

Assessment Report

EuroAcademy

Institutional accreditation
and quality assessment of study
programme groups

- Life Sciences
- Business and Administration
- Languages and Cultures

2018

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Introduction

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

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

Quality assessment of a study programme group involves the assessment of the degree to which study programmes and the associated studies and development activities conform to legislation, national and international standards and developmental directions with the purpose of providing recommendations to improve the quality of studies.

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

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

The aim of the assessment team was the institutional accreditation and assessment of the Study Programme Groups (SPG) of Life Sciences; Business and Administration; Languages and Cultures in EuroAcademy (EA).

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

Helen Thomas (chair)	Freelance Education Consultant, UK
Olav Aarna	Adviser to the management board of the Estonian Qualifications Authority (Kutsekoda), Estonia
Tanja Dmitrovic	Professor, Vice-Rector, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Anca Greere	Assistant Director QAA, UK; Professor in Linguistics and Translation Studies, Babes-Bolyai University; Romania
Roger Levy	Professor, The London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
Jekaterina Masenko	Student, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
Johanna Mattila	Professor, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden
Anne Perkiö	Head of Business Administration Programme, Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
Tuula Tuhkanen	Professor, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

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

After the preparation phase, the work of the assessment team in Estonia started on Monday, 7 May 2018, with an introduction to the Estonian Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedures by EKKA, the Estonian Quality assurance organization for higher and vocational education. The members of the team agreed the overall questions and areas to discuss with each group at EA. The distribution of tasks between the members of the assessment team was organised and the detailed schedule of the site visits agreed.

During the following days, meetings were held with the representatives of the EA (Tuesday 8, Wednesday 9 and Thursday 10 May).

On Friday, May 11, the team held an all-day meeting, during which both the structure of the final report was agreed and findings of team meetings were compiled in a first draft of the assessment report. This work was executed in a cooperative way and the members of the team intensively discussed their individual views on the relevant topics.

This report has 4 parts: institutional accreditation report; quality assessment of Life Sciences SPG report; quality assessment of Business and Administration SPG report; quality assessment of Languages and Cultures SPG report.

1. Institutional Accreditation

Comments: EuroAcademy (EA) is a small institution of professional higher education (PHE). It was established as a university in 1997. In 2010, it became an institution of professional higher education, focussing on applied higher education programmes. EuroAcademy has five faculties: Business Management, Design, Environmental Protection, International Relations and Translation. At the time of the assessment panel's visit EA was offering PHE programmes in Environmental Specialist, Business Management, Translator, International Relations, Interior Architecture and Fashion Design, and master's programmes in Environmental Protection and in Economy and Business Management. The master's in Economy and Business Management was due to terminate in June 2018 and the International Relations PHE programme in June 2019. All programmes at EA are offered in three languages: Estonian, Russian and English. At the time of the panel's visit there were 526 students registered for programmes at EA.

Since the last institutional accreditation, EA has moved to new premises which houses all the provision in one well-renovated and spacious building.

EA prepared self-evaluation reports (SER) for each of the four components under assessment. The panel found the reports difficult to read and insufficiently clear on many aspects of the provision. The SER for institutional accreditation included references to the outcomes of the previous institutional accreditation report from 2015 and tables to show how the recommendations had been addressed. However, EA suggested that the main criticism of the assessment report was related to the small size of the institution and to the "informal constitution" which, EA maintains, enables flexibility. It was not clear that EA had fully understood the implications of the 2015 institutional accreditation report. The SERs for each of the study programme group assessment areas made some limited reference to the institutional accreditation report and to study programme assessment reports. In the SER for languages and cultures, no explicit reference was made to the findings of the 2015 SPG report. Evidence from meetings, observations and documents during the assessment visit, demonstrated a divergence between the statements in the SERs and the practice found in EA.

EA engaged well with the panel during the visit, responding to questions, additional meetings and providing further documents when requested. The assessment panel appreciated the courteous responses and the hospitality offered.

Summary of the institutional accreditation

mark with 'X'

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organisational management and performance			X	
Teaching and learning		X		
RDC		X		
Service to society		X		

General Findings

EuroAcademy has had some success since the last institutional accreditation in launching programmes in English and Russian, in attracting more international students and in moving to new premises. Overall the assessment panel considered that EuroAcademy has not acted sufficiently on recommendations from the last institutional accreditation report and relevant aspects of SPG reports. A strategic focus which is underpinned by achievable and measurable steps and supported by a realistic financial plan is still lacking. Systematic planning and monitoring of changes in the curriculum, in teaching and learning, student progress and feedback from stakeholders is very limited across the institution. Insufficient progress has been made since the last institutional accreditation report in research and development and in service to society. The panel was concerned that lack of progress in these key areas did not provide confidence for the sustainability of the institution in the medium term. These findings inform the judgment that in the area of Organisational management and performance, EA does not conform to requirements and in the other three areas of assessment EA partially conforms to requirements.

Commendations:

- The provision of the curricula in three languages and in Russian in particular which caters for particular groups of students.
- The success in building up the international student numbers.

- The communication between students and staff and the responsiveness of staff to addressing students' needs.
- The overall positive feedback received from employers and students.
- The premises EuroAcademy occupies which offer appropriate accommodation for staff and students and an environment conducive to learning.

Main Recommendations:

- EuroAcademy must review its strategic plan and its development plans. In doing so it should take into account the position EA occupies as an institution of Professional Higher Education and the successful aspects of its current provision. EA should ensure that the revised plans align fully with the mission and vision, are consistent, based on realisable targets and underpinned by sound and realistic financial plans and resource development.
- EuroAcademy should review its governance and management structure to build in greater externality and to ensure sustainability in the medium and longer term.
- EuroAcademy must define key concepts used in the curriculum such as 'international' and 'interdisciplinary' and ensure that staff fully understand the concepts and how to embed them in the design and delivery of the curriculum.
- EuroAcademy should ensure that curriculum development and changes are systematic, informed by stakeholder feedback and fully understood and implemented by staff.
- EuroAcademy should widen its staff recruitment base and ensure that there are clear role descriptions which detail the competencies, skills and experience required.
- EuroAcademy must ensure that it implements the newly designed academic staff appraisal system and systematically uses the outcomes for the purposes of staff development and, in particular, for the enhancement of pedagogical skills.
- EuroAcademy should develop a strategy to increase the take up of international mobility opportunities by both staff and students.
- EuroAcademy should review its approach to the recruitment of students and develop clear criteria which it uses transparently and which are informed by a systematic analysis of drop outs.
- EuroAcademy is advised to develop a process for a more systematic collection and analysis of stakeholder feedback including students, alumni, employers and professional organisations and use the findings to enhance provision.

1.1. Organisational management and performance

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

General comments:

The overall assessment of organisational management and performance was that it does not conform to requirements. This assessment is based on the following:

- EuroAcademy has not defined its role as an institution of professional higher education clearly; its strategy is seen through a historical lens rather than being based soundly on what EA currently is and providing a clear vision of what it should be.
- The institutional development plan is not strategically driven; nor is it underpinned by robust financial analysis and planning which is aligned to the development plan.
- The key terms of "international" and "interdisciplinary" used in describing the focus of EA are not defined and are used inconsistently by staff.
- The governance and management infrastructure is inward facing and makes no provision for the sustainability of the organisation.
- EA has not acted on recommendations from the 2015 institutional accreditation, in particular, but not only, the need to develop explicit requirements for the competence and skills of the teaching staff.

1.1.1 General Management

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.
- ✓ The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country's priorities and society's expectations.
- ✓ Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.
- ✓ The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans and includes the

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

Evidence:

- *the rate of achievement prescribed in development/action plans (key results)*
- *results of employee satisfaction survey: satisfaction with management and information flow*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments EA is one of five private institutions of PHE in Estonia and offers applied programmes in all faculties in Estonian, Russian and English. During the assessment visit, EA described itself in relation to its past when it had university status. The development plans articulate a desire for EA to regain the status of university. This desire is reflected in the aims of introducing new master's programmes, developing the research activities and profile in order to achieve positive evaluations of research and development activities, hence gaining the right to offer doctoral studies. The presentation of the institution through the historical lens and the aspirational perspectives related to the status of a university results in a lack of clarity about what EA's role is as an institution of professional higher education at the current time within the Estonian higher education context. The assessment panel was concerned that this lack of clarity about its role affected EA's strategy and resource allocation and resulted in insufficient focus on the overall student experience. EA should review its position within the higher education context and ensure that there is alignment between the educational focus, aims and resource allocation.

At the time of the assessment visit, EA was working on its development plan for the period starting in 2020. The current institutional plan and the development plans for individual faculties present a number of aims and targets including doubling the number of students in the translation programmes, increasing international students by 100 each year, and establishing new master's programmes in all faculties. However, the panel was not confident that the development plans were strategically driven or set realistic targets underpinned by a business plan which was financially viable. The SER identifies some objectives for three different time scales: one and three year, five year, and ten year objectives. Some of these objectives are not measurable. For example, it is unclear how EA would be able to demonstrate that it had "created possibilities for and facilitate the development of unanimous community of students and staff" (SER). The development plans at both institutional and faculty level should include intermediate targets which can be measured and which move EA from where the institution now is to where it aims to be in realistic and appropriate phases.

EA has stated aims to be international and to offer programmes that are interdisciplinary. No consistent definition or understanding of what either of these terms means in the context of EA could be gained during the assessment visit. Staff provided some examples to illustrate how they understood the terms; these were inconsistent. No evidence of how internationalisation and interdisciplinarity were embedded into the design and delivery of the curriculum could be found. For example, the study programme areas of international relations and of translation both claim to be inherently interdisciplinary but without any clarity as to what this means. EA should articulate clearly how it understands both the term internationalisation and the term interdisciplinary and ensure that all staff share this understanding so that curricula and their delivery reflect the institution's conceptualisation.

The panel recognised that EA is a small institution. In that context, the panel also noted the broad spectrum of EA's provision including offering programmes in three languages across five faculties, programmes at PHE and master's level and a significant number of elective courses. The impact of this is that the available resources are spread too thinly across the institution as a whole. There is significant variation across the different faculties in the numbers of students recruited and the popularity of the different language options. Whilst the provision of all programmes in three languages singles EA out from other institutions in Estonia, greater focus on the core of EA's niche market with commensurate allocation of resources would enhance the provision and support future success.

EA is managed by a Council/Board, (both terms are used). The Council has three members, who are current or previous senior staff. At the time of the assessment visit this included the Rector and the dean of the design faculty. In any small institution, there will be staff who have more than one role. This does open individuals and the institution to a level of vulnerability and is a challenge for its long-term sustainability. To mitigate against the risks posed, EA would benefit from reviewing its organisational structure for management and governance so as to increase the level of transparency and accountability.

The majority of the senior staff in the institution have been in post for some time and a number are beyond the average retirement age. Whilst this provides continuity with the past, it does not provide security for the future. EA needs to develop succession planning at all levels to ensure sustainability and continuity in the medium and long term.

It is clear that individual staff members have active contact with stakeholders, including staff in other institutions, employers, alumni and researchers, both in Estonia and internationally. However, these are held at a personal level and the impact of stakeholder input is disparate and unfocussed. At the same time, the institution's over-reliance on known contacts has led to an insularity within the higher education context in Estonia and more widely. This is further emphasised by EA's stated aims of recruiting EA graduates as teachers and senior staff members. As a result, EA misses out on valuable, objective inputs into the development of the institution. EA should set up a properly constituted advisory board at institutional level to maximise the input of external stakeholders, by

providing a systematic channel for greater objectivity and a wider perspective on its development.

The size of EA enables frequent exchanges of ideas and information between staff and between staff and students. Staff also have frequent exchanges with external contacts. This appears to work well. EA does need to be aware of the extent of informal communication and the risk that not all staff are always informed of changes and developments. This means that external ideas are not consistently shared to promote effective practice across the institution, particularly in a context where there are significant numbers of part-time staff. EA should complement the informal communications with more formal channels. This could be achieved through the use of electronic updates, for example.

Recommendations

- EA should review its position within the higher education context of Estonia and ensure that there is alignment between the educational focus, aims and resource allocation.
- EA should ensure that its development plan uses, as its starting point, the position and status that EA currently holds. Development plans should be strategically driven and set realistic targets which are underpinned by a business plan which is financially viable.
- EA should articulate clearly how it defines and uses the terms "internationalisation" and "interdisciplinary" and ensure that all staff share this understanding and can embed the approaches in the curriculum.
- EA would benefit from reviewing its organisational structure for management and governance so as to increase the level of transparency and accountability and build in sustainability.
- EA should develop its succession planning to ensure sustainability and continuity in the medium and long term.
- EA should set up a properly constituted advisory board at institutional level to maximise the input of external stakeholders, by providing a systematic channel for greater objectivity and a wider perspective on its development.
- EA should complement the informal communications with more formal channels to ensure all staff members are fully informed of developments.

1.1.2 Personnel Management

Requirements

- ✓ The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development arise from the objectives of the development plan of a higher education institution, and ensure academic sustainability.
- ✓ When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities (teaching, RDC, student feedback, etc.) are taken into account in a balanced way.
- ✓ The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.

- ✓ Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.
- ✓ Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.
- ✓ Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.

Evidence:

- *the rate of competition for academic positions*
- *the number and profile of the staff (academic and administrative/support staff, age distribution, qualifications, including their average age by qualification level)*
- *the proportion of foreign teaching staff and research staff*
- *indicators of international mobility of academic staff as a proportion of their total number*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

EA provided data on the number of staff, in academic, administrative and management roles. The SER stated that there are 103 academic staff. This breaks down into a total of 23.7 FTEs who have a role in teaching demonstrating the high proportion of part-time staff. Overall the staff ratio is 1 FTE staff per 22.2 students. This is much higher than the average in Estonia. At the time of the assessment visit, the senior managerial post of vice rector was vacant and a number of administrative and academic management staff had only very recently taken up their roles. It was thus difficult to assess the impact of the roles on the overall provision.

EA uses both open competition and election to recruit staff. The approach used reflects the seniority of the position with senior staff posts being filled through election. This includes the position of rector. There are person specifications for some roles, though not for all.

EA recruits academic staff on the basis of experience, research output, professional practice and teaching. However, no evidence was seen of the different weighting attributed to the different elements. Nor was there evidence of the strategic recruitment of academic staff to the current needs of the curricula. The 2015 institutional accreditation report included a recommendation that "EA must establish a uniform and transparent system for academic staff recruitment, management, evaluation and development that clearly supports the institutional vision for the future; and must define the requirements for the competence and skills of the teaching staff." There was little evidence to support the institution's claim that it had responded to this recommendation in the previous report. As a result, this recommendation still stands.

The level of remuneration and performance pay is decided by the rector. The panel did not see evidence of transparency and objectivity in the process.

EA is in the process of introducing staff appraisal. At the time of the assessment visit, the new process had only been used for administrative staff. Academic staff reported that they were not aware that the system would be introduced and would apply to them in 2018-2019. There was no evidence at the time of the visit to show how the outcomes of staff appraisal would feed into development plans for staff at the individual, faculty and institutional level, nor whether it would be used to determine remuneration. EA needs to ensure that the process for staff appraisal is implemented consistently and transparently across the faculties. EA should also articulate how the outcomes of appraisal will be used to inform staff development and remuneration and to share good practice to enhance provision across the institution.

One of the stated aims in the current development plan is to increase international staff mobility. The panel saw evidence of some international staff mobility from the faculties; nine staff participated in some form of international mobility in the 2016-2017 academic year, compared to 5 in the previous academic year. It was not clear from the data presented whether this was full-time or part-time staff. The strategy behind the mobility was not always clear; in particular, it was not clear how mobility related to the enhancement of teaching and learning currently. For example, a staff member in the translation faculty had undertaken a visit to learn about the use of electronic software tools when EA did not yet have the hardware and software to enable colleagues to benefit in the short term from the learning.

EA has a code of ethics which includes sections titled "education and research", "the lecturer", and "the lecturer, students and society". The code does not include issues of copyright. An example of case copying in the Business Faculty was provided where there was no attribution as to where the case study had come from and that it was a translation of a pre-existing study. EA must ensure that all staff follow copyright law in the use of course materials. Reference to this should be included in the Code of Ethics.

EA conducts employee satisfaction surveys once a year through SIS. A separate survey for working conditions was also reported in the SER. Responses were overall favourable with two thirds of the responses being over 75%. It was difficult to assess the implications of these figures as the sample size and the full surveys were not seen by the assessment panel.

Recommendations

- EA should develop a strategic approach to staff mobility and ensure that the learning staff acquire is shared and used to benefit the learning of current students.
- EA must establish a uniform and transparent system for academic staff recruitment, management, evaluation and development that clearly supports the institutional vision for the future; and it must define the requirements for the competence and skills of the teaching staff.
- EA needs to ensure that the process for staff appraisal is implemented consistently and transparently across the faculties. EA should also articulate how the outcomes of appraisal will be used to inform staff

- development and remuneration and to share good practice to enhance provision across the institution.
- EA must ensure that all staff follow copyright law in the use of course materials. Reference to this should be included in the Code of Ethics.

1.1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure

Requirements

- ✓ The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution as well as the administration and development of infrastructure are economically feasible, and are based on the objectives of the development plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).
- ✓ A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of its core processes.
- ✓ The working conditions of the staff, and the learning and RDC conditions of students (library, studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.) meet the needs arising from the specifics of an institution of higher education and the expectations of members.

Evidence:

- *the distribution of the revenue and expenditure*
- *investment dynamics*
- *results of employee satisfaction survey: satisfaction with working conditions*
- *results of student satisfaction survey: satisfaction with learning and RDC conditions*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

EA has a financial plan and a risk plan associated with it that are included in the development plan. The panel was not convinced that the plan was based on realistic targets linked to the development plan.

The panel noted that overall expenditure has exceeded income in all but the 2017-2018 financial year. At a faculty level expenditure exceeds income in the translation area. The institution has good reserves which it has drawn on to cover the shortfall between expenditure and income. The assessment panel learned that the overwhelming majority of income is derived from student fees. Student numbers have been falling and continue to fall, despite a significant increase in international student numbers. There was no clarity as to how EA could fund the developments outlined in the DP in the context of a decline in student numbers. EA must review its financial plan together with the DP to ensure that they are aligned and realistic.

EA invested in a new student information system (SIS) in 2016. This is proving to be an effective tool for management and administrative processes. EA should continue to work with the information systems and fully embed the use of SIS consistently across the administrative functions of the institution.

In 2016 EA moved into new, rented premises. The new premises are light and airy and provide appropriate accommodation for staff and students which is conducive to learning. The building contains specialist facilities for design and environmental programmes. The software available reflects the range of programmes offered. Students, staff and employers commented very favourably on the premises.

Commendations

- The introduction of the new student information system.
- The new building which provides appropriate space and facilities for staff and students and offers a conducive learning environment.

Recommendations

- EA must review its financial plan together with the DP to ensure that they are aligned and realistic.

1.2. Teaching and learning

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

General comments:

In the area of Teaching and Learning, EA partially conforms to requirements. The assessment panel based this outcome on the following.

- There is a lack of clarity in EA's educational objectives. Changes are not driven by market demand and are insufficiently underpinned by plans for staff development, recruitment and learning resources.
- There is insufficient planning of student numbers, and entry requirements are neither fully transparent nor consistently implemented.
- There is no systematic monitoring of the impact of curriculum changes which are uncoordinated and frequently ad hoc.
- Student work, particularly the final thesis, is variable and does not always meet the expected standards.
- Assessment processes are not adequately secure.

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

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.
- ✓ A higher education institution educates students so they are nationally and internationally competitive.
- ✓ The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.
- ✓ The admission rules are consistent with the mission and purposes of an institution of higher education and support the formation of a motivated student body.
- ✓ Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.

Evidence:

- *positive graduation rates*
- *employer satisfaction with preparation of graduates*
- *rates of alumni employment*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes, and give, among other things, evidence of the international competitiveness of graduates*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

Evidence from documents seen and discussions held during the assessment visit demonstrated that EA's educational objectives undergo frequent changes. These changes tend to reflect external quality assurance input and student uptake of

the programmes. It is not always clear why changes are made and how they align either with the broader educational objectives of the institution as outlined in its development plans, or with identified financial and/or market opportunities. Changes are thus, in the majority of cases, ad hoc. There is little evidence to demonstrate that the planning necessary to ensure the required staff development and learning and teaching infrastructure was undertaken.

The panel found that coherent alignment between the study programmes offered and the educational objectives articulated in the development plans and SERs was lacking. There is insufficient systematic collaboration with the world of work and labour markets to ensure that the design and delivery of the curricula respond appropriately to national and international societal needs. EA has a niche position as one of five private institutions of PHE in Estonia and has managed to access the international market with a degree of success. EA would benefit from strengthening this niche through a more tightly focused professionally-oriented approach.

Evidence from classroom observations, discussion and documentation demonstrated that teaching methods are, in some cases outdated, and overall would benefit from improvement. For example, in the Translator programme even though Computer Assisted Translation tools had been taught in a specific course, they were not being made use of in the Translation classes. Teaching methodologies did not always reflect the professional orientation of the programmes, and did not draw on business developments within the different sectors to enable students to gain a thorough understanding of industry requirements. EA should provide staff with relevant training as part of their continuous professional development to ensure that teaching methods are effective and fully up-to-date.

The employment rates for graduates are good. Competences, beyond those related specifically to their major area of study, contribute to their employability. These include foreign language competences (Russian and English) which are an asset for graduates. Employers spoke positively about the language profile of EA graduates. There is, however, no systematic graduate tracking mechanism to support data gathering on the suitability of education for the labour market, including the need for additional competences/skills.

The assessment panel found very limited evidence of a strategic approach to the distribution and planning of student numbers. There was a lack of clarity as to how the needs of society, both within Estonia and internationally, are reflected in the formation of the student body and how this aligned with EA's focus on specific African countries and Russia. There was little evidence to demonstrate that appropriate resource planning is linked to student places, nor was there evidence to demonstrate that staff are sufficiently competent to deliver all aspects of programme delivery, including expert professional support in the language of delivery. Many staff members are part-time and some have very minimal engagement with the overall management structures in EA.

EA has articulated admission criteria. These do not result in the rigorous selection of candidates. Admission requirements are clearly laid out in EA policy; examples

of practice described were inconsistent and rarely led to a candidate being rejected. EA states minimal language requirements for admission (CEFR B2 level) and it accepts IELTS, Cambridge and TOEFL certificates as proof of language level. However, the panel also heard that internal testing is an option when students do not have such certification. It was unclear how or whether the EA test compares with recognised international tests. EA includes a motivational interview as part of its selection process which is conducted by teaching staff and, frequently, by the rector. It is not clear what the role of the motivational interview is in filtering candidates or what grading grid might be applied for these to ensure consistency.

Students are admitted twice a year, at the start of semester A or the start of semester B. EA adjusts the scheduling of courses to enable students to have appropriate progression through the curriculum. Part-time students agree their schedule with a faculty tutor. Students appreciate EA's flexible approach.

The SER provided the numbers of graduates over the last three years. The numbers of PHE graduates over the period has been steady at just over 110. The numbers of graduates from the master's programmes increased significantly in 2017 to 67, which is over twice the number for both of the previous two years. The data does not differentiate between full- and part-time students, something which it would be difficult to provide given the flexibility for students to move between full and part time study. It was thus not possible for the panel to evaluate the graduation rate.

EA has limited experience of admitting students with disabilities. The SER explained that applicants can declare a disability in the application or it might be a subject for discussion at interview. The premises which EA occupies is a building of historic significance and EA is not allowed to make adjustments such as installing an elevator or providing disability equipment for the entrance stairs. As a result, EA cannot accommodate students with muscular-skeletal disabilities.

Commendations

- The learning environment has improved with the move to the new building.
- Foreign language competences developed through programme delivery in Russian and English are an asset for graduates.

Recommendations

- EA should set clear educational objectives with robust implementation plans. These should involve staff development, staff recruitment and learning resources. Changes should be driven by market demands, be supported by external input (such as partner institutions, employers, and international collaborators) and be systematically monitored to determine their effectiveness.
- Promote more modern teaching methodologies which consider current academic trends in teaching and learning, and embed professionally-oriented practices within teaching.
- EA should ensure that admission criteria are relevant for the programme and are applied rigorously to allow for the appropriate filtering of applicants. This is important for the subsequent classroom experience of all students.

- EA is advised to develop a graduate tracking system which allows relevant information to be gathered at regular intervals. The resulting data should be used for curriculum development plans and contribute, more broadly, to the review of educational objectives set at institutional level.

1.2.2 Study programme development

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account the strategies of the country and expectations of the society.
- ✓ Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different stakeholders are involved in the development of study programmes.
- ✓ Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability to the requirements of the labor market of graduates are surveyed and analysed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.

Evidence:

- *student satisfaction with the quality of studies*
- *alumni satisfaction with the quality of studies*
- *employer satisfaction with preparation of graduates*
- *results of quality assessments of study programme groups*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes, e.g., the number of joint study programmes, the number of study programmes in English, etc.*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

The provision of programmes in three languages, and particularly the provision of programmes in Russian, gives EA a market niche. EA has had some success in increasing the numbers of international students in the last two years and meeting its target. The provision of all programmes in three languages has associated resource demands including for the infrastructure, the pedagogical skills appropriate for multicultural and multilingual classrooms and the availability and accessibility of support mechanisms in the languages of delivery. At the time of the assessment visit the resource demands were not fully met. A multicultural, multilingual teaching environment requires special attention to be given to teaching methodologies appropriate for the subjects being taught and the academic background of the students. EA's awareness of such requirements is limited and plans for development do not focus on the specific and additional needs of their international students. Both academic and administrative staff need training to enable them to understand and provide for the needs of international students.

The assessment panel undertook a detailed analysis of the curricula in three study programme groups. The panel found that in Environmental Protection and

Translation, the curricula do not reflect the title and intention of the programmes. This is potentially misleading to prospective students and to other stakeholders, including employers.

Changes are made to the courses at an individual level. Whilst some changes reflect student feedback and feedback from external bodies, overall there is a lack of strategic thinking driving the changes, and insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that changes are supported by adequate resources. There is very limited external input to trigger, support or contribute to the monitoring of the changes made. Oversight of curriculum changes should be by the faculty committees which include external stakeholders and students. The panel learned that some of these committees have recently been reconstituted and at the time of the assessment visit were not yet functioning effectively.

Students are broadly satisfied with the quality of their studies. However, scrutiny of final theses at both PHE and master's level revealed that in some cases, and particularly in the Environmental Protection and Translation areas, these fell below the standards expected. The strong practical focus of the theses is appropriate for PHE diplomas. However, the challenge of the topics under investigation together with the looseness of the grading criteria mean that on graduation students do not consistently demonstrate a sufficiently high level of knowledge, understanding and skills in their chosen domain. EA needs to ensure that topics chosen for final theses, whether at PHE or master's level, are relevant for level of the award, reflect the market and that students benefit from supervision by staff who have adequate subject-level, professional and research profiles to support the work being undertaken.

Recommendations

- EA should ensure that changes to programmes are strategically driven and align with market needs. EA is advised to set up systematic fora to derive external views which can feed into the development process.
- EA should ensure that there is alignment between the title of the programme, the programme objectives, the intended learning outcomes of the programme and the component courses, so that these are clear to prospective students and other stakeholders.
- EA should ensure that there is sufficient awareness and recognition of the specific needs (pedagogical and support-related) for a multilingual and multicultural learning environment.
- EA should ensure that the topics and approach to the graduation theses are set at an appropriate level of difficulty to allow students to demonstrate relevant knowledge, understanding and skills. EA also needs to ensure that topics chosen are tested for relevance by staff with appropriate research competences to support the students with their theses.

1.2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment

Requirements

- ✓ Student academic progress is monitored and supported.
- ✓ Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.
- ✓ A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.

Evidence:

- *the average duration of study by its levels*
- *the proportion of dropouts*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

Student progress is monitored and students report they are well supported with their learning. Drop-out rates are high, ranging between 24% in 2014-2015 to 19.9% in 2016-2017 and are insufficiently monitored. There is no systematic data providing the reasons as to why students choose not to complete a programme. It is, therefore, difficult for EA to implement a strategic approach to identifying potential future drop-outs and/or in dealing with students who have dropped out and encouraging them to complete their studies. Where students do return to complete their studies, they are given an individual study plan, which, with support from their tutors, enables them to complete at their own pace.

EA has articulated learning outcomes for the courses and has articulated assessment criteria for each course. However, the learning outcomes are not always expressed as learning outcomes in terms which enable staff to see how they can be achieved; nor are the assessment criteria always aligned to the learning outcomes. It is thus difficult to assess how, or if, learning outcomes are achieved and how course learning outcomes contribute to the overall aims of a programme.

EA uses a range of assessment types reflecting the particular subject area. Project-based learning is used but not in all programmes. Some students reported that they only do projects as part of internships. Given the applied focus of PHE, the inclusion of more project work would be appropriate.

The assessment panel reviewed marked student work across a range of programmes at both PHE and master's levels. The scripts presented did not exhibit detailed feedback. It was thus difficult to ascertain the extent to which feedback reflected the specific learning outcomes being tested and thus the basis for how marks were awarded. Students reported that they found feedback, which included oral feedback from teachers, on their assessments helpful and that this enabled them to improve.

The assessment panel were informed that there is no moderation of assessment at any level within EA. The same member of staff may develop the course, write and mark the assignments, and provide feedback to the students. There is no independent objectivity in the assessment process. EA should consider the principle of "four eyes" and seek ways of including some form of moderation into the assessment process.

There are no clear security measures for retaining assessed work. Sometimes papers are stored on the Study Information System/Moodle platform, at other times it is kept by the teacher or given back to the students. EA is encouraged to develop explicit guidance on security measures for assessment and ensure these are consistently implemented.

There is a process for students to complain about their grade. In the case of failure, students have three opportunities to resit the assignment. There is no penalty, such as mark capping, imposed for resits. Students also have the opportunity to resit an assignment they have passed to improve the grade. If the grade on a subsequent exam is lower, then that grade stands. EA is encouraged to reflect on whether this opportunity reflects standard practice in Estonia or internationally.

EA has a policy for the assessment of prior learning (APL) and for work-based learning which is appropriate for an institution which has many mature students who come with work experience. The policy did not indicate a maximum number of credits that students could have accepted against APL and this would be a helpful enhancement to the policy. Some use is made of APL, particularly in the Business area and is also used for transferring credits from study undertaken abroad.

Recommendations

- Develop a more comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing drop-out trends.
- Revise learning outcomes and assessment criteria to ensure the learning outcomes are clear and achievable and that assessment criteria relate clearly to the learning outcomes.
- Consider developing a moderation system for assessment using the principle of "four eyes."
- Provide more detailed feedback on assessment papers which corresponds to the learning outcomes and to assessment criteria.
- Promote the assessment of prior learning more actively.

1.2.4 Support processes for learning

Requirements

- ✓ The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.
- ✓ A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.

- ✓ A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
- ✓ Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.
- ✓ Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organisation of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.

Evidence:

- *the proportion of foreign students and foreign guest students*
- *the number/ proportion of students who have studied at foreign institutions of higher education compared to the total number of current students and graduates*
- *the proportion of dropouts*
- *results of feedbacks*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

From discussions with students and alumni it was evident that staff are very responsive to students whether they bring academic or pastoral problems and queries. Students feel that staff are always available and very supportive. EA provides induction sessions for students on arrival and academic counselling throughout the programme. There is a recently appointed psychologist who offers support to international students at induction and throughout their studies. Psychological counselling is not available to students in the Estonian language.

EA has identified the need to increase international student mobility. There has been very limited success in increasing take-up. Outgoing student mobility over the last three years has been 8,7,5. The more mature profile of many local students, significant numbers of whom are in employment and have family responsibilities, presents a challenge to undertaking international study periods. Students who had undertaken a period of study abroad were very positive about the experience. They also reported that the Erasmus coordinator was very helpful and supportive in finding appropriate placements. However, EA could do more to advise students on how to align the mobility studies with the home curriculum so that more credits can be recognised on return. Students reported that the mechanism for recognising work undertaken during a mobility placement was through APL.

All PHE students undertake an internship as part of the award requirements. The panel noted that in the area of business EA has managed to identify placements for all students which is often a challenge, especially for international students. There are clear guidelines for internships with legally binding agreements between the placement provider and EA, and between EA and the placement provider and the institution. Internships are supervised and both providers and students receive appropriate support. Students and internship providers reported their satisfaction with the arrangements.

The SERs make frequent reference to e-learning. Evidence from the assessment visit indicated that e-learning was more of a desirable, than a current reality. Programme leaders reported that there was an intention to adopt more online approaches to accommodate more students. The panel heard that there is only very limited IT support, two hours a week, available to support staff and/or students with IT issues. It was unclear whether any targets had been set and what the main objectives were for e learning within EA. EA is recommended to clarify its strategy for e-learning and ensure that resources are in place to support the implementation of the strategy. The strategy should be fully communicated to all staff.

EA administers student surveys electronically on a regular basis. However, the analysis and implementation of improvements is not systematic and students are not always aware if their feedback has been considered and/or actioned. There is a student representative system and students sit on various committees, including the faculty committees. The Student Council has recently been re-elected. Students are confident that they can play a representative role across the whole of the student population, even though they did recognise that out of 10 seats only 4 students were active.

Commendations

- The academic and pastoral support offered to students including the availability of staff and their responsiveness to students' needs.
- Organisation of the timetable enables effective use of student time
- Relevant Internships are provided to all PHE students.

Recommendations

- Offer more detailed advice to students in respect of incoming and outgoing mobility and devise a system for better recognising learning in the partner institution, as a formal component of the EA programme.
- Clarify the strategy for e-learning, strengthen resources for it and ensure all staff and students are aware of the developments proposed and the rationale for such developments.
- Make better use of student feedback, and communicate to students any developments derived from such feedback.
- Monitor the newly elected Student Council to ensure it works effectively and has the potential to capture student views across all student groups including international, full-time, part-time and mature students.

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

mark with 'X'

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

General comments:

Since the last institutional assessment in 2015, EuroAcademy's research record has deteriorated in all three assessment areas and EA can no longer be considered fully compliant with the expectations of the RDC standard. This is based on the following findings.

- Research output in terms of number of publications per faculty member and in number of running research projects has declined substantially.
- There is no systematic approach to the ongoing measurement, evaluation or stimulation for RDC activities.
- Students' involvement in research is sporadic; the quality of final thesis varies from very poor to reasonably good, and there is no systematic approach to assure the consistency and standard of supervision across programme delivery in all three languages.

1.3.1 RDC effectiveness

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.
- ✓ A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.

Evidence:

- numerical data: (1) total research publications; (2) publications of categories 1.1., 1.2, 2.1, 3.1; monographs on national sciences; (3) public presentations of

creative works; recognitions from international competitions; reviews in professional publications, etc.; (4) patent applications, patents; (5) text books, teaching tools for various media; (6) system development solutions, product development solutions, environmental solutions; (7) contracts with enterprises; (8) spin-off firms, etc.

- *the number of research publications/creative works per member of the teaching staff and per member of research staff (calculated in full-time positions, by field)*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

RDC activity is included in the main strategic documents of the EA. The institution's mission, vision, and positioning in the Estonian market are not well defined and, as a consequence, the RDC strategy lacks a strong foundation. The aims for RDC are based on the national research priorities, and are practically identical to the country level goals, which makes them very difficult to operationalise at the institutional level. Although some elements of a research strategy and key performance indicators (KPI) are outlined in the SER, the panel found no solid evidence to demonstrate that systematic efforts have been made to continuously measure, evaluate, and stimulate various RDC activities. The responsibility for the development of RDC rests at the individual faculty level, and specific aims for RDC are presented in the faculty development plans. However, there is no concrete plan on how to set and implement the research agenda. Research activities are largely performed ad hoc, on the initiative of individual researchers.

EA emphasised both in the SER and in meetings with management that an interdisciplinary approach is favoured and promoted. EA failed to demonstrate how a high level of coordination between faculties, required to fully integrate interdisciplinary aspects into the curricula and research agenda, is achieved within a decentralised RDC structure.

The main KPIs remain unchanged since the last assessment, and include the numbers of publications, the size of the budget for RDC activities, conference participation and the number of research projects. There has been a notable decline in the number of publications over the 2014-2017 period: from 1.34 to 0.44 per academic staff member (in FTE from 1.7 to 0.5). On the positive side, the number of quality journal publications (ETIS 1.1) remains relatively stable. However, this is not nearly sufficient for EA to achieve the goal articulated in the development plan for 2019 to restore EA to the academic status of a university and open a doctoral programme.

The SER states that six externally funded research projects have been conducted during 2010-2017, including two with enterprises. However, four of these projects were completed by 2013, one by 2014. Only one project has been run since 2014. At the time of the assessment visit, three project proposals had been submitted for consideration by research funding agencies. All three proposals are oriented to cooperation with universities in the Baltic Sea region. There are marked differences across disciplines: in translation, there is practically no research nor is there an ambition to develop it. In business economics and environmental studies the situation is somewhat better, but the projects, both

scientific and applied, should be better aligned with the strategic orientation of EuroAcademy.

One of the recommendations of the 2015 institutional assessment was to strengthen the applied orientation of EA's RDC and use it for profiling research activities. Since that report, the situation has deteriorated. Increasing the practical content of theses, as noted in the SER, is not an adequate response.

EA continues to publish its in-house journal the Baltic Horizons (ETIS classification 1.3). Whilst publication of an in-house journal is at odds with current national and international practice, it does provide an outlet for publishing student work which is mainly based on master's theses. However, if EA is successful in raising the status of the journal in the ETIS classification, as it aspires to do, it will certainly limit the opportunities for students to publish in the journal in the future.

The needs of society and its stakeholders are only partly included in the planning of RDC activities. The meetings with employers indicated that their involvement in EA activities is largely limited to supplying student internship placements, not in setting the research agenda. External stakeholders are only indirectly involved in identifying market needs and cooperation opportunities through personal one-on-one contacts with EA academic staff. There is no systematic approach to the scanning of and addressing societal and market needs. As a result, if a gap is found, it is not contextualised within EA's resources and capabilities.

Commendations

- Despite an overall decline in the number of publications, the number of journal publications in indexed journals remains relatively stable.
- Students are offered publication opportunities in Baltic Horizons.

Recommendations

- Develop the research strategy and related action plans so that they include specific goals, implementation measures and the measurement of outcomes that will clearly demonstrate how RDC at EA contributes to the development of a knowledge-based society in Estonia and to increasing its competitive edge.
- EA should develop a clear strategy for strengthening applied research and development which would support curriculum development and contribute to the development of Estonian society and a knowledge-based economy.
- The panel recommends that rather than pursuing the ambition to become a university and open doctoral programme, EA should aspire to be the best PHE in Estonia or even in the Baltic region in its niche area.
- EA should specify how the interdisciplinary approach with a focus on sustainable development is defined and realised in RDC activities.
- EA is advised to establish an RDC council as a strategic management body supporting interdisciplinary (applied) RDC in the institution.
- EA is recommended to map seven RDC areas across all five faculties and integrate them into the individual faculty research plans.
- EA is advised to reconsider the role and profile of the journal Baltic Horizons.

- EA should focus more on applied research projects to further strengthen the link between theory and practice, and better prepare students for entering the labour market.
- Students and thus graduates of both PHE and master's programmes need to be better connected to real life problems in order to improve their employability.

1.3.2 RDC resources and support processes

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.
- ✓ A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.
- ✓ A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.
- ✓ RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.

Evidence:

- *investments into the RDC infrastructure*
- *the proportion of RDC finances in the total budget, separately including finances received from international contracts, applied R&D contracts, grants for creative activity; trends, comparison with partners (partial overlap with management)*
- *RDC finances per member of research staff (calculated in full-time positions)*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

EA has some elements of an RDC infrastructure and support system in place. In the absence of a clear RDC strategy, the support system lacks coherence and is neither fully efficient nor effective. A vice-rector was appointed in 2015 to oversee the RDC area. At the time of the assessment visit the position was vacant.

The budget for RDC activities has been in decline in both nominal and relative terms over the past years. The share of RDC cost in total budget has dropped from about 10%, as indicated in the previous assessment report, to 7.8% in 2015 and further to 5.3% in 2017. The majority of the RDC budget, 85% in 2017, is used for salaries, the remaining 15% is used for financing conference participation, about 12% in 2017, and for publications. The deans and the rector are responsible for the allocation of conference and publication funds. Decisions are made on a case by case basis, and there is no system in place to identify researchers with the highest research potential. ETIS lists 54 academics affiliated to EA, and 15 internal RDC grants offered by the EA in the period 2010-2018. These went to four individuals between 2015 and 2018.

Academic staff are encouraged to undertake PhD studies. EA does not give financial support for this but does offer some flexibility in teaching schedules to free-up time for doctoral studies. There is a staff member responsible for mobility grants who gives support with applications for international exchange. The

number of academic staff that take up mobility opportunities is still small, but is increasing slowly. Good support is provided by an administrator, who is also responsible for the library. The participation of academic staff in mobility programmes such as Erasmus and DoRa remains modest.

The journal Baltic Horizons is a publication outlet for both academic staff and students. The EA's goal is to upgrade the journal's classification to ETIS 1.2 by including international members on the editorial board and by attracting more foreign authors. The assessment report of 2015 indicated that such efforts were welcome and warranted. However, the expectation that an academic institution should publish academic journals is outdated. In the current academic publishing market, dominated by a handful of global publishers, inclusion of any local journal in indexing databases requires much effort and considerable resources, in the context of an uncertain outcome. Scarce financial resources would be better utilised in other research promoting activities, such as establishing dedicated research funds. The recent recruitment of an experienced researcher with a good research record and the capability to compete for national and international research funds is a step in the right direction.

For a small institution like EA, participation in EU and other international funding is of paramount importance for keeping up with advances in research equipment. Research equipment at EA is, in part, outdated. Laboratory equipment for environmental studies does not meet modern research standards, with an exception of a computer laboratory and software. Some translation software exists, but is not used for research purposes.

As competition for international research funds is fierce, focusing on cooperation with companies and organisations may be a more fruitful avenue for EA. Research and/or consultancy agreements with external stakeholders would alleviate financial strain, and create further research opportunities. This would also enhance EA's capability to compete for funds and establish stronger international partnerships. The financial projection in the current development plan does not anticipate a significant increase in external RDC funding.

EA has a number of national and international partners but no proper research networks. Links with other research institutions are forged largely on an individual, personal basis.

Commendations

- There is a good computer laboratory and appropriate software for environmental studies.
- EA subscribes to some EBSCO resources.

Recommendations

- EA is encouraged to establish a research fund which is accessible to all academic staff on a competitive basis. EA should also develop a transparent system for allocating funds.
- EA should target the use of internal RDC grants for the development of the priority RDC areas.
- EA should explore establishing partnerships with public universities to gain full access to journal databases.

- EA should focus on developing agreements with companies and other organisations in the area of research and consultancy. Student research projects can be used as a first step in building relationship with companies.

1.3.3 Student research supervision

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution includes students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.
- ✓ Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates.
- ✓ Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.

Evidence:

- *the proportion of supervisors (including co-supervisors) from outside of the higher education institution, including from foreign countries*
- *results of student satisfaction survey: satisfaction with supervision*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

There are only limited opportunities for students to be involved in research, because EA has almost no externally funded research projects. Student involvement in research activities is mainly through the final thesis. The applied orientation of EA's RDC is measured by the number of final theses that focus on applied research problems. This number has increased in recent years.

The number of theses per supervisor is quite low and the load is thus quite manageable. The SER notes that the share of theses supervised by external mentors is between 40 and 50 per cent. This is rather high. The supervision of a thesis attracts a fee which, evidence suggests, provides sufficient incentive for adjunct faculty to assume this responsibility. From the scrutiny of a sample of theses, the panel noted variation in the standards achieved. This variation may in part be due to the significant number of external supervisors. The variation may also be due to the availability of supervisors able to offer supervision in their particular area of expertise across all three languages of tuition.

Student satisfaction with supervision is regularly monitored. The data provided showed that the percentage of students who are not satisfied with supervision has increased from 2% in 2014 to 10% in 2017. The panel gained no insight into how this problem was being addressed.

Guidance is given to students on how to recognise and avoid plagiarism. This guidance is included in the Code of Ethics. A course on academic malpractice is

also run. EA uses plagiarism detection software for the Russian language, while the responsibility for ascertaining originality of student work in other languages (Estonian and English) rests with individual members of academic staff. With the expansion of programmes delivered in English this is not a satisfactory situation.

Commendations

- Some programmes provide a course in research methodology preparing students for graduation work.
- The proportion of theses with a practical application is increasing.

Recommendations

- Develop student research projects in cooperation with external stakeholders and integrate project work into course syllabi.
- EA should develop general requirements that go beyond mere formatting for graduation projects at both PHE and master's levels.
- EA should improve the quality of thesis supervision and put a system in place to monitor and ensure its consistency.
- EA should adopt the use of plagiarism detection software for student work in both the Estonian and the English language.

1.4. Service to the society

mark with 'X'

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

General comments

EA partially conforms to requirements in the field of service to society. Recommendations made during the Institutional Accreditation in 2015 have not

been fully implemented. Where they have been implemented this has not been systematic. EA does not include a strategy for service to society as part of its overall development plan which addresses all the relevant aspects of service to society. In particular:

- EA still does not have a systematic approach for popularising its core activities. This impacts on the visibility of EA in Estonia.
- EA's in-service training objectives and target groups are still unclear. As a result, in-service training and other educational activities offered to the general public have not become an essential part of EA's mission nor are they capitalised on as a source of revenue.
- The general public is insufficiently informed about other public-oriented activities taking place at EA, and these activities are mostly *ad hoc*.

1.4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development

Requirements

- ✓ A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities.
- ✓ Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in other social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.

Evidence:

- *the number of people/enterprises (including students, separately) involved in activities of popularizing RDC, the number of events by type, trends*
- *employee participation in non-university bodies (the number and %)*
- *articles by employees in newspapers (the number of articles per employee), commentaries, interviews, etc.*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

EA is active in popularising its activities among students of upper secondary schools and in the international media. As outlined in the SER, the focus of this popularisation is the marketing of EA's study programmes. EA appears to have interpreted the recommendation from the 2015 Institutional Accreditation that it should develop a marketing plan with a narrow, sales focus; a marketing plan, however, should be related to the overall vision and focus of the institution. The vision presented is still vague and does not support the development of a focussed marketing plan or a rationale and strategy for the popularisation of its activities. The assessment panel noted that EA does not consider research and development (RDC) as a core activity worth popularising. EA should develop a marketing plan which is aligned with the overall institutional development plan and which incorporates RDC activity.

Staff of EA participate in a range of activities of professional associations and as experts in some supervisory boards and decision-making bodies. Participation

tends to be from the rector and other senior staff. For example, in the area of the Environment, an EA staff member is the chairman of the Environmental Committee and the rector sits on the committee; the rector is the Chairman of the Research Council of Tallinn Botanical Gardens. The dean of the faculty of design is a member of the organising committee of the conference on Current Trends and Technologies in Development of Education in Design within the Frameworks of the Bologna process.

Commendations

- EA staff are actively engaged in professional associations and in various decision-making bodies in society.

Recommendations

- EA should develop an overarching and shared vision for popularising EA activities in society. This could be part of the communication strategy.
- EA should engage alumni and students in popularisation activities

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

Requirements

- A higher education institution has defined the objectives regarding in-service training and measures their implementation.
- In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups as well as with the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.
- Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.

Evidence:

- *the number of participants (including per full-time member of the academic staff) in continuing education (and in other forms of paid open learning) per hour, or the number of ECP per participant*
- *the proportion of money acquired from continuing education compared to the total scope of finances for educational activities*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

EA provides the opportunity for external applicants to register on courses which form part of the regular curriculum, provided there are spaces on the course. In addition, EA has designed some courses specifically for external target groups. For example, staff from the faculties of Business Management, International Relations and Translation have delivered tailor-made courses. EA does collect participant feedback from these courses. However, there is no evidence to show how the results of this feedback are used to plan further activities. There is no

systematic needs analysis conducted in conjunction with employers and representatives of interested groups. Nor is there evidence of EA seeking new target groups for in-service training. The result is that in-service training and educational activities for the general public are mostly *ad hoc* in nature.

Recommendations

- Develop and implement a coherent strategy for offering in-service training and other educational activities to the general public as part of EA's strategy (development plan).
- Conduct a systematic needs analysis for in-service training in cooperation with employers and other interested groups; identify the potential target groups and tailor in-service training and other courses to the outcomes of the needs analysis.

1.4.3 Other public-oriented activities

Requirements

- Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.
- A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or by organising concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.

Evidence:

- *the number of public-oriented events by type, the number of participants (if measurable)*
- *other indicators arising from institutional purposes*
- *interviews*
- *documents*

Comments

Some academic staff participate in public discussions and provide advice and assistance in their area of expertise. The Faculty of Design regularly organises exhibitions in EA's premises. Students from the Translation Faculty provide free translation services during their internships. EA supports the museum of the Kristiine District of Tallinn located in the EuroAcademy building and hosts meetings and other events for several non-profit organisations (NPOs) on a regular basis.

In general, these activities are mostly *ad hoc*, and their impact is not evaluated on a regular basis.

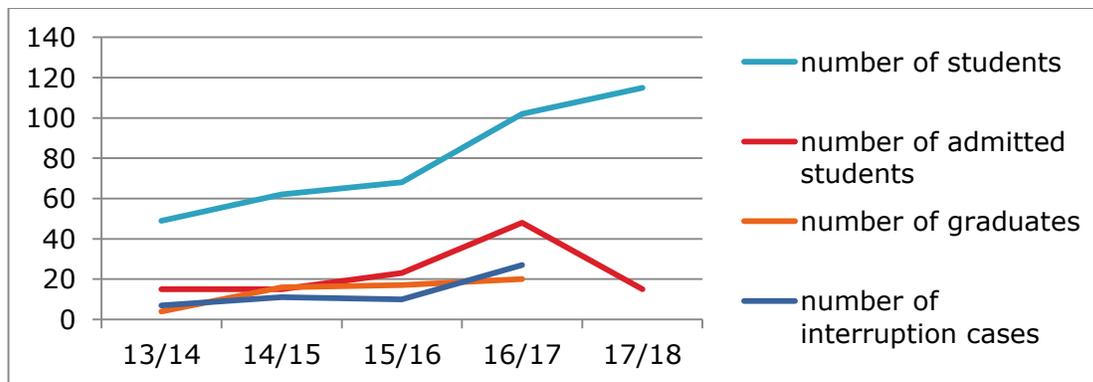
Recommendations

- Involve staff members, students and alumni in the activities of the NPOs affiliated to EuroAcademy.

2. Life Sciences SPG assessment

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

Under the title, Environment Protection EuroAcademy offers six programmes delivered in three languages: two in Estonian, two in Russian and two in English. These follow two curricula: one for professional higher education, the other at master's level. Leadership of the study programme area is by one strong personality, the rector. The study programmes include classroom teaching, laboratory studies and field courses, and thus improvement of both theoretical and practical skills is targeted. EA describes the programmes as interdisciplinary. However, no consistent definition or understanding of what this means and how it informs the programmes could be established. Similarly, the term international is left undefined. Lack of clarity and consistency is characteristic of a number of areas within the programme that gave rise to concern during the assessment visit.



2.1.1. Environmental Specialist (Prof HE); Environmental Protection (MSc)

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

Both the PHE and master's programmes include classroom teaching, laboratory studies and field courses and provide learning opportunities for the development of both theoretical and practical skills. These are sufficient for the programmes. The professional HE programmes include an obligatory internship.

From discussions with staff and documentation the panel was not confident that the programme was sufficiently coherent or that individual teachers were aware of the content of the component courses on the programme beyond those they were involved in. The panel found evidence that some statistics is included in different courses; however the coverage of statistics was not sufficiently is was not sufficiently coherent from an academic perspective and some critical approaches to statistics were missing.

The titles of the programmes do not clearly reflect their contents. For example, environmental management would, in the panel's view, be a more accurate description of the programmes to promote to prospective students. The programmes are described as interdisciplinary, but no evidence of real interdisciplinarity in teaching or in learning outcomes was observed.

The average age of the teaching staff is high and presents a challenge for the modernisation of the programme.

The rector outlined how the development of the environmental protection programmes is based on the needs of the society and the labour market. Recently focus has been on internalisation and on the introduction of sustainable development goals as part of the study programme. Development of the practical skills is considered essential, particularly for professional higher education.

Strengths

- The availability of the study programmes in three languages (Estonian, Russian and English), and the attractiveness of this for foreign students.
- There is an identified need, mentioned by stakeholders and students, for Russian language based programmes for environmental professionals in the Estonian labour market.
- The good and close relations between EuroAcademy administration, students and lecturers are appreciated; small study groups enable individual teaching.
- The flexible and student-friendly study plan, and study management system is appreciated by students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- More attention should be paid to training in EU environmental legislation, the use of mathematical methods and statistical analysis approaches in the PHE programme. Student training in the English language would benefit from being improved to achieve a more consistent level of knowledge in the student group.
- It is recommended that the extent to which the regular reading of research articles (science reading) is used is increased to reflect its importance and to enhance the standards of PHE-theses.
- The impact of student feedback on the development of the study programme could be improved.
- It would be helpful to develop and adopt a clear benchmarking system with international programmes in the same field of study.
- Stakeholders and their feedback could be included in the study programme development in a systematic way.
- The provision of three parallel study groups where student numbers are small is economically risky and may result in instability in the long-term. The panel encourage the faculty to explore whether some courses could be given jointly only in English for all study groups. This would also support improvement of active English language skills for students of all programmes.
- To achieve interdisciplinarity of the study programme, the curricula need significant revision. This would involve the introduction of truly interdisciplinary courses, preferably including active problem solving, in the curricula. Sufficient theoretical introduction to the disciplines would also be needed as a foundation for the interdisciplinary courses. Achieving an interdisciplinary focus would be demanding in terms of the conceptualisation required and the skills and knowledge of teaching staff. This would require refreshing the base of teaching staff and investing in staff development and training for existing staff.
- To ensure an appropriate level of training in statistics, it is recommended that EA introduces the statistical package R.
- Social media could be used more effectively to attract new students.
- From the samples of theses presented, the panel found that the standard at MSC level falls below those expected in the European higher education context. To improve the standards, students need to acquire better theoretical skills in defining the study hypothesis or research question, greater scientific problem solving and writing skills. Revisions to the curricula will be needed to achieve this and the changes should be

- supervised and monitored to ensure that teaching staff fully understand the requirements, and implement them consistently. For some teaching staff, this may also entail additional training.
- EA should consider whether the title Environmental Management might be more suitable for the group of courses listed in the self-evaluation report.

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

Resources and access to computers and library services have seen improvement since the last evaluation. The EA premises provide a good educational environment with adequate and appropriate space for all staff, classroom teaching and student work. The classroom equipment is acceptable. The computer classroom has enough computers and some advanced software. However, there is a critical lack of adequate statistical software.

The laboratory facilities and equipment are inadequate and only allow teaching in small groups. These resources fall below contemporary developments and requirements both nationally and internationally. Nevertheless, student satisfaction with the resources is reported at 75% which is unusually high. The fieldwork visits in forest, bioindication, biological diversity, and marine research practice, to establishments engaged in environmental protection offer some compensation for the lack of proper laboratories and access to modern environmental analytical devices at EA. The increase in international students puts additional pressure on the provision of laboratory and experimental facilities of the required standard.

Some of EA's practical courses are delivered in Estonian public universities, which gives students additional access to equipment and teaching methods. The library resources satisfy the minimal requirements necessary for the programmes and for independent student work. Major databases are accessible in the public libraries. EA houses a private collection of lichens which can be accessed for teaching and use in student projects. The use of this collection does not, however, play a major role in students' practical work. Overall, the resources necessary to support the delivery of the PHE and the MSc programmes are present at a minimal level. The major factor affecting the availability of resources is EA's financing which relies on student tuition fees for the majority of its income.

Strengths

- The overall study environment which is attractive and appreciated by the students.
- The computer class and the GIS programme (ArcGIS) used are up-to-date and the number of GIS programme licences is sufficient.
- The electronic study information system is sufficient and Moodle is available for e-learning.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The laboratory environment and equipment do not meet the standards of a modern teaching laboratory and should be renewed, improved and increased to meet the demands of the PHE programme.
- The use of e-learning systems is not adequate. Many teachers only use the electronic resources as a repository for study materials.
- Statistical programmes are lacking. For example, the programme R is public domain and could easily be adopted by EA.
- The commitment to improving the library resources and e-learning tools should be continued and active use of them encouraged.
- The library facilities are sufficient. However, the book collection is not up-to-date and most key volumes of recent books in the field of environmental (protection) management are lacking. The selection of scientific papers in full-text is very restricted through the accessible databases. Since databases are very expensive, one way to improve their accessibility would be a joint agreement with the public universities in Estonia. If this is not feasible, then students should be given very active guidance in the use of electronic journals at the public university libraries in Tallinn.
- The minimal IT-support, which was quoted as being two hours per week for the whole of EA, is a significant concern. From discussions with staff and students, it emerged that support covers only minor, on-site installations or problem solving, but no support, for example, in the use of electronic resources or the distance use of EA's resources. IT support should be increased to ensure greater stability of the electronic resources, to provide support for teaching staff and students and to offer training in different electronic support systems and programmes. The panel advises EA to set up a help-desk service that serves both on- and off-site access to resources.
- There was no evidence to suggest that EA provides teaching staff with laptops. Such provision would enable more mobile working as well as supporting the use of electronic systems in teaching. It would also support other work related tasks for staff while travelling to participate, for example, in networks, international projects and exchange programmes.
- No development plan for study resources was seen and funds for their development are not budgeted.

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 SER and discussions during the visit provided comprehensive information on the teaching methods used in EA. Traditional teaching techniques (lectures and exercises) are the core delivery methods. There was no evidence of real problem-based learning, beyond small exercises during the laboratory courses. Nor was it clear how interdisciplinary teaching was provided. Small study groups enable individual communication between students and teachers, which is much appreciated by the students. Students reported that they were satisfied with the teaching.

The assessment panel found that e-learning tools were predominantly used by staff as a repository for study materials and course schedules. There was evidence of some active use of Moodle. Staff do use the SIS; however, SIS is not intended as an e-learning tool.

EA co-operates with private companies, local government and state institutions to provide practical training with opportunities for students to develop professional skills and gain teamwork experience.

From the scrutiny of course documents the panel found that, for many courses, the learning outcomes are not clearly defined. The assessment criteria do not align fully with the learning outcomes and are ill-defined, which militates against consistent, objective grading. Assessment in the environment programmes would benefit from revision to ensure assessment criteria are clearly defined and aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the courses. Further, the marking criteria need to be aligned fully with the assessment criteria to enable systematic and objective marking.

The panel reviewed the guidance for thesis preparation and scrutinised a sample of student theses. The panel found that at master's level there was very little evidence of objective, science-based criteria and how these should be applied. The theses seen were rather simple, based on ill-defined literature surveys and showed the undertaking of little experiment-based research. Overall, the

standard of the theses is poor and falls below the those expected and outlined in the SER.

In order to access their grades, students have to give feedback through the SIS, this is generally positive. However, students reported that the feedback they give does not reflect a considered view of the course: they complete it in order to access the course credits. This may impact negatively on the robustness of assessment. Some international students reported that they felt the study requirements needed to be both stricter and more ambitious.

There is a detailed calendar showing the schedule for the delivery of courses. International students can register either for the start of semester A or semester B. The option to start in either semester affects how students might progress through the curriculum and may, in some cases, limit their ability to take advantage of all the course contents. The cyclical organisation of the curriculum does enable effective use of students' time. However, it may also be a barrier for mobility and international student exchange.

Students, including those who combine full-time work with studying, expressed satisfaction with the study load. The SER showed that drop-out rates are high, particularly among the international students. There was no evidence of a systematic approach to managing or reducing the drop-out rates.

Internships and practical training are key aspects of both the PHE and master's programmes. The panel was not confident that the identification, completion and reporting on placements was sufficient, particularly for students speaking only Russian and English. The panel was concerned that EA would not be able to meet the challenges posed by large international student cohorts.

Strengths

- The students are satisfied with the supervision they receive.
- Individual study plans are developed for students to reflect their particular situation.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- From discussions with staff it was clear that teaching methods are rather out-dated, with class-room lectures predominating.
- Learning outcomes are not clearly formulated, which makes it difficult to assess the overall coherence of the study programmes.
- The theses are often supervised by visiting and/or part-time teachers. This is a challenge for the consistency and robustness of the supervision.
- There are limits in the degree to which staff have sufficient competence to supervise thesis work conducted on other continents. This has a negative impact on the supervision provision for students. Distance supervision restricts the degree to which staff can help students with the practical work. This also impacts on the robustness with which the work is assessed. It is recommended that EA identifies supervisors with sufficient expertise in the thesis topic from universities local to where the student is undertaking the work.
- There is no evidence of group work or interdisciplinary work in the delivery of the curricula.

- E-learning tools are used predominantly to store material and documents relating to the courses. It is seldom used for active learning or as an assessment tool.
- Wider access to national or international e-learning networks would support the design and delivery of courses to meet the standards and requirements expected in the area of environmental sciences.

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 formal scientific competence of the teaching staff meets Estonian requirements. Some staff are involved in scientific research, are well-known experts in their field and regularly publish in international journals. Publications in international journals are, however, infrequent. Publication rates have fallen since the last assessment.

The majority of the teaching staff are part-time and carry the heaviest teaching load. Part-time teaching staff are not always well informed about the rest of the programme and this affects the coherence of the delivery. Some full-time staff have multiple roles. For example, the same staff member is in charge of the library, Erasmus counselling and the introduction of laboratory work. In the environmental laboratory, there is a part-time technical assistant available when needed.

The evidence in the SER and from meetings revealed that the practical involvement of international lecturers in the delivery of the curriculum is

infrequent. Only one mathematician from Saint Petersburg, delivering lecture(s) in graph theory, was presented as a teacher for the programmes.

The average age of the teaching staff is high and a number are beyond the average retirement age. The panel recommends that the faculty develop, as a matter of urgency, a staff renewal and succession plan. In doing so the faculty should take into account the need for an appropriate mix of experienced researchers and professionals, should include a target for the recruitment of international staff to ensure the required standards for the delivery of the programmes and the development of skills relevant for the labour market.

A minority of staff in the faculty engage in international mobility, research activities or are involved in international networks and projects. The panel did not see evidence of professional development which focused on teaching skills and there was no system for inducting and mentoring of new teachers.

Strengths

- Teaching undertaken by staff from other universities and organisations contributes to the benchmarking of teaching standards and of the adequacy and appropriateness of course contents.
- The involvement of scientists and professionals from other Estonian universities and organisations is a positive feature.
- In most cases specialists from different fields are responsible for courses in their own area of expertise.
- The participation of individuals from enterprises increases the relevance of the programme for the labour market.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- There is no system for the assessment or development of the pedagogical skills of staff to support innovation in and the up-dating of teaching methods.
- The staff teaching individual courses are not familiar with the contents of the courses across the programme as a whole which is related, in part, to the high proportion of teaching delivered by part-time staff.
- The average age of teachers is high and there is no succession plan in place.
- The up-take of mobility programmes across the staff group is low.
- The numbers of staff engaged in research or active collaboration with stakeholders is low.
- The English language skills of some teaching staff are not of an acceptable standard. Some staff have no English language skills and this has implications for the resourcing of EA's desired international study environment.
- It was not clear to the panel where responsibility for finding placements and internships lies. Discussion with students and staff revealed a mixed picture of internship supervision. As a result, the adequacy of the practical training and the assessment of the associated work load is not consistent. The panel recommends that full-time staff oversee the identification and monitoring of placements and internships to ensure consistency of the students' learning opportunities.

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 size of the student cohort increased in the 2016-2017 academic year following the launch of the delivery of the programmes in English. The PHE programme increased by about one third and the master's programme doubled its intake. In 2017-2018 the number of students who registered, compared to those accepted, fell in the light of difficulties with visa applications. EA actively markets its programmes internationally.

International student recruitment is undertaken through screening documentation from the home country and a motivational interview that is conducted by the rector.

Students reported that EA was an attractive place to study because of the low tuition fees, the low cost of living and access to part-time employment. In addition, EA offers some student accommodation which students value.

The drop-out rate is high which is reflected in the very low numbers of graduates.

The panel were concerned by the expectations expressed by some international students that they would be able to continue to the master's programme and, on completion of the master's, they would receive a licence which enabled them to take up roles as environmental inspectors in Estonia. This is an unrealistic expectation within the context of the current requirements of the profession in Estonia.

Students reported that they were satisfied that they receive sufficient information on the organization and content of studies. Legal advice for contracts and work-related issues is available from a law lecture. Evidence suggested this was undertaken by the staff member in a voluntary capacity. Administrative support for students functions well. Student-teacher contact is frequent and effective. Student mobility is low; most students interested in mobility are from the English language programme.

There is effective monitoring of students by both administrative and academic staff. The recently appointed psychologist provides psycho-social counselling to

students in either Russian and English. There is no similar counselling offered in Estonian.

The data in the SER show that the employment rate of graduates is high. However, the SER also shows that only 41% of graduates practise in areas related to environmental protection.

Strengths

- Students are satisfied with the support and guidance from teaching and administrative staff. They have access to individual and additional teaching and/or help when needed. They also have direct access to the rector who addresses their needs or problems.
- Psychological student counselling is offered to international students to assist them to adapt to Estonian academic life and society.
- Legal and administrative advice is available from a member of staff in the Academic Affairs office.

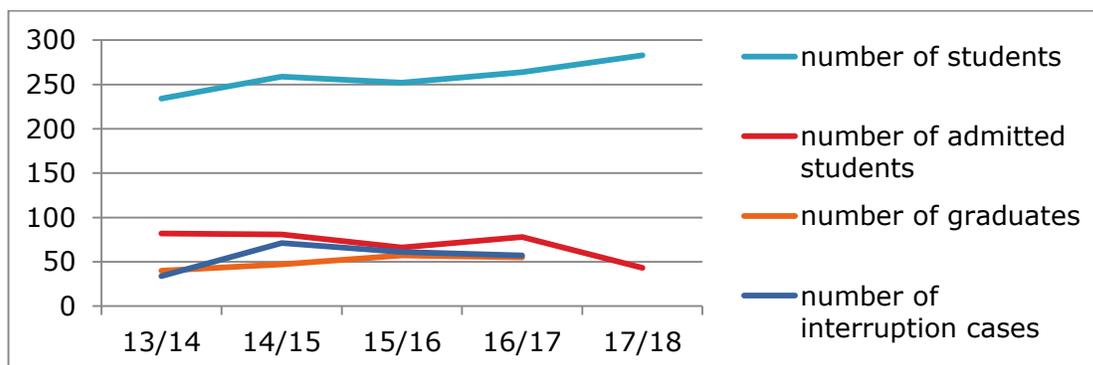
Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Drop-out rates are high, particularly in the programmes delivered in English.
- Student counselling could further be improved to reduce the dropout rate, especially in the English programme.
- The take up of mobility programmes is very low.
- Student recruitment is not robust enough to admit students with sufficient entry qualifications and motivation to promote success on the programme. The video interview is not consistently conducted. Although it is recorded, there is no evidence to suggest that recordings are analysed and used to improve practice.
- A standardised interview protocol and documentation could be used alongside the video interviews. These should be conducted by at least two faculty members to ensure greater objectivity, consistency and comparability.
- Some students graduate despite low motivation and lack of application in achieving the learning outcomes.
- Learning outcomes should be more clearly defined and the assessment of these need to be more rigorous and consistent across the courses.
- There is no system to track the employment of graduates. From discussions with alumni and data in the SER, only about half of the graduates are employed in areas related to environmental protection.
- International students have unrealistic expectations about employment opportunities within Estonia.
- Greater attention should be given to the information international students are given before and during their studies on available jobs in Estonia to ensure that they have realistic and accurate expectations of the opportunities available to them. It would be helpful to include more information on EA's homepage on the employment opportunities in Estonia and abroad to provide applicants with potential career opportunities both in Estonia and globally.

3. Business and Administration SPG assessment

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

EuroAcademy (EA) currently offers two programmes in the Business and Administration SPG: a master's in Economy and Business Management, and a PHE award in Business Management. Both programmes are offered in three languages (Russian, English and Estonian). As the current master's terminates in June 2018, the PHE will remain the sole accredited programme. The assessment panel thus focused on the PHE programme. From the evidence provided through documentation and discussions with staff, the panel concluded that the PHE programme in business management conforms to the standards. The imminent closure of the current master's is not a situation of EA's choosing. The self-evaluation report and on-site discussions outlined the proposal of a new master's programme around the theme of economic sustainability and entrepreneurship. However, the proposal is not yet realised as EA withdrew the programme from the accreditation process. The failure to accredit or re-accredit a master's level programme leaves the faculty reliant on one programme. This is symptomatic of some of the weaknesses and areas for improvement found during the panel's visit.



3.1.1. Business Management (Prof HE); Economy and Business Administration (MA)

Study programme and study programme development

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

Comments

The panel affirms that the standards for study programmes and programme development are generally met for the PHE Business Management programme. The programme meets the requirements of the Standard of Higher Education and conforms with legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards.

The structure and content of modules support the achievement of the programme objectives and learning outcomes. The different elements of the study programme form a coherent whole. The programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes.

EA articulated in the SER and in discussion its aims for the rapid internationalisation of the student population. There was, however, no evidence of annual recruitment targets. EA's target markets for attracting new students are mainly countries of the former Soviet Union and Africa.

Evidence in the SER and from student and stakeholder comments during the visit confirm that EA engages with external views when making changes to the parts and the whole of the curricula on offer.

Strengths

- The PHE curriculum is balanced in terms of subject content and theoretical and practical aspects. It is a competitive, practically focused programme which covers the broad range of subjects typical at this level of study in business programmes internationally. The process of incremental change of individual courses /modules is managed through formal and informal means

on an annual cycle.

- The PHE practice placement is focused and well managed via tripartite learning contracts between students, employers and EA. It is particularly commendable that practice placements have been found for international students.
- The programme is delivered flexibly for part-time students who are working and/or have family responsibilities. Students reported on this favourably.
- The programme is available in three languages with the Russian option being particularly welcomed by stakeholders and Russian mother tongue students. Provision of the programme through the medium of English is attractive to foreign students from Africa.
- Employers report that EA is responsive to suggestions for changes to the curriculum. For example, the introduction of specific content on tax law and accountancy, and making content more practically focused.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The panel was presented with a number of documents by the faculty including decisions and minutes from committees, including the council and the senate. It was, however, somewhat unclear how and to what extent the guidelines and regulations outlined in the documents are applied in practice – see below.
- The closure of the existing master's programme and the failure to complete the accreditation process of the new master's programme are, in the panel's view, symptoms of a lack of transparency in curriculum development and a reflection of the faculty being too inward-looking. It is recommended that EA undertakes systematic analyses in the labour market, feasibility studies and elicits broader external stakeholder feedback to inform programme developments, including new programmes.
- The fact that the PHE programme in Business Management will soon be the only programme in the SPG leaves the faculty with a narrow curriculum base. It is essential that the new master's proposal is submitted for accreditation in the methodical and inclusive manner recommended.
- Although it was clear from discussions with staff that study programme development takes feedback from students and employers into account, this needs to be more systematic and involve more staff in strategic decision making.
- From the evidence seen it was clear that not all course/module descriptors in the programme are available in all three languages. We strongly recommend that this is rectified swiftly.
- EA confirmed that only two academic staff members are involved in the supervision of work placements and the associated tripartite agreements. It is recommended that the opportunity to supervise placements is extended to other staff members as far as possible, once appropriate training is given.
- Scrutiny of the curriculum documents showed that the entrepreneurship module in the PHE programme repeats material found elsewhere in the programme. The materials seen did not evidence an adequate coverage of theories of entrepreneurship, leadership, start-ups, innovation management and change management. It is recommended that the coverage of entrepreneurship is reviewed as part of the regular academic cycle.

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

Based on the information in the SER and the findings of the assessment visit, the panel concluded that there are sufficient resources to meet current student needs. Both staff and students reported that they are satisfied with the available resources and facilities. The panel had some specific concerns about the use of copyrighted resources, and serious questions about resource sustainability and the apparent absence of budgetary planning in the faculty.

Strengths

- The new premises offer a very pleasant learning environment. The classrooms are spacious and well-furnished, equipped with a PC and projector/ beamer. The number of IT classrooms appears to be sufficient.
- The library is bright and airy. The supply of textbooks in three languages and the access to databases is adequate for student numbers. All stakeholders reported that resources are sufficient in terms of premises, library and IT infrastructure.
- Students and staff also reported on the value of having the open access policy of public university libraries in the Tallinn area.
- The rector is able to support specific requests for funding from the faculty, whether from staff or students.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The panel did not find evidence of an independent faculty budget or budget setting and approval process. Staff reported that while direct appeals to the Rector for resources usually meet with success, a formal, annual allocation with budget categories for materials, student support, staff development etc. was not in place.
- The panel was concerned at instances of the infringement of copyright such as photocopying case studies and book chapters. The panel recommends that guidance and penalties on copyright issues are included in EA's Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics should include the fact that such copyright infringement constitutes theft and is, thus, a disciplinary matter.

- The panel found there was a lack of transparency concerning resource acquisition. It was not clear how decisions are made regarding, for example, the purchase of new textbooks. It is recommended that a formal system for making requests to the librarian is implemented.
- EA occupies the ground floor and a further two floors in the building. There is no lift and this means that the building is inaccessible for those with physical disabilities.
- It was clear to the panel that the stipulation of a minimum class size of 10 students was very flexibly interpreted. This stipulation is particularly challenging in the context of offering all the courses in three languages. It is clear that, for the long-term viability of the faculty, this is not sustainable. It is recommended that more managerial control of class size is imposed.

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

Overall the panel confirms that the teaching and learning on the PHE programme meets the standards of teaching and learning expected in Estonia. Supporting statements and data in the SER, evidence from teaching staff, managers and students provided a positive picture of the learning environment, of active teaching styles, flexible modes of delivery and of openness to pedagogical development. Nevertheless, there are areas of particular concern in mobility, monitoring student progress and the design and review of assessments and assessment tools.

Strengths

- Students reported that staff are available and approachable and respond quickly to student queries, concerns and problems. They considered this to be one of the advantages of a small institution.
- There is evidence of the use of a good variety of interactive learning and diagnostic assessment techniques. There was little mention by students, alumni or staff that overly didactic styles predominate.
- The Business and Management programme has a focus on practical problem solving exercises and the use of e-learning platforms beyond using them as a repository for materials to make them accessible for students. For example, some teachers used the Moodle platform for continuous assessment and inter-active dialogue with students. This enabled progress with learning to be closely monitored.
- Staff, employers and students confirmed that practice placements are found for overseas students. Students praised the practice placement, which is the national expectation of a programme of PHE, as an integrated part of the learning process.
- The use of fingerprinting identification to prevent academic fraud, as outlined in the SER, is innovatory, good practice.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Senate has written regulations governing assessment which date from 2015. These do not include any form of moderation in the design or marking of assignments and no standardisation of marking against the given standards. The setting and marking of assessments is undertaken by staff delivering the modules; this is sometimes one person. There is no internal or external moderation such as second marking or external examiners. The assessment process thus lacks objectivity. As a first and essential step, the panel recommends that the faculty introduce a formal system of internal moderation for formal assessments.
- Scrutiny of the syllabi and other documentation revealed that there is a profusion and confusion of grading systems. For example, some assessments are simply pass/fail, some have percentage grades and others use literal grades. The panel were not confident that the grading system was clear for students. The opportunity for students to self-refer for a re-sit assessment provided a more complex picture. The panel recommends that EA reviews and reforms the grading system to ensure that it is fully in-line with robust and transparent practice in comparable institutions in Estonia.
- It was evident from discussions with staff that the sharing of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment is voluntary and informal. The SER states that there is not, as yet a formal system of peer review and the panel found no evidence of awards for best teaching practice. While regular 'in-house seminars' on teaching techniques, e-learning, and communication skills are mentioned in the SER, there are no details as to how staff engage or whether there is a requirement to attend. This needs to be made explicit so that expectations and requirements are clear.
- The SER reported that some staff are slow to upload material onto the SIS. This is both a staff development and teaching and learning issue and should be addressed by leadership from the faculty.
- The panel found that staff were not always clear on the relationship between credit point values and the amount of notional student effort represented by

those points. This relationship should be made explicit in all syllabi and subject cards.

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

Whilst the panel was confident that teaching meets the required standards, there are some significant deficiencies in staff development and appraisal processes. In terms of qualifications, the SER for the SPG shows that 57% of the academic staff contributing to the PHE programme have PhDs; overall the qualification level of the total staff is high. There was evidence in the SER that some staff participate in research and development including journal publications, and exchanges with foreign partner institutions. This illustrates the aspiration to raise the profile of the faculty.

Overall, 57% of staff are over the age of 51, and the average age is 56. 25 staff contribute to teaching the PHE programme, of these 12 are full-time and 13 part-time. However, not all those who are shown as full time in the Business faculty only teach in that faculty. For example, the rector is shown as full time for business. Discussions with staff indicated that demand-led staff development opportunities are available to both full-and part-time staff including, for example, participation in international conferences. Although there are some elements of staff development in place, it is not complete. 'Areas for improvement' noted by the EKKK 2017 visit concerned inadequate staffing. It is not clear from the SER what remedial measures have been taken to address this, other than the election of some existing staff members to Docents.

Strengths

- The formal qualification level of staff is high.

- There is a positive mix of academics and practitioners among the teaching staff.
- There is active engagement with international professional development organizations such as CEEMAN and IMTA.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- It was apparent that, while a partial system of annual staff performance review and appraisal based on self-appraisal is in place, it is in its very early stages. It is recommended that a system of mandatory annual performance-based staff appraisal tied to output targets and staff development needs be speedily introduced. This must be predicated on the competence of line managers and designated resources to support staff development.
- The self-assessment document states that the recruitment of staff is sourced either from self-referring candidates or the existing pool of master's students. There does not appear to be a system of open competition, especially for part-time staff, who constitute a large proportion of the teaching resource. The recruitment of master's graduates, as a source of teaching staff will no longer be possible because of the closure of the master's programme. As a matter of priority, the faculty should widen and make more transparent its recruitment policy and practice.
- There are opportunities for staff development. There is, however, an absence of systems for identification, monitoring and planning. The panel found no evidence of a central staff development resource in EA.
- From class observations and other interactions between staff and students, it was clear that the language skills of some staff delivering courses in English were below an acceptable standard. The panel recommends that the English language needs of staff are identified by an independent assessor. Further, that appropriate resources are devoted to addressing the English competence of those staff whose language skill falls below the required level for their interactions with students.
- While the SER states that free time is made available for staff to pursue doctoral study, there is no system of paid sabbaticals or other formal systems (e.g. tariff based teaching hours' relief), specifically to develop research capabilities
- While 'in-house regular seminars' on teaching techniques, e-learning and communication skills are mentioned in the SER, there are no details as to how staff are engaged or whether, for example, there is a requirement to attend. This needs to be made explicit.
- As practice placement supervision is not spread around the faculty staff, it limits opportunities for staff interaction with employers which could lead to opportunities for applied research projects which could, in turn, enrich their professional development.

Students

Standards

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

Comments

Students of Business Management expressed satisfaction with the conditions that the institution provides and this supports their studies. However, the drop-out rate is high, especially among English speaking students and there are some specific issues around foreign student enrolments. The student feedback system in the new SIS has improved accountability and performance monitoring. Students feel that their feedback is heard and taken into account. The data provided demonstrated that employment rates are good. However, the data was not disaggregated between masters and PHE graduates and international students were excluded from the data. There are areas which require improvement.

Strengths

- There are high levels of student satisfaction with business management programmes, staff and facilities. The availability of courses in three languages is particularly appreciated by students.
- The faculty has flexible means to support students to complete their studies. These include temporary suspension of studies, transfer to part time mode, and academic leave.
- Employers expressed high levels of satisfaction with graduates from the Business Management programmes in terms of their knowledge and practical skills, in practice placements, and as employees.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

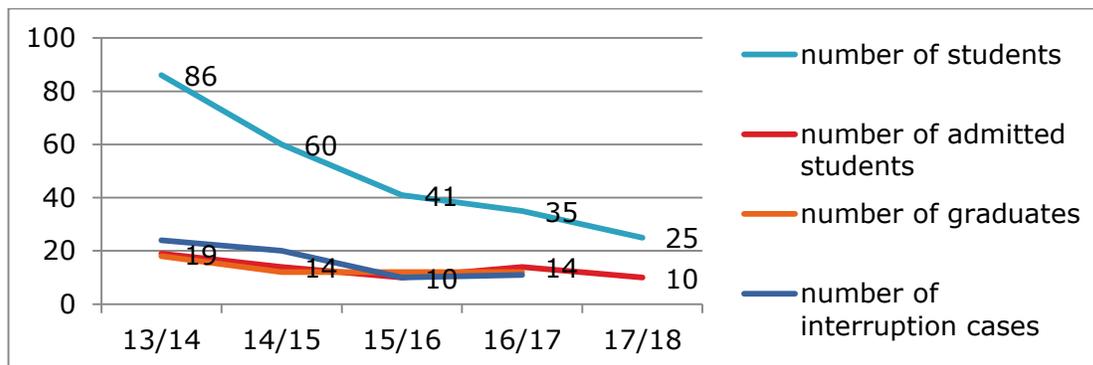
- Data on outgoing student mobility shows that it is very limited at present (1-2%). There are equally few incomers. Although there is an EA ERASMUS+ coordinator, more effort is needed to focus on encouraging students to go abroad. This could be, for instance, by broadening the range of international partner institutions.

- The SER provided a breakdown of the drop-out rate from which it is clear that foreign (non-EU) students make up the majority of the drop-outs. Despite the measures formally in place to assess applicants, there have been serious problems with the Estonian border authorities with the admission of some of these applicants. As a matter of urgency, the admissions process for foreign students and the academic and social support once they have enrolled, needs attention if the drop-out rate amongst this group is to be reduced.
- Despite the satisfaction expressed by students with feedback mechanisms and responsiveness, the SER indicated that the student response rate through the SIS is quite low. In order to improve accountability, this needs to be raised, and the feedback loop needs to be strengthened through formal responses by EA to student comments.
- In the context of the influx of non-EU students, the organization of the Student Council could be more stable. Greater stability would ensure continuity and better enable the perspectives of students from all language groups to be considered.

4. Languages and Cultures SPG assessment

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

The Translation faculty offers two options for the Translator programme: Estonian and English, and Russian and English. The Russian and English programme includes the option to take a beginner's level Estonian language course. At the time of the assessment visit, only the Russian and English programme was being delivered due to low numbers of applicants for the Estonian-English language combination. The faculty development plan includes a target to double the number of students in the near future. However, EA failed to demonstrate exactly how this could be achieved and what resources would be required to ensure a positive teaching and learning experience for the students. The lack of understanding of what is needed to implement some of the targets is a symptom of a number of weaknesses identified by the panel.



4.1.1. Translator (Prof HE)

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 SPG assessment in 2015 contained a number of recommendations. Although the SER did not refer specifically to these, the programme management outlined in discussion some changes that were made following the SPG evaluation, including plans to double student numbers. The curriculum was also reviewed by partners, the Estonian Association of Interpreters and Translators for example, with the finding the EA should reintroduce interpretation into the curriculum. EA lacks the resources and infrastructure to support this. The option for students to choose electives from the Business Faculty which cover general topics related to entrepreneurship was also introduced; however, these are not specific to the translation profession. Overall the changes do not reflect a comprehensive vision for the programme, nor do they address, directly, the need for the professionalisation of the study programme.

The panel confirm that the curriculum conforms to national requirements in terms of ECTS credit points, including the number of credit points allocated to the internship and to the thesis.

There is repeated mention in the SER of frequent changes to the study programme. Whilst these are presented as an indication of flexibility and responsiveness to external factors, EA staff were unable to articulate the rationale for changes or to explain the drivers which determine them. The panel could find no evidence of systematic analysis of market trends or collection and analysis of external stakeholder feedback. Recommendations from external quality assurance evaluations are responded to inconsistently and unsystematically.

The assessment panel were unable to gain clarity on processes and approval for changes or for monitoring their impact.

There was insufficient clarity on how the programme should be developed.

There was no clear definition of the EA graduate profile in relation to employment opportunities. The panel found little evidence to demonstrate the sustainability of the programme in the longer term.

The curriculum includes compulsory courses and electives. Close scrutiny of this showed insufficient coherence in the programme structure. A range of topics is covered but there is insufficient clarity on how these combine to ensure that students achieve the intended learning outcomes, and desirable competences for the translation profession. Programme delivery does not enable all learning outcomes to be addressed. For example, learning outcomes for the Translation module include the development of competences related to translation software and electronic tools; however, discussions with students revealed that these are not used in class. The Fundamentals in Translation Studies module refers to pre- and post-translation analysis but the course outline does not include machine translation. Learning outcomes for the Internship module include "experience in teamwork;" students reported, however, that internship tasks are resolved independently. Learning outcomes are not expressed as per the Bologna requirements and may be misleading to students.

As required by PHE programmes, internship forms part of the curriculum and offers students the opportunity to undertake translation tasks. Feedback from alumni and employers indicated that the language skills of students were of as much value in the placement as the translation skills.

Students and alumni reported that they value the foreign language skills afforded by the Translator programme but did not necessarily view the programme as one with professional relevance in the area of translation. Alumni reported that they found employment for which their language skills were valued and which might also make use of their translation skills. From these discussions and review of the curriculum documents, the panel concluded there is a mismatch between the programme's title, the programme content and what students see as the academic focus of their programme.

Strengths

- The language combination Russian-English which caters for a niche student profile.
- The development of foreign language competences is greatly appreciated by students and employers.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Programme changes are currently unsystematic. EA should ensure changes are better coordinated and more strategically driven and informed by systematically collected input from stakeholders, especially employers in the translation industry.
- EA should review the sustainability of the programme in conjunction with the specific graduate attributes it wishes to develop.

- There needs to be greater synergy and coherence between the different components of the curriculum. The articulation of this must make it clear to students how the modules create a coherent programme, what its overall aim is, and what employment prospects it offers.
- The programme curriculum needs to be more professionally-oriented and ensure students understand and have relevant skills for the translation business environment.
- The course syllabi should be revised so that course titles, learning outcomes and content align and are clearly articulated.
- Practical elements of the programme need to be coherently linked and better embedded in the curriculum.
- The assessment panel would encourage EA to review the position of the Translator programme within the context of the institution as a whole and consider whether a change in emphasis away from translation to languages and culture or languages and communication might be more marketable and sustainable in the long term.

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 assessment panel reviewed the learning resources and confirm that for the current number of students the computer lab, the CAT licences and the library resources, books and journals, are sufficient and relevant for the programme. Some of the resources are recent acquisitions and their potential is not fully exploited for more effective delivery of the programme. The library holds much relevant material for the curriculum; however, these are not included in the bibliographies of the individual course descriptions. Highlighting the availability of relevant resources in the course bibliographies would encourage students to make better use of the existing resources.

The panel learned from students that they had attended a course for the use of CAT tools. They also reported that EA gave them life-long SDL Trados licences, if they completed the course successfully. The panel also learned that this software

resource was not used by staff in the teaching of other courses which the students would value.

Staff reported in discussion that the acquisition of resources and their maintenance was undertaken when the need arises. The assessment panel was not provided with evidence as to whether regular evaluation of resources was undertaken to ensure their relevance and currency. Whilst requests were usually met, no funding is allocated to the faculty and there was no clarity about the approval process.

The SPG SER and staff outlined the intention to make greater use of the virtual learning environment (Moodle). No specific objectives were given within a clear timeline for achieving them; the plan is vague and, as such, unachievable.

The bibliography lists would benefit from revision to give better coverage of key approaches to translation. For example, the Translation Theory module refers almost exclusively to the linguistic approach in translation and does not cover text linguistics and/or functionalist approaches both of which are essential for a professionally-oriented translation education programme.

Strengths

- Library resources are current and relevant, though possibly as yet insufficiently made use of.
- The CAT tools are in line with modern industry developments.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- EA should consider embedding the use of CAT tools in the delivery of courses.
- Course bibliographies should be updated so there is coverage of all the key areas and approaches to translation.
- Students should be encouraged to make full use of the available library resources by ensuring that library resources are referenced more fully in the course descriptions.

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

Student numbers are small. At the time of the assessment visit there were 25 students over all three years and all on the Russian–English programme. The small cohort size is conducive to a strong staff-student relationship, enabling responsive and quick feedback.

The panel reviewed previous assessment reports, observed some teaching sessions and spoke to staff and students. The panel concluded that teaching methodologies are rather outdated and insufficiently practice-based. Students confirmed that there is no project-based learning and that most courses are delivered through lectures. Students have little exposure to more interactive approaches. Teamwork is not promoted and business practices are not emulated.

Staff reported that they discuss and share teaching and learning approaches. This is done informally rather than systematically and does not ensure that learning gained from staff development, including teaching observations, is shared to benefit teaching and learning across the faculty. Overall the faculty has not made progress on the recommendations in the 2015 SPG report which noted the need for teaching to be updated.

Curriculum documents in the SER gave scant information about assessment either the type of assessment or the timing of it. Nevertheless, students confirmed that they knew what to expect from assignments. Neither the assessment design nor the marking of assignments is subject to moderation. There is no faculty or institutional policy on this. The result is that there is no external benchmarking of standards, no checks on the consistency of marking, or of the linking of grading criteria to assessment learning outcomes and how grades are awarded is not transparent. Students reported that they understand why they received the grades they do, confirmed that they receive feedback and that they can request additional feedback which is readily given by staff.

The graduation thesis is a translation-based task with annotations. Students choose their own texts. A review of this indicated that student choice did not always reflect an appropriate level of challenge for a PHE diploma. The grading criteria for the thesis are insufficiently detailed and this allows for ambiguities and inappropriate subjectivity.

Stakeholders are not systematically involved in the design and/or the delivery of the programme. In discussions the panel learned that the faculty committee has been re-convened, though at the time of the visit it had not met. The revised committee includes external stakeholders, including some employers. It is critical that EA ensures a representative membership which is able to provide input about market requirements for teaching and learning.

Internships are an integral part of the programme, as required for PHE diplomas. The internships are managed through tripartite agreements which work well. Both students and employers reported positively on the internships and informed the panel that there was always a translation-basis to the placement.

Strengths

- The investment by the Faculty in SDL Trados and the opportunity afforded to students to acquire CAT certification.
- The academic staff are very supportive of students throughout the teaching and learning process and take an individual approach in their relationship with the students.
- The programme's internship coordinator has been successful in providing the students with appropriate internship opportunities. The on-site internship supervisors are provided with the necessary information and are asked to give feedback.
- Student feedback regarding their study process is collected periodically at the end of every semester.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The promotion of e-learning and of modern teaching tools are a part of the institutional development plan, as well as of the Translator programme. As indicated during the interviews with students and academic staff, more improvements are needed in this area. Moreover, there is insufficient IT support in EA as a whole to ensure the goals are achieved.
- The Translator programme would benefit from more interactive teaching methodologies, team work, project-based learning, employer engagement in the delivery of the specific modules, and a strong business orientation in the delivery of the various elements of content.
- Teaching staff share, informally, experience of educational activity. This is self-initiated, not programme-wide and does not have systematic support from the human resources department. More structured interaction/ collaboration between staff is necessary to ensure programme learning outcomes are achieved.
- Assessment processes are too dependent on single members of staff. This results in over subjectivity and a lack of consistency across the programme. EA should consider introducing some form of moderation to ensure a level of objectivity and consistency in the assessment process.
- The thesis on the Translator programme falls below the standard for a PHE programme. The panel recommends that EA staff should identify suitable texts, rather than leaving the choice open to students. Grading criteria for the thesis should be better calibrated and more explicit allowing students to better understand how their performance is evaluated.
- It would be beneficial to involve students in research and development projects beyond those experienced on placement.

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 SER states that there are 27 staff engaged in teaching the curriculum, of whom twelve are full-time and 15 part-time. Eleven staff are specialists in the areas of languages and translation. All but one member of staff holds academic qualifications at master's level or above. The staff student ratio in the faculty would seem very favourable. However, in discussion with the programme management, the panel learned that there were only 5-7 staff who were actually teaching translation and these staff were expected to cover all relevant areas.

Some staff members are active professional translators which is an asset to a professionally-oriented programme. However, it was not clear to the panel how this relevant experience is incorporated into the curriculum and its delivery. Additionally, some of the staff are active in professional associations.

Teaching staff have had the opportunity to take part in training courses or Erasmus exchanges. This has exposed them to new directions in the teaching of translation and the translation industry. Staff could not identify ways in which the learning on these courses and exchanges had fed into the delivery and development of the current programme. There was a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the recommendation from the 2015 SPG report that identified the need for more up-to-date teaching methodologies had been actioned. The faculty must focus on updating the teaching skills of staff. This includes the use of technology within the classroom.

The discussions with staff revealed that they were not part of a staff appraisal system, that they were not aware that EA was introducing an appraisal scheme for teaching staff, nor did staff participate in a formal teaching observation scheme. The panel urge EA to engage all faculty in the formal appraisal scheme and ensure that development needs are identified, actioned and monitored in the faculty.

Strengths

- Teaching staff have practical experience of working as translators.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The faculty should ensure that staff development is strategically driven and the benefits of learning shared across the faculty as a whole.
- Development needs for individual staff should be identified with a focus on both pedagogical and professional skills and knowledge.
- Where staff undertake exchanges, the faculty management should ensure that it has direct and immediate relevance for the Translator programme.
- Given the planned expansion of student numbers, EA should ensure it has sufficient staff with appropriate training who can deliver all aspects of the provision.

Students

Standards

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

Comments

Students and alumni of the Translator programme have a very positive view of EA. They appreciate the individual approach staff have towards students. Despite this, the programme aim is not very clear for the students. A number of students reported that they applied for the course because it would help to improve their English language skills rather than for their interest in translation. Students demonstrated a lack of awareness of what opportunities there are in the labour market for translators.

The Russian students, who are classified as international students, do not always have the option to attend some of the courses which would be of direct interest and these include some of the business oriented courses.

Overall students expressed their satisfaction with the teaching and learning. They would value more technology-based learning and the use of CAT tools, including Trados in the classroom. As the cohorts of students in the faculty are small, they have ample opportunity to raise questions and seek clarification on all aspects of their learning, which they appreciate.

There is low take up of student mobility in the faculty. Although the SER includes the aim of improving the rate of student mobility, there has been little success in increasing the take up.

Students who had undertaken study abroad, reported very positively on their experience and on the support provided by the EA Erasmus co-ordinator. However, students who had participated showed limited awareness of how their learning could be recognised formally in credit terms, by EA on return. The view they expressed was that they had to use the APL process.

Feedback questionnaires are administered through SIS at the end of every course. Students also reported that they are encouraged to provide informal feedback through the semester. Students could cite instances where their feedback had resulted in changes to the teaching. Although there are a number of channels for providing feedback, there was no systematic analysis of the feedback so that opportunities may be missed to make appropriate changes. The faculty would benefit from taking a more strategic approach to the collection and analysis of student feedback which should be coupled with employer and other stakeholder feedback.

The SER provided data on graduate employment. Employment rates are high; however, the jobs taken are infrequently within the translation profession. Alumni reported that they gained employment in areas where their language skills could be used. This included working in call centres and in the hospitality industry. Employers confirmed that for those who have the combination of English, Russian and Estonian language skills, job prospects are high.

Strengths

- The personal approach students receive. Those who decide to study abroad, receive good advice.
- The range of agreements with universities and colleges outside Estonia affords good opportunities for student mobility.
- Students have the opportunity to give immediate feedback to their lecturers and have seen changes made based on their suggestions.
- Students can always be actively engaged during their lectures, due to the small size of the group.

Areas of improvement and recommendations

- The English language requirement for the Translator programme is B2. As an alternative to international certificates (IELTS, TOEFL, Cambridge), EA also offers a test of its own. It is unclear how the test is used to evaluate

the language level of the applicant (whether commonly acknowledged criteria are used or EA has its own standards). The result of the exam in the mother tongue is taken into consideration, but no specific requirement is stated. EA needs to clarify its entry requirements for the Translation faculty in line with clarification of entry requirements for the institution as a whole.

- Teaching staff offer counselling to students. There is a psychologist who provides counselling in relevant areas; this is not available in Estonian. Not all students are aware of what kinds of counselling are available to them. Although students felt their needs were met, EA might consider establishing a full-time counsellor, who could provide the students with independent advice.
- More use should be made of CAT tools in the translation course delivery.
- Participation in student mobility is still low. EA could more actively encourage mobility opportunities and seek opportunities in English speaking environments.
- The faculty should have a more systematic approach to the collection and analysis of feedback.