

Assessment Report

Psychology Organizational Behavior

Tallinn University
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 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 Psychology in two higher education institutions: Tallinn University (BA Psychology, MA Psychology, MA Organisational Behaviour) and University of Tartu (BA Psychology, MA Psychology).

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

The following persons formed the assessment team:

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Dalia Nasvytiene	Assistant Professor, Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences - Lithuania)
Milvi Tepp	Chairman of the board of Estonian Human Resource Management Association PARE - Estonia
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The assessment process was coordinated by Liia Lauri (EKKA).

After the preparation phase, the work of the assessment team in Estonia started on Monday, April 4, 2016, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedure by EKKA, the Estonian Quality Agency 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 days, meetings were held with the representatives of Tallinn University (Tuesday, April 5) and University of Tartu (Wednesday, April 6).

On Thursday, April 7, 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 two sections, the assessment team summarise their general findings, conclusions and recommendations which are relevant across the whole SPG. The team provides an external and objective perspective on the programmes and the contexts within which they are delivered. 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

The panel found that across both institutions and in all five programmes, all of the specified standards were met and that in some cases they were exceeded. In general, Tallinn University and University of Tartu provide strong provision in psychology at BA and MA levels. Each University has a distinctive character and approach and these complementary institutions have much to offer to students, to each other and to the development of psychology both nationally in Estonia and within the wider International context. Staff and students at both institutions 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.

The institutions welcome collaboration and the panel would endorse an overall approach to provision in which collaboration is maintained and enhanced. This will in turn enhance student mobility between universities within Estonia and present a united and attractive front to international students, increasing international interest and student mobility. One area in which such collaboration can manifest itself more clearly is in a commitment by each university to develop its own specialist strengths distinct from those of the other institution whilst also recognising the specialist strengths of the other institution and seeking to

collaborate for mutual benefit. Any developments that suggest increased competition should be considered carefully and cautiously.

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.

Both universities must face the challenge of rapid reduction in prospective student numbers due to decreasing birth rates and must therefore ensure that strategies are in place to ensure sustainability in this situation. This emphasises once again the importance of collaboration and internationalisation.

Whilst both Universities provide good quality education in psychology that prepares students effectively for future employment and further study, they do so in distinctive ways and thus face distinct challenges. The staff at Tallinn University impressed the panel with their very strong commitment to their work and with their willingness to carry very high workloads. However, a more strategic and organised approach will alleviate some of their pressures and allow the programmes to develop more effectively and efficiently. Every support should be given to the psychology programme staff in this endeavour. Just as the staff at Tallinn should be commended for their strong commitment, so those at Tartu should be commended for their commitment, and their strategic and organised approach.

1. Assessment report of Psychology SPG at Tallinn University

1.1. Introduction

As an institution Tallinn University (hereinafter TU) was founded in 2005 by an Act of the parliament of the Republic of Estonia. TU has grown to include six schools, two colleges, 5 centers of excellence, 8 research centers and 13 support units. It is the largest university of humanities in Tallinn with more than 9,000 students. The strategic goal of TU for 2015 – 2020 is to develop interdisciplinary research-based focus fields (5 of them are active now).

The bachelor study programme of Psychology (PSYBA) was launched in 1993, the master study programme of Psychology (PSYMA) in 1994, the curriculum of Organizational behavior was opened four years later. They are implemented in the School of Natural Sciences and Health.

There are 278 bachelor and 55 master students currently studying in the Psychology study programme, and 178 master students in the Organizational Behavior programme.

1.2. General findings and recommendations at the study programme group level

The psychology study programme at University of Tallinn is served by an excellent and enthusiastic staff who have created good working relationships and a good atmosphere within which students find they are able to interact easily with staff and with one another. Within this strong academic community it is clear from both current students and alumni of the programmes that there are high levels of satisfaction with the teaching that is received and students are enthusiastic and feel well prepared for subsequent employment including employment within the psychological professions. Teachers in general are driven and hard working in the service of their students and the University and in one or two cases the efforts of staff gave the panel the impression of a level of commitment that is nothing short of *heroic* as they seek to ensure the quality of the programmes. It is particularly important to mark this since there are a wide range of pressures on staff.

Employers and other stakeholders affirm the good and improving quality of graduates from these programmes, and all concerned with these programmes should be commended for that.

This is, therefore, a positive academic community in which: (i) the standards of higher education are all met; (ii) staff and students form an engaged academic community; and (iii) staff demonstrate very high levels of commitment to their work. A number of recommendations can also be made for the enhancement of

these programmes and the organization that delivers them. These are discussed in the sections to follow, but summarized here.

The most important issue to address is the overall vision and strategic approach of the study group, including academic management and academic staff, for the development of psychology over the next period of years and the way in which programmes will be managed intentionally to deliver that vision. A strategic approach will allow competing pressures to be met, such as the need for interdisciplinarity, accreditation for Europsy, the demands of professional psychology, and co-existence with University of Tartu and wider Estonian psychology. With such an approach, the existing strengths can be maximized and the programme group can flourish.

This strategic approach should work its way into a range of areas such as programme development, for example in deciding whether or not ambitions in experimental psychology should continue to grow or whether they should be limited (as the panel would recommend), and whether the ORG MA programme should be developed to better accommodate the diverse academic backgrounds of those who apply to study it (as the panel would recommend). Other important areas include the management of the number of modules and their ECTS credit weighting (the panel recommends module numbers be decreased and ECTS credit weightings be increased in some cases); the diversification of teaching methods and their alignment with the learning outcomes that determine the type of psychology programmes that Tallinn University provides (as the panel would recommend).

Other areas in which good work is being done, but which could be enhanced include the student feedback cycle, e-learning, the connection between teaching and research (at MA level in particular), the evenness of student workloads across different modules carrying the same ECTS credit weighting, and the preparation of students for placement and internship experiences to ensure they have the required skills beforehand. Innovation in teaching and learning should also be supported by a systematic approach to staff development that ensures that the necessary teaching skills of all staff are continually enhanced and up to date. Finally, student mobility can be enhanced by a more flexible approach to recognizing credit awarded in other institutions for modules that are not precisely those specified within the programmes at Tallinn. It is normal to give leeway for students to re-shape their programmes according to what is on offer in other institutions.

A major issue for some staff is excessive workload. This situation may be improved by developments in strategically driven management, but should also be addressed directly. In order to ensure a fair and balanced workload across the academic staff, the system for managing workload should be revisited and intentionally developed.

The psychology staff and management clearly recognize two current issues that could present serious problems. First, dropout rates from courses are too high in

some cases and so the psychology staff should revisit the question of why dropout rates are high and plan an approach to bring these down. Second, there is a high likelihood of financial challenges in future, largely due to changing birth rates in Estonia. The panel therefore recommends that the question of how the study area will be managed and prepared for financial challenges in future should be addressed clearly with the University. This will include ensuring that the programmes remain tuned to the needs of the labour market and are increasingly able to compete internationally.

These issues are presented in more detail in what follows.

1.3. Strengths and areas for improvement of study programmes by assessment areas

1.3.1. Psychology (Bachelor/Master)

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Study programme development' are all met and in some cases exceeded. Training in psychology is composed of a three-year Bachelor's degree followed by a two-year Master's degree in accord with European norms. The panel saw evidence that the general structure and content of study programmes and modules correspond to the

Estonian Standard of Higher Education¹ and to valid institutional internal regulations as well as to the Statutes of Curriculum and rules of Study of University of Tallinn. Overall the panel can confirm that study programmes are organised in ways that are coherent and consistent with both learning objectives and expected learning outcomes. The panel heard evidence that curricula have been developed through continuous and systematic feedback in such a way as to take account of the needs of the labour market, feedback from stakeholders and new developments in psychology. Co-operation between psychology staff and relevant employers and professional bodies is good, and this includes the Society of Estonian School Psychologists and the Society of Clinical Psychologists. An elective has been introduced in the Master's programme to provide a professional placement with the aim of increasing the amount of practical training in psychology study programmes. Processes for curriculum development and quality assurance are in place, being regulated by internal rules of the University and the responsibilities of individuals involved in these processes are clearly defined.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- These programmes of study are held in high regard by all those associated with them. This includes students and alumni as well as employers and other stakeholders.
- Curricula provide significant opportunities for interdisciplinary study and also for individualised learning by offering a large number and range of elective modules within programmes. Such opportunities are particularly important since they allow students to prepare for subsequent employment and/or further study.
- Programmes are very popular as evidenced by application rates of up to 7:1 (BA). This enables the University to be selective and thus to ensure that those who undertake psychology programmes are those who are best placed to be successful and to make a positive subsequent contribution in a psychological profession or research.
- The process of programme and curriculum development has enabled the maintenance of high academic standards amidst a range of pressures in relation to professional standards, labour-market needs and changes in wider management and University structures.

¹ (i) Standard of Higher Education Government of the Republic Regulation No 258 of 13 August 2002 delineates general requirements for curriculum, content of BA and MA studies; (ii) Government of the Republic Regulation No 178 of 18 December 2008 Standard of Higher Education outlines the formulation of Learning outcomes of cycles of higher education level and their connections to the qualifications framework.

Areas of Improvement and Recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- An overall strategic vision and approach should be produced to govern for the development of the psychology study area. This is important for a range of reasons, including developments within the academic and administrative structure of Tallinn University. The strategy should articulate clearly how the competing demands on curricula are to be addressed, including but not limited to demands driven by the placement of the study area within the School Natural Sciences and Health; the need for interdisciplinarity; the need for individualised learning; preparation for professional practice; and EuroPsy accreditation. It should ensure that additions of new elements within programmes are not ad hoc and in particular that there is not a proliferation of modules addressing narrow areas of specialisation.
- Future development of curricula should be informed by an increasingly detailed understanding of the competencies required within the labour market in general and in particular those relevant to the needs of professional psychologists. In light of this and other considerations:
 - Formal systems should be put in place to ensure that the understanding of the needs of stakeholders remains accurate and up to date.
 - The current plan to enlarge the proportion of experimental psychology and neuropsychology within the programmes should be reconsidered.
- Programmes should be structured to ensure graduates are very well equipped to work as professional psychologists and to receive the necessary accreditations. Serious consideration should be given to increasing the proportion of the psychology programmes that is given over to internships and doing so in line with the standards required for EuroPsy and other forms of professional certification.
- At present curricula consist of a large number of small courses, each given a credit weighting that is typically in the order of three or four ECTS points. Strong consideration should be given to the reduction of the number of courses so that the proportion of modules with a small credit weighting is reduced. This will also reduce the number of modules taught. The panel felt that this was a particularly important issue given student feedback and the management of staff workloads. It is a strength of the programmes that students have a wide range of choices, but there is scope for reduction in the number of modules without reducing this strength. The panel thus recommends that programme managers work on ways in which the number of courses can be reduced and the credit value of individual courses can be increased. Note that this may need to be done in consultation with University of Tartu in order to avoid reducing student mobility.

- The focus on internationalisation should be increased for the sake of international recruitment and the mobility of Estonian students through exchange programmes. In order to achieve this:
 - serious consideration should be given to increasing the proportion of courses that are taught in English. Greater provision in English would enhance the competitiveness of Estonian psychology within European and wider markets, creating possibilities for students from other countries to join Estonian programmes and would also enhance the mobility of Estonian students, which is very low at present.
 - collaboration with University of Tartu should be increased where possible in order to develop the opportunities for engagement in psychology across Estonia for incoming international students.

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 above standards applicable to the domain of 'Resources' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The panel found the physical and technological resources available to the psychology programme group to be of a generally high standard. This includes the accommodation of academic and support staff within recently completed, well-equipped rooms containing good technological and (where necessary) bibliographical resources. Each full-time member of staff has a well-equipped workplace and office conditions are not cramped. Lecture rooms are spacious and well-equipped ensuring that lecturers can be heard and students can benefit from clear presentation of slides and other supporting resources. Students have a small but adequate study room available including six personal computers equipped with software necessary to carry out scientific research. Students can also access the University's wider provision of classrooms equipped with computer workstations. The panel found that academic staff and students are very positive about the environment within which they work and study. Study information systems are available and adequate, but there is room for improvement.

There is a clear aim to use financial resources to enhance the educational offer, as illustrated by the decision to invest in equipping a laboratory for experimental research. The psychology programmes are supported by a very good library and give a strong impression that the supply of textbooks and other literature (including e-resources) is good.

Management are aware of demographic changes that mean the student numbers are likely to fall sharply in coming years and have a consequent negative impact on income. The panel judged that while resources are adequate at present there remains a risk that financial sustainability will be undermined and so this situation should be monitored carefully and addressed strategically (see below).

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- The physical environment and technological and bibliographic resources available to students and staff are very good and constitute a modern learning environment. This is clear from both the self-evaluation report and the data gathered during the visit.
- Study spaces are of good size and quality and sufficient to achieve the aims of the programmes, providing for the needs of both students and teachers. The necessary professional literature and study materials are available in both English and Estonian languages and the core literature is available in an open, specialised library.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- It is clear that academic leaders and programme managers are concerned about the effect of limited financial resources and the risk in the medium term that teaching and research activities might be restricted. The panel recommends that attention be given to the financial consequences of policy decisions and the development of a strategy to address concerns about financial sustainability. Such policies should aim to maximise income and efficiency in order to enable growth of research activities and internationalisation (e.g. staff mobility, participation in international conferences, inviting international visiting lecturers) as well as avoiding adverse consequences for the educational offer.
- It is good that the University makes use of a 'Study Information System', but in the light of comments from students and both academic and support staff, the panel recommends that attention should be given to the overall usability of the system from a student point of view and the need to present related information in a coherent and integrated way.

Teaching and learning

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Teaching and Learning' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The panel observed a working environment that facilitates meeting the needs of learners' individual and social development. There are good working relationships between teachers and students. Teachers set aside hours each week in which they can be consulted by students and there are clear guidelines that email messages are replied to within a week and these are adhered to. Student learning is well managed, for example through a clear approach to assessing the amount of independent work that students must do. There is continual ongoing reflection on teaching and learning in staff meetings. The panel found that programme managers work hard to find ways to deliver programmes in ways that facilitate the achievement of planned learning outcomes. Progression is ensured through the use of pre-requisites and coherence is enhanced by delivering related subjects in the same semester. It is also clear that the variety of teaching methods used is acceptable and the development of digital culture is supported through the use of IT in a range of contexts as part of the learning process. There is a connection between theoretical and practical learning, and a commitment to renew the organisation of professional placements, which the panel would support. There is an ongoing concern to achieve a good fit between the competency profile of graduates and the needs of the labour market. Although the level of student mobility could be improved, students are well-informed about existing opportunities and encouraged to take them up. The panel found evidence of a variety of an acceptable variety of assessment methods being used to evaluate student's achievements.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- Teaching is sensitive to a range of student needs. A number of courses (e.g. general subjects taught as part of PSYMA) are designed to promote holistic development and there is a concern to ensure that provision includes proper study support and opportunities for students with a range of needs.
- Good indications of a student-focused approach to teaching include:
 - the admission requirements are clearly expressed and meet rather high thresholds for admission (65 and 70 points respectively);
 - clear information to students about agreed policies in a range of areas, such as plagiarism;
 - providing timetable information well in advance (2 months prior to the start of semester) and making this information easily available;
 - regular gathering and response to student feedback (end of each semester);
 - effective organisation of timetables to facilitate the range of student activities, and in particular to accommodate specialist student electives at Masters level.
- Courses are well described, including a clear description of learning objectives and learning outcomes along with equally clear evidence of the ways in which teachers transform one into the other.
- It is evident that the practical dimensions of professional training in psychology, including placements, are based on strong theoretical background and there is a continuous effort to strengthen this provision. The locations of placements and the facilities provided meet students' expectations and the effect of this training is evidenced by the fact that roughly half of the active participants in the Estonian Psychology Students' Association project *Lahendus* are students and alumni from Tallinn University.
- After amendments made in 2012 graduates from PSYMA can apply for a EuroPsy qualification in one of three areas of specialisation (Educational Psychology, Clinical and Health Psychology, or Work and Organizational Psychology). Both teachers and students are aware of the need to focus on cultural diversity in society.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Consider ways in which the diversity of teaching methods can be increased: The panel noted data from the study information system (ÕIS) that teaching methods are heavily dominated by lectures at BA level in particular. Given the emphasis on practical outcomes in these

programmes, some consideration should be given the constructive alignment of teaching methods with course content and a reduction on the reliance on lectures in favour of active teaching methods where appropriate. Examples of alternative methods might include peer-review, peer-assisted study, interactive work in class, problem-solving sessions, role play, simulations of real-life situations etc.

- Develop the regular use of e-learning across modules: The use of e-learning should become more systematic, developing the existing ad hoc use into a more consistent approach in order to support flexible learning and digital literacy further.
- Increase support for student mobility: More can be done to support students' inward and outward mobility. Our suggestion would be to simplify the means by which students can transfer their programme credits acquired in other universities (within Estonia and internationally) and to develop more flexible procedures for recognising prior learning abroad, recognising that courses taught elsewhere will differ in title and content even whilst proving adequate substitutes for those in PSYBA and PSYMA.
- Ensure a consistent student workload: Courses with the same ECTS weighting should require equivalent amounts of student work (including independent study) in line with national and European standards.
- Ensure clarity of marking criteria and assessment documentation: Ensure that all assessment tasks are clearly described and associated with clear and easily accessible marking criteria that are available prior to the start of a course. In addition, ensure that all teachers understand the terminology used to describe assessments in a consistent way e.g. terms such as 'form' and 'method'.
- Encouragement of Russian language: A particular need has been expressed by stakeholders for professional psychologists who can work effectively with Russian speaking Estonian people. This issue should be explored further and a plan made to ensure that this need is addressed.

Teaching staff

Standards

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

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Teaching Staff' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The panel found the number of teaching staff and the level of their qualifications to be in line with standards and the sustainability of programmes. The self-evaluation report indicates nine full-time faculty members out of 15, and 10 qualified to PhD level, with an overall total of 50-55 contractual lecturers. Teachers are actively participating in activities related to the study programme and have received numerous grants in the last five years. Students assess academic staff to be good teachers as measured by the surveys carried out among students and alumni that were seen by the panel (positive assessments are indicated over the period 2012 - 2015 by means fluctuating from 4.48 to 4.62 on a 5-point scale) and confirmed in meetings with the panel. While students indicate that teaching is good, alumni also indicate that their studies have prepared them well for subsequent professional work. Some joint activities with UT were held in the sphere of teaching (in relation to content and LO of psychology programmes) and research (participation in activity of Doctoral school of UT). Some teachers were actively involved in TU regular internal training sessions to improve teaching skills, part of staff members deepened their methodological skills. However it looked as signs of high self-consciousness rather than implementation of overall strategy to promote continuous professional development. Novice teachers are provided with relevant support [In regard to this issue the panel should recommend to reconsider if the same curator for all 3 programmes efficiently copes with such workload]. The panel also saw good evidence that academic staff provide a rich variety of services to the external community, being involved in cooperation with institutional, public and private organisations, as well as with other Estonian or foreign HEIs. Foreign visiting members and nationally recognised practitioners participate in teaching the study programme, both at the BA and MA level. Members of the teaching staff participate in in-service training activities aimed at improving teaching skills, at a national and international level. The panel clearly perceived, during the visit and the meetings, that the teaching staff include people with very good training, wide experience and a strong commitment to teaching. International research collaboration is being developed, although this is not equally distributed across all members of the teaching staff. While the quality of teaching is monitored the means by which feedback leads to development is not clear. In case of teaching

problems the head or curator of programmes usually mediates between students and lecturers.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- **Commitment:** It became very clear to the panel during the visit that all staff are very highly committed to their work and in some cases the commitment goes beyond even this and may reasonably be described as 'heroic'. This brings very significant benefits to the students and the university. These facts were apparent from interviews carried out with students and alumni as well as with the academic staff themselves and from the documentation. The panel would commend the academic staff in the strongest possible terms for their commitment.
- **Professional Experience:** An excellent level of professional experience is to be found shared among the staff, in particular in relation to consultancies for governmental Institutions (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education and Research).

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- **Workload:** To ensure that staff workloads are proactively managed to ensure that the workload is broadly even given the range of tasks that each staff member must undertake.
- **Research:** To review and increase the support given to staff for the production of scientific work: While teaching staff are well qualified, experienced and committed, it is important to take steps to increase the level of research output and scientific work, seeking to raise the quality and level of such work as well as the quantity that is produced.
- **Partnerships:** To enhance and formalise national and international relationships and partnerships: Attention should be given to the enhancement of cooperative relationships with partners that might give rise to funded research projects that potentially enhance team building within the study area. Existing relationships that teaching staff have with the institutions of the community (City Council, Estonian Health Insurance Fund, Human Resource Management Association, Estonian Career Counsellors Association, and others) should be developed and new relationships forged that to ensure that these operate within the framework of applied research projects heading towards publications in reference journals, whilst also involving students.

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 above standards applicable to the domain of 'Students' are all met and in some cases exceeded. High application rates (7-3:1 at BA level) ensure that the University is able to fill student places whilst also being selective and ensuring that places are given to the most motivated and capable students. While drop-out rates are a concern the University and psychology staff are aware of this and seeking to address it within the context of very high employability rates in Estonia. The panel found that students are satisfied with the content, form and methods of study. Students have opportunities to study elsewhere as part of their programmes, although some enhancement of this is required for take-up of opportunities to increase. Employment rates of alumni are high and the panel saw clear evidence that employers are both content with the quality of graduates that they receive and recognize that the quality of graduates has increased in recent years expressing the happiness of the employers that the graduates are good and improving.

Students are represented in decision-making processes at all three levels of managerial structure – those of university level, academic unit level and sub-unit level. Career and Counselling Centre of TU collects general information about studying and learning conditions.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- Enthusiastic students: The panel found that students are in general very satisfied with their studies and enthusiastic about their programmes of

study. They are also satisfied with the preparation the programmes give them for subsequent work and study.

- Selective Entry: BA study is highly competitive and thus the psychology programmes can be selective and admit only the best students (Self-assessment report indicates 7,2 candidates per study place. Several different methods are used to test applicants.)
- Involvement in Research: The level of student involvement in research projects is commendable. At BA level, 26% of students write a BA thesis based on research coming from a project in which they were involved. This level increases to 32% at MA level.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Address completion and dropout rates: The panel recommends that attention be given to the percentage of students completing their studies, seeking to raise this figure, and in particular to the relatively high dropout rate. A number of means should be considered to achieve this. The panel found a general concern that it can be difficult to balance paid work with full-time study. This concern did not come out clearly from the small number of PSYBA/PSYMA students with whom the panel spoke and so it should be investigated further. If students do indeed have difficulty integrating study and work then steps should be taken to address this through the organisation of timetables and programmes in such a way as to facilitate student employment as far as possible. In addition, the area of student support and guidance should be reconsidered in order to ensure that students are given the necessary information and advice at the times when it is most useful to them.
- Reconsider selection: Following on from the previous recommendation, the psychology group should consider providing opportunities for prospective students to find out more about the course prior to entry and to understand more clearly that they need to complete their programmes and to graduate. Students should be enabled to withdraw their applications at this stage if they believe this to be important.
- Enhancing opportunities for practical and professional development: Students lack training of practical skills and practical experience during their study period in university. In order to improve learning process of practical skills for students, university should revise its teaching methods and search for additional trainings or possibilities for students practice. Cooperation with employers and organisations in field could be beneficial and help to increase students awareness and develop practical skills in short term run, nevertheless for future improvements and additional trainings attracting state support is crucial.

- Student mobility: The existing arrangements for allowing students to study in other institutions nationally and internationally should be reconsidered with the aim of meeting and exceeding the suggested proportion of students (5%). The extent to which the psychology programmes can increase their flexibility in allowing students to study broadly similar topics overseas in place of modules that are part of their programmes at Tallinn should be considered. The aim should be to allow students greater flexibility in exchanging modules at Tallinn for broadly similar (though not the same) modules at other universities. Without such flexibility the *de facto* opportunities for students to study overseas are much reduced.
- Increasing the attractiveness of MA Studies: The competition for places at MA level is much lower than at BA level. The reasons for this should be considered and if possible a strategy put in place to ensure that MA study is increasingly appealing to prospective students. (The self-assessment report indicates applications running at 1,3 candidates per study place)

1.3.2. Organizational Behavior (Master)

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Study programme and study programme development' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The ORGMA study programme aims to produce experts provided with a psychological and behavioural approach to organization, competencies in management and business administration and a scientific approach to research, therefore capable

of intervention and change in organizations. Considering the quite general admission requirements and the content of the curricula this study programme could be viewed as continuing education programme to support the development of competencies and acquiring knowledge needed for specialists and managers in managing people and organizational processes. The panel found that the content and structure of the study programmes are consistent with programme objectives and expected learning outcomes. The different modules within the programmes meld together appropriately to form a coherent whole. The development of the study programme has been a continuous process, closely connected with changing needs of labour market as well as increasing academic level of teaching. In terms of general structure and volume of different modules and study programme as a whole the curricula corresponds to the Estonian Standard of Higher Education and to the valid institutional internal regulations, to the Statutes of Curriculum and rules of Study regulations of University of Tallinn, respectively.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- The study programme represents an interesting and unique opportunity to merge psychological and business administration competencies to create a reflexive management capable of innovation in organisations.
- The curricula is highly valued by potential students: the competition for student places is high (approximately 4 candidates per student place).
- The students are very satisfied with the study programme content, the quality of lectures and flexibility of teaching arrangement
- The study programme provides real value for graduates: According to the alumni feedback questionnaire implemented in 2013, 83% would choose the same specialisation if they had to start again and 73% claimed that studies in their area of specialisation had contributed to their professional career development

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Reconsider range of specialisations: Taking into account that permanent teaching staff resources (in the meaning of numbers and also in the fields of expertise) are limited, to keep the high quality of curricula the committee suggests that programme manager should reconsider the idea of increasing the number of areas of specialisations.
- Enhance support for students from diverse backgrounds: Students enrolled on this study programme have bachelor's degree from quite different fields: The curricula (especially in the specialisation area in military and paramilitary organizations) contain courses requiring a basic

- education in psychology to fully understand as a prerequisite. The programme manager should consider and start to working on ways in which the course content in general and progression through the course take into account the diversity of educational backgrounds of the students.
- Increase qualitative methods teaching: Considering the study programme orientation a great part of master thesis are related to seeking solutions to practical problems in organizations. The committee recommends increasing the time given to teaching qualitative research methods in order to ensure that students are able to carry on high quality research in their thesis projects.
 - Provide a better alignment between the content and goals of specialist modules: Programme managers should consider how to enhance the alignment of the goals of specialist modules with their content. For example:
 - the current focus on antisocial and abnormal behaviour and crisis situations in the specialisation on military and paramilitary organisations could be enlarged to include issues related to both the international multicultural scenario and the ordinary management of population and communities within the local territory;
 - the specialisation in Health Care Organisational Behaviour could include a larger proportion of courses specific to its needs. At present only three out of 10 subjects are directly related to the field and these deal mainly with HCM financing, social insurance, provision of health care services in Estonia, medical statistics and so on. It would therefore be important to introduce courses specifically aimed at psychology and organisation in health care systems.
 - Formalise feedback processes: In order to follow the needs of labour market and keep the quality of study programme the committee recommends to create a formalized procedures of systematic feedback from employers and students

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 above standards applicable to the domain of 'Resources' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The panel found the physical and technological resources available to the psychology programme group to be of a generally high standard. This includes the accommodation of academic and support staff within recently completed, well-equipped rooms containing good technological and (where necessary) bibliographical resources. Each full-time member of staff has a well-equipped workplace and office conditions are not cramped. Lecture rooms are spacious and well-equipped ensuring that lecturers can be heard and students can benefit from clear presentation of slides and other supporting resources. Students have a small but adequate study room available including six personal computers equipped with software necessary to carry out scientific research. Students can also access the University's wider provision of classrooms equipped with computer workstations. The panel found that academic staff and students are very positive about the environment within which they work and study. Study information systems are available and adequate, but there is room for improvement.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- The panel recognised from both the self-evaluation report and during the site-visit that the physical location and the available technological and bibliographical resources constitute a modern learning environment.
- Premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality to achieve the aims of programmes. This is valid for students as well as for teachers. Professional literature and study materials (in English and Estonian languages) are collected at the request of teachers and students, and the core literature is made available in an open specialized library.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Accessibility and Integration of Study Information System: Students highlight that the University makes use of a study information system, but at present information proves to be poorly integrated and difficult to access for students, as well as for academic and support staff.
- A strategic approach to sustainability: Academic leadership and programme managers expressed concerns about the effects of the limited financial resources available. The medium-term prospects of this could be to inhibit academic staff research and also the number of elective courses. The panel thus recommends developing policies to improve financial sustainability and enable growth of research activities and internationalization (e.g. staff mobility, participation in international

conferences, inviting international visiting lecturers) and to avoid adverse consequences on the educational offer.

Teaching and learning

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Teaching and Learning' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The ORG MA study programme is taught within a dynamic academic community atmosphere that is friendly for students from various fields of previous Bachelor education. The panel saw clear evidence that programme objectives are consistent with learning outcomes. The programme structure ensures that courses are ordered in hierarchical sequence so that knowledge builds systematically in both breadth of content and depth of understanding, promoting the successful achievement of learning outcomes. Teachers combine traditional lecturing with group work, seminars and discussions; the e-learning platform is occasionally used. The panel found a number of examples of effective development in teaching and learning, for example in recognising the need to strengthen the research competencies of students. The learning outcomes identified are of the right type and level for the qualifications that they serve. The network of practical placements established for the programme is suitable for the development of skills required for a behaviour-focused approach to human factors in organizations. Student mobility rates are low, but teachers are aware of the reasons for this and are working to deal with this concern. Exams and presentations provide the majority of assessment methods, but a considerable variety of other methods are also used. There is an

effective community supporting this programme consisting of students, alumni and stakeholders, all of whom are willing to contribute actively to the development of the programme. Their opinions are taken seriously along with other factors in programme development.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- A high level of flexibility: The cyclical form of study provides great flexibility and takes into account the fact that students work full time. Despite heavy workloads carried by students who study while working, students remain positive in general towards the content and organisation of the programme.
- Theoretical and practical courses seems to be in balance: In many cases teaching methods and learning activities correspond to study objectives and learning outcomes..
- Students appreciate the practical outcomes oriented approach: Practitioners and prominent specialists in relevant field are invited to teach particular courses.
- Students clearly understand the learning outcomes and are aware of the skills they want to acquire to be competitive in labour market and implement „softer approach to management“.
- Teachers provide the content of the ORG MA programme in flexible ways through the “A Year at the University” programme in the Open University and some students have been attracted to study the programme full-time because of this.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Connecting teaching and research: A focus on greater alignment between research and teaching: This is highly recommended. Programme managers adhere to university's R & D priority for 2012 – 2016 to apply research-based learning and to improve research competence in students. In order to facilitate this process the teaching activities must maximally correspond to the area of research expertise and scientific degrees of the staff. At the present ORGMA programme explicitly foresees research skills as their outcomes but has very small number of teachers with PhD and the least percentage of thesis based on research (24 % compared to 26 % in PSYBA and 32 % in PSYMA).
- Enhancing advice given to students: Diverse first-cycle background and often little research experience require proper advising and guidance for the enrolled students on how to prepare prospective Master thesis. Further ways should be explored how students can conduct scientific research together with their teachers.

- Efforts should be taken to formulate a clear vision for e-learning and digitalization.
- Enhance academic staff development: An uneven profile of teachers' pedagogical skills can be managed by training of pedagogical competences on a regular basis using evident support from senior management of university.
- Enhance student mobility: A more flexible attitude towards recognition of credit and skills transfer from national and international universities would be beneficial.
- Balance effort hours per credit: It is also recommended that attention is paid to ensure that the workload requirements across courses of equivalent credit value are comparable (at the present 24 contact lessons are allocated to courses of 3ECTS, 5ECTS and 6ECTS).
- Information on assessments should be complemented with transparent composition of final grade and grading criteria for particular assessment tasks. Students must have explicit understanding of the way in which diverse assignments and assessment methods contribute to the final mark.

Teaching staff

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Teaching Staff' are all met and in some cases exceeded. Only visiting lecturers are exclusively involved in teaching the ORGMA study programme, while internal staff members are involved in at least two, sometimes in all the three study programmes.

For this reason, only few remarks on teaching staff specifically address the ORGMA programme.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- Teaching staff have the requested qualifications and prove to be particularly committed to the achievement of high quality learning outcomes. Students' assessment of the lecturers' teaching skills is very positive.
- Recognised practitioners participate in teaching the study programme. Their contribution is highly appreciated by students, who during the interviews highlighted the importance of learning practical skills directly from experts in the field. In retrospect, also the alumni pointed out that involving practitioners as lecturers had helped them to get a clearer idea of their prospective career.
- The teaching staff is interdisciplinary, as the psychological background of the majority of internal members is enriched by the diverse qualifications of the visiting lecturers.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Connect Research and Teaching: In many cases, staff members' publications and projects, when present, are not aligned with the syllabus of the courses. Therefore, it seems unlikely for several members of teaching staff to use examples of their own research results in their teaching, as stated in the self-evaluation report.
- Balance academic staff workload: The evidence seen by the panel suggested that the distribution of teaching workload amongst staff can be highly uneven and this suggests that workloads may not be managed effectively. One particular example of this is that research-based master's theses may be ascribed to very few teachers who must supervise a wide range of topics, many of which will not reflect their own research interests. It is important to ensure that supervision of master's theses in particular is grounded in research activity and equally that it is distributed across the whole academic staff. The panel recommends that the system for managing workload be reconsidered to ensure that workloads are fair and appropriate across the academic staff as a whole. Each member of academic staff should have a workload in accord with her or his contract, that is fair in comparison to others, and which is clearly connected to the competencies and specialisations of the individual. As far as possible, all contracts should include some element of research and where this is the case proper time should be allocated for this. In order to facilitate the effective outworking of workload planning,

stronger administrative support may be required to ensure that teaching is underpinned by effective logistical and course management.

- Academic staff development for visiting lecturers: Visiting lecturers, most of whom come from the external professional community, constitute a large part of the academic staff. This is positive in terms of transfer of professional knowledge, expertise, and capabilities into the educational offer, but can introduce uncontrolled variability in teaching skills and methods. There is no evidence of how novice members of the teaching staff are supported with regard to the development of their teaching skills. It is therefore suggested to provide support to ensure that external lectures be integrated in a coherent system of teaching and assessment methods.

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 above standards applicable to the domain of 'Students' are all met and in some cases exceeded. The competition for student places is high (3,6 candidates per student place) and therefore the University can be selective, taking in only motivated and capable students. Dropout rates have been a problem in recent years, but this is recognised and there has not been any neglect of this issue. (On average, 75% of the ORGMA students complete their studies while the percentage of the PSYMA students is 95%). Opportunities for student mobility are given for this programme, although the nature of the programmes and the activities of the students militate against this. The employment rates of alumni are excellent and the panel found strong evidence of satisfaction from stakeholders, including employers, at the quality of graduates from this programme.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- The very positive feedback from students and alumni, who express high satisfaction for their learning experience that they apply in their professional practice.
- A relatively high proportion of students are involved in research projects. In master studies 24% of students wrote their master theses based on research of R&D project they were involved in.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- Review arrangements for student mobility: It would be beneficial to increase the number of outgoing Erasmus students and ways to do this that are consistent with the working practices of students.
- Review approach to student completion and drop-out: A significant number of students (mainly part-time) do not complete the programme and drop-out rates have been high in recent years. These issues should be kept under review. There should be further investigation of the reasons for drop-out and ways in which the University might reduce these figures, perhaps in connection with employers. Student support should also be reviewed to ensure that the right kinds of support are offered at the right times to ensure that dropout rates are minimised.
- A systematic approach to retention: In order to lower drop-out rates, consider introducing activities at the point of admission to ensure that workload issues are understood and enhance mentoring during the study process.

2. Assessment report of Psychology SPG at University of Tartu

2.1. Introduction

The University of Tartu (UT) was founded in 1632, and has developed as the national university of the Republic of Estonia, with a mission to advance science and culture, to provide the possibilities for the acquisition of higher education based on the development of science and technology on the fields of humanities, social, medical and natural sciences and to provide public services based on teaching and research.

The university offers a psychology programme (both at the bachelor and at the master level), with a new curriculum since 1991. These two parts of the programme are viewed as two sides of the same coin, having the shared goal of preparing professional psychologists. At the same time, the two parts have a set of objectives of their own: the bachelor provides students with an interdisciplinary understanding of human psychology and behaviour and with knowledge of the main theoretical problems and methodological bases of psychology, and the master programme offers further academic education in psychology, necessary to continue at a doctoral level, to work as a psychologist in many different fields, or to apply for a professional qualification of psychologist (such as the European Diploma).

2.2. General findings and recommendations at study programme group level

The Bachelor and Master psychology programs at UT are grounded in a very strong academic context. Most of the teachers are internationally recognized experts in their field. The students are thus able to hear from, and also take part in strong and up-to-date scientific work.

The psychological academic community at UT is strong, enthusiastic, and committed. This applies both to the management and teachers of the program, but also to the students, who seem to be at the same time satisfied and aspiring.

Both management and staff express a genuine concern for ongoing staff development and consequently for innovation in learning and teaching.

Leadership of the UT and the IP made a strong impression. There seems to be a strategic and well-organized approach to the management of the programs, and to their development. Part of this approach also, seems rightly to address the issue of maintaining sufficient resources to ensure sustainability in the face of financial pressures. Students and stakeholders seem to be well involved in the

development of future plans. The plans for a 'development fund' aimed at recruiting Estonian scientists back to their country of origin seem a good idea to strengthen the Estonian scientific community further.

2.3. Strengths and areas for improvement of study programmes by assessment areas

2.3.1. Psychology (Bachelor/Master)

Study programme and study programme development

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Study programme and study programme development' have all been met and in many cases exceeded. There is evidence that programmes are developed purposefully and regularly in a way that is responsive to: student feedback, developments in the discipline, a commitment to research, and the needs of the labour market. The overall impression is that academic standards are high. It is clear that the structure and content of modules and courses in the study programmes support achievement of the learning objectives and outcomes and the evidence for this is to be found in the motivated and energetic teaching staff, the largely effective student feedback system (both formal and informal), the strong academic community and clear documentation. The structure of each programme flows from a clear academic identity and commitment to experimental psychology and is thus coherent. Feedback processes are strong and it is notable that a wide range of stakeholders have been involved in programme development.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- The panel noted an overall strategic and well-organised approach to management of the programmes and to their development.
- The Bachelor/Master study programmes are well-integrated and constitute a united whole.
- The prerequisite courses system in the master programme ensures a systematic approach to learning and supports achieving the objectives of the programme.
- The course syllabus information available on the Study Information System indicates that teaching is based on contemporary high level academic materials.
- The relatively wide and well-supported use of web-based delivery of courses.
- The continuous nature of the programme development process, supported by the wider university processes and structures and in particular efforts over the last few years to involve different stakeholders in programme development.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- We recommend that the University ensure that students have opportunities for interdisciplinary study (even if the university policy in general is not supportive for interdisciplinary studies), managing individual student programmes in order that the extent of such study facilitates progress towards chosen careers. While the committee applauds the intention to develop interdisciplinary masters programs (partly developed to attract more international students), the University's internal market does not at present incentivize departments to facilitate interdisciplinary study in general and we recommend that the department and wider university work together to remove this problem.
- We recommend that the Institute of Psychology seeks to explore further the partnership with Tallinn University and opportunities for collaboration for mutual benefit. Each University should seek to maintain and develop strengths that are distinctive from the other (in both teaching and research) and to see the maintenance and development of collaboration as a means to greater effectiveness as each University draws increasingly on the strengths of both. This is particularly important for internationalisation and to ensure the competitiveness of Estonian psychology programmes in wider international markets.
- We recommend that the credit ratings of courses be reconsidered with a view to moving to a smaller number of courses that include some courses with a larger credit rating, removing those courses that do not seem to have a clear rationale. The present proliferation of small courses has no obvious benefit to students but a number of drawbacks, such as the large number of very

introductory lectures and the inability to develop important themes in an extended way. This restructuring may need to be done in consultation with University of Tallinn in order to ensure that student mobility is not reduced.

- The issue of the sixth year for the training of clinical psychologists was stressed in the self-evaluation report, and was extensively discussed during the site-visit. The committee recommends and also stresses the importance (also from the perspective on international comparability) of this sixth year in the training of clinical psychologists, being a year that is based in the workplace rather than in the university, and would like to urge the management to look for solutions to ensure the sustainability of this sixth year.
- The committee also would like to suggest to the management to explore whether or not a similar sixth year (including the solutions to ensure sustainability) should also apply within the training for school psychologist.

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 above standards applicable to the domain of 'Resources' are all met and in many cases exceeded; where there is a risk that standards could be under threat (such as through reduction of income) plans are in place to address this. It is clear that teaching and learning spaces are able to accommodate the numbers of students and they are well supplied with appropriate IT infrastructure including projection equipment and computer suites. Specialised equipment is available for research purposes and there is a concern that students should be exposed to research activity at Bachelors level. The library is well supplied and there are no apparent concerns about access to books. The Institute of Psychology recognizes that resource challenges are likely in future for a variety of reasons but especially demographic changes. The Institute is doing what it can to ensure sustainability into the future and its plans in this regard should be developed and pursued energetically, including a focus on drawing in larger numbers of international students.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- The building the IP is housed in certainly contributes to a feeling of 'community' among students and teachers.
- The IP has excellent resources and facilities to support the achievement of the objectives of the programme.
- Internet and other web-based facilities are easily available and their use seems to be well supported.
- Students and staff have excellent administrative support.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- The reducing student numbers might in the future be a problem for the income of the programme. The existing plans to increase income in relation to the wider university should be pursued energetically (including increasing research money, international students, contributing to a wider range of programmes within the university). The IP has a number of good ideas in teaching that it says require additional funding and these activities could also contribute to the achievement of those if the resource environment turns out to be less aversive than expected.
- The committee stresses awareness that greater efficiencies may be required if income is nevertheless reduced as compared with present levels despite efforts to mitigate this. Again, developing a greater collaboration for mutual benefit with Tallinn University is one important means to do this, but in particular an increasing focus on internationalisation, attracting international students, would be important.
- New programmes at the Masters level introduced for reasons of sustainability should preferably be taught in English and should be complementary to rather than competitive with the existing specialisms of Tallinn University.
- It is important that sufficient resources are dedicated to sustaining the existing and reportedly very satisfying level of administrative support.

Teaching and learning

Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.

- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Teaching and Learning' are all met and in many cases exceeded. It is clear from the nature of the academic community that, in addition to receiving good support from formal channels, students can lean on a wider network of support and interaction that facilitates their holistic development. Staff have a good level of flexibility in the delivery of their teaching, coupled with an effective feedback system that enables them to develop their learning and teaching approach in a way that ensures students are increasingly enabled to achieve planned learning outcomes. IT resources are good and this, coupled with the use of web-based e-learning demonstrates that the institute seeks to remain up to date in its methods. The integration of practical and theoretical studies is acceptable and an area in which there is improvement and this is coupled with an acceptable and recently increased level of engagement with stakeholders. The process of teaching and learning does support learning mobility to an acceptable degree, although there would be some benefit from a greater focus in this area. Assessment of learning outcomes is adequate.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- Quality of teaching is high, as shown from students' feedback and job perspectives.
- Teaching methods used are modern, and advanced technological resources are used.
- Stakeholders are well-involved with the programme. They also expressed their satisfaction.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- The evenness in student workload across courses with the same credit rating deserves attention.

- Establishing the importance of research methods teaching in the minds of students who are training for practical careers in, for example, clinical or school psychology.
- Simplify the means by which students can acquire credit in other universities internationally and within Estonia and use that credit towards awards at the University of Tartu.
- The committee supports the objective of having more internationally acknowledged occasional lectures and short-course lecturers who have significant international experience.
- Support development of teaching in English to support international students.
- Support the aim of increasing co-ordination of teachers with respect to their courses and in particular the systematic integration of this into the formal structures for programme development.

Teaching staff

Standards

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

Comments

The above standards applicable to the domain of 'Teaching Staff' are all met and in many cases exceeded. Teaching staff are well qualified as evidenced by their CVs and there are no significant concerns about the ability to cover the programmes at a suitable level. Student assessments of staff teaching skills are strong and the feedback system in place ensures that staff are in a continual process of reflection on their teaching. There is good communication between teaching staff and acceptable levels of communication between institutions. There is an intentional focus on including foreign and visiting teachers and

practitioners to the teaching staff. Academic staff development is an area of strength and is taken into account in assessment of academic work to an acceptable degree.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- Teaching staff has a high scientific standard. Most of them are internationally renowned experts in their field, with a high quality scientific output.
- The committee noted a strong sense of 'community' among the teaching staff.
- Teaching staff seems genuinely interested in the feedback of students, in order to improve teaching.
- Teaching staff reports satisfaction with the availability of training to improve their teaching.
- Students explicitly mentioned the high scientific quality of the teaching staff.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- The committee would like to urge the IP to look for ways to strengthen the staff profile of clinical psychology. We strongly support the claim that the first priority of the IP should be to find a high-quality professorial material and appoint her or him to a chair in clinical psychology and to do so at the first opportunity. In addition, the importance of a developmental focus within clinical psychology for this chair should be explored.
- The existing formal and informal systems for gathering and responding to student feedback should be maintained and staff should continue to develop student feedback systems where possible. It is important to maintain the availability of teaching assistants to ensure that students can be taught in smaller seminar groups. The system of allocating assistants should be maintained in such a way as to have the maximum benefit to student learning and a fair impact on the workload of academic staff.
- Additional staff resources would be useful in the area of School Psychology and we encourage considering ways of sharing resources with Tallinn University in this area.

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 standards applicable for the domain of 'Students' are all met and in many cases exceeded. Students that we met were motivated and capable and dropout rates, whilst capable of improvement, do not represent a substantial area of concern. Students are motivated and satisfied as evidenced by their comments, the feedback they provide, and the overall impression of the IP. We have seen that students do have opportunities for international study or study at other Universities within Estonia. Employment rates are very high and alumni are generally and increasingly pleased with the quality of graduates.

Strengths

Given the panel's investigations, the following areas are commended as particular strengths:

- Students are very competitive and well prepared. Students have been awarded at national level for their research papers. Several students have published their research in international journals.
- There is a good integration in the labour market – approximately 80% of graduates are working in field of speciality.
- The committee noted a strong sense of 'community' among the students.
- Students show a lot of initiatives, partly outside of their studies (e.g., Lahendus, PsychoBus). They reported to be supported in this by the IP, which the committee approves.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

Given the panel's investigations, the following recommendations are made for the enhancement of study programmes:

- The committee supports giving greater attention to students as they develop as independent learners particularly through the process of preparing the Bachelor's thesis and – if this is successful – also in preparation of the MS thesis. In combination with this, the committee also stresses the maintenance of effective academic student guidance into the future. This should include advice about the choice of electives (or equivalents to minors) in order that students have the right amount of credit and type of knowledge to be best prepared for the career to which they aspire. Also developing alternative modules of subjects between which students are free to choose.
- The committee urges to make clear to prospective students the serious nature of the scientific enterprise in psychology (and the importance of this for effective work in applied psychological fields) in order to avoid the loss of

good students to other disciplines wrongly perceived to be more 'truly scientific' in nature.

- To investigate the possibility of introducing additional opportunities for students to work with future employers in their projects, with a particular concern to ensure that any work done in this way is not subject to delays arising in the employer's organization.
- Drop-out rates are not at present a significant cause for concern but the continuation of strategic efforts to maintain and improve the situation are important, especially as prospective student numbers decline.