

LÄÄNE-VIRU COLLEGE



SELF-EVALUATION REPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMME GROUPS

Mõdriku

2018

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EHIS (<i>est</i>)	Estonian Education Information System
EFQM	European Fundamental Quality Model
EKEÜ (<i>est</i>)	Estonian Association for Advancement of Vocational Education
EKIS (<i>est</i>)	Document Management System
ERK (<i>est</i>)	Estonian Association of Accountants
ESTA (<i>est</i>)	Estonian Association of Social Workers
ESF	European Social Fund
ESN	Erasmus Student Network
ETIS (<i>est</i>)	Estonian Research Information System
ETKA (<i>est</i>)	Association of Estonian Adult Educators Andras
EUIF	Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund
EURASHE	European Association of Institutions in Higher Education
EÜL (<i>est</i>)	Federation of Estonian Student Unions
HEI	Higher Education Institution
MER	Ministry for Education and Research
IA	Institutional Accreditation
INNOVE (<i>est</i>)	Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development
IKT (<i>est</i>)	Information and Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
LVRKK (<i>est</i>)	Lääne-Viru College
OSKA (<i>est</i>)	The system of monitoring and forecasting demand for workforce
R&D	Research, development and other creative activities
RIKS (<i>est</i>)	Libraries Information and Catalogue System
RKRN (<i>est</i>)	Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences
RPL	Procedure for Recognition of Prior Learning and Work
SAIS (<i>est</i>)	Admission Information System
SIS	Study Information System
TAI (<i>est</i>)	National Institute for Health Development
TET (<i>est</i>)	Health Promoting Workplace
TU	Tallinn University
TTÜ	Tallinn University of Technology
SPG	Study Programme Group

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE COLLEGE

College	Lääne-Viru College (LVRKK)
Legal form	A state institution administered by the Ministry of Education and Research
Registration code:	70006174
Postal Address	Tiigivahe tee 2, Mõdriku, Vinni municipality, 46609 Lääne-Virumaa, info@lvrkk.ee
	Phone +372 329 5950
Territorial location	Mõdriku, Vinni municipality Rohuaia 12, Rakvere
Contact person	Helle Noorväli, Rector, Helle.Noorvali@lvrkk.ee
Key areas of activity	Professional higher education and vocational education in the fields of business, administration and law, health and well-being; vocational education in information and communication technology and health and well-being; applied research; development of the specialties taught and in-service training
Mission	We offer students skills and knowledge in the areas of economics, management and social affairs that they need in their life and work in order to increase their competitiveness and support the development of Estonia.
Vision	LVRKK is a recognised institution of professional higher education in the areas of economics, management and social affairs.
Core values	CREATIVITY, DIGNITY, APPLICABILITY, COMPETENCE, COOPERATION
Structure	Structure of LVRKK

LVRKK is the only rurally located institution of professional higher education with a unique and modern study environment that has developed into a trustworthy partner for employers, professional associations, institution of professional higher education and vocational education institutions, etc.

Interest groups: the Republic of Estonia - society, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and other state agencies, local municipalities, students, employers, professional associations, foreign partners, college staff, graduates.

Major cooperation partners: MER, the Institute for Health Development (TAI), the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (EUIF), the Association of Estonian Accountants (AEA), the Estonian Traders Association, the Estonian Assistants Society, the Estonian Social Workers Association (ESTA), the Association of Estonian Adult Educators (AEAE) Andras, the Estonian Qualifications Authority, the Federation of Estonian Student Unions (EÜL), the Town of Rakvere, Vinni Municipality, major employers of and internship companies/agencies in all of the curricula, Estonian institutions of professional higher education, Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences (RKRN), Rakvere College of Tallinn University, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonian University of Life Sciences, vocational education institutions and the Estonian Association for Advancement of Vocational Education (EKEÜ) and cooperation partners from abroad.

During the current development plan period the College has been awarded the following titles: Deed of the Year of Lääne-Viru County ("Lääne-Virumaa aasta tegu sotsiaalvaldkonnas") in the social sphere; the e-learning Eagerness Award title ("Agaruse eripreemia"); The Most Training Friendly Organisation in Lääne-Viru County ("Kõige koolitussõbralikum organisatsioon Lääne-Virumaal"); Health-promoting Workplace (Tervist Edendav Töökoht (TET)); and Beautiful Home in Lääne-Viru County ("Lääne-Virumaa Kaunis Kodu").

LVRKK employs 59 people in the following positions: academic staff 22.15, support staff 14.0 and administrative staff 20.0; authorisation agreements 4.6 positions.

The total number learners was 1,057 as at 10.11.2017, of which 948 were higher education students. During the current academic year the College has six higher education establishment curricula (in two study programme groups) and six vocational education curricula (in six study programme groups), but from the next academic year instruction will be provided only in the higher education establishment curricula.

History

- 1927-1952 The School of Home Economics was established in Mõdriku Manor; the school functioned under various names and trained women in farm management and agricultural specialists.
- 01.09.1957 Mõdriku Agricultural Technical School started providing accountancy training.
- 1998 The students were no longer admitted on the basis of basic education and a gradual transition to higher education curricula started.
- 01.09.2001 Mõdriku Agricultural Technical School and Rakvere Pedagogical School were merged into Lääne-Viru Higher Vocational School (Regulation of the Government of the Republic No 79 of 26.02.2001).
- 03.09.2007 The status of a state institution of professional higher education (Order of the Government of the Republic No 103 of 20.02.2007) and operation under the name of Lääne-Viru College.

Short description of self-evaluation:

The self-evaluation of College activities took place at a very complicated period as the two-year merging process with the Rakvere College of Tallinn University (initially the merging was supposed to take place in 2017, then in 2018, and now the process has been halted) has affected the developments and the everyday functioning of the College.

The present document mostly concentrates on the results of the last three years (2015-2017) of the development plan of 2014-2018 (est, eng) and the objectives set for 2018 in the development plan. Some development activities will continue in the next development plan period as well. The report was also based on experts' recommendations of the institutional accreditation (2014) and the experts of social services study programme group (2015) and the improvement plans (est, eng) drafted based on these recommendations. The report concentrates mainly on the professional higher education as no students will be enrolled in vocational education starting with the 2017/2018 academic year. If possible, the report compares the main quality indicators of the College with those of other institutions of higher education.

In order to carry out self-evaluation, the Rector appointed persons responsible for the domains of self-evaluation: **the management and functioning of the organisation** – Helle Noorväli (Rector, person responsible for self-evaluation as a whole); Eda Vahero (Quality and Human Resources Manager, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs); Ellen Einla (Administrative and Financial Director); **study activities, including study programme groups** – Eda Vahero (Vice Rector for Academic Affairs), Virve Transtok (the Head of the Chair), Reet Niilus (the Head of Academic Service) and the leading lecturers of the curricula; **research, development and/or other creative activities**, (TAL) – Hille Ainsar (Vice Rector for Development), Virve Transtok (the Head of the Chair); **servicing society** – Tiia Murulaid (the Head of the Centre for In-service Training and Retraining), Kaie Kranich (lecturer and working environment specialist).

AGGREGATED DATA OF LVRKK

Table 1 presents aggregated data of students, and data analysis is outlined in the respective chapters of the document.

Table 1. Aggregated data on students by curricula

	Business and Administration study programme group (SPG)	Business Administration	Commercial Economics	Assistant Manager	Accounting	Management of Business Information Systems (MISK)	Social Services SPG (Social work)	TOTAL
Total number of students (as at 10.11)								
2013	604	151	152	60	226	15	246	850
2014	552	153	116	58	193	32	207	759
2015	628	169	129	68	205	57	234	862
2016	707	192	136	91	222	66	244	951
2017	720	187	132	108	224	69	228	948
Number of students admitted (as at 10.11)								
2013	288	47	70	38	118	15	78	366
2014	248	51	55	36	86	20	76	324
2015	307	67	64	46	101	29	81	388
2016	273	73	45	45	88	22	81	354
2017	250	50	50	45	80	25	70	320
Number of graduates								
2013	183	30	43	18	92		74	257
2014	216	31	65	31	89		81	297
2015	170	37	35	29	69		43	213
2016	139	35	24	19	54	7	49	188
2017	141	25	32	16	55	13	58	199
Number of dropouts								
2012/2013	98	36	26	7	29		58	156
2013/2014	86	21	24	9	29	3	41	127
2014/2015	76	15	19	11	26	5	11	87
2015/2016	62	15	14	7	19	7	26	88
2016/2017	103	34	24	13	23	9	26	129
Student mobility								
2012/2013	13	5		3	5		3	16
2013/2014	12		1	4	5	2	2	14
2014/2015	17	10	1	2	3	1	6	23
2015/2016	30	4	14	7	5		8	38
2016/2017	20	11	7	1	1		3	23

I REPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

1. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION

1.0 Report on the consideration of recommendations made in the previous report for institutional accreditation

Proposal: *The College has to ensure that the main forms of study (e.g. workplace-based training and cycle study) are hereafter also reflected in the course of development planning, future development plans and follow-up activities.*

We have employed workplace-based training in vocational education for years now, but in Estonian institutions of higher education such training is still in its pilot stage. We intend to start with such studies after the end of the pilot stage in the curricula of Accounting, Social Work and Commercial Economics.

The operational plan of the college development plan highlights the activities for the better application of cycle study (the improvement of students' and lecturers' digital skills, the development of e-courses and e-study objects, the making of lecture recordings, a more thorough study of Moodle use, etc.).

Proposal: *It is necessary to improve the efficiency of College marketing and external communication in connection with a future decrease in the number of potential students. In Estonia awareness about the studies offered, including cycle study, must be increased with the help of a marketing strategy.*

In 2016 we renewed our marketing strategy with an action plan in which we specified the communication channels by age group in order to adjust marketing activities to better meet the target groups' needs (including the students in cycle study). We will implement the Facebook content marketing plan, we will carry out digital marketing campaigns in Facebook and Google and we will measure the results.

Proposal: *The College must set more ambitious objectives for its employees.*

Arising from the objectives set in the development plan the lecturers of the College have in recent years put more effort to receiving international experience. For example, they have taken part in the teaching process in institutions of higher education abroad, taken part in external projects, organised (and also participated) in international weeks, etc. The College has involved lecturers with PhD degree and doctoral students in the study activities and in carrying out applied research.

1.1 General management

The management of the College is based on the development plan and quality management system.

Objective: The management of the College is transparent, democratic and purposeful; it involves study, development, administration and financial activities and is based on the principles of quality management which are the following: learner centeredness, initiative and common objectives, being oriented to results and processes, continuous learning and development, and development of cooperation and social accountability. In the achievement of the objectives of the College the management supports and leads its members.

Quality management is based on the Deming circle method (plan-do-check-adjust) and it is process-based (see Figure 1). The objective of the quality management system of the College

is to train employees who meet the expectations of stakeholders, to ensure the carrying out of applied research and development projects.

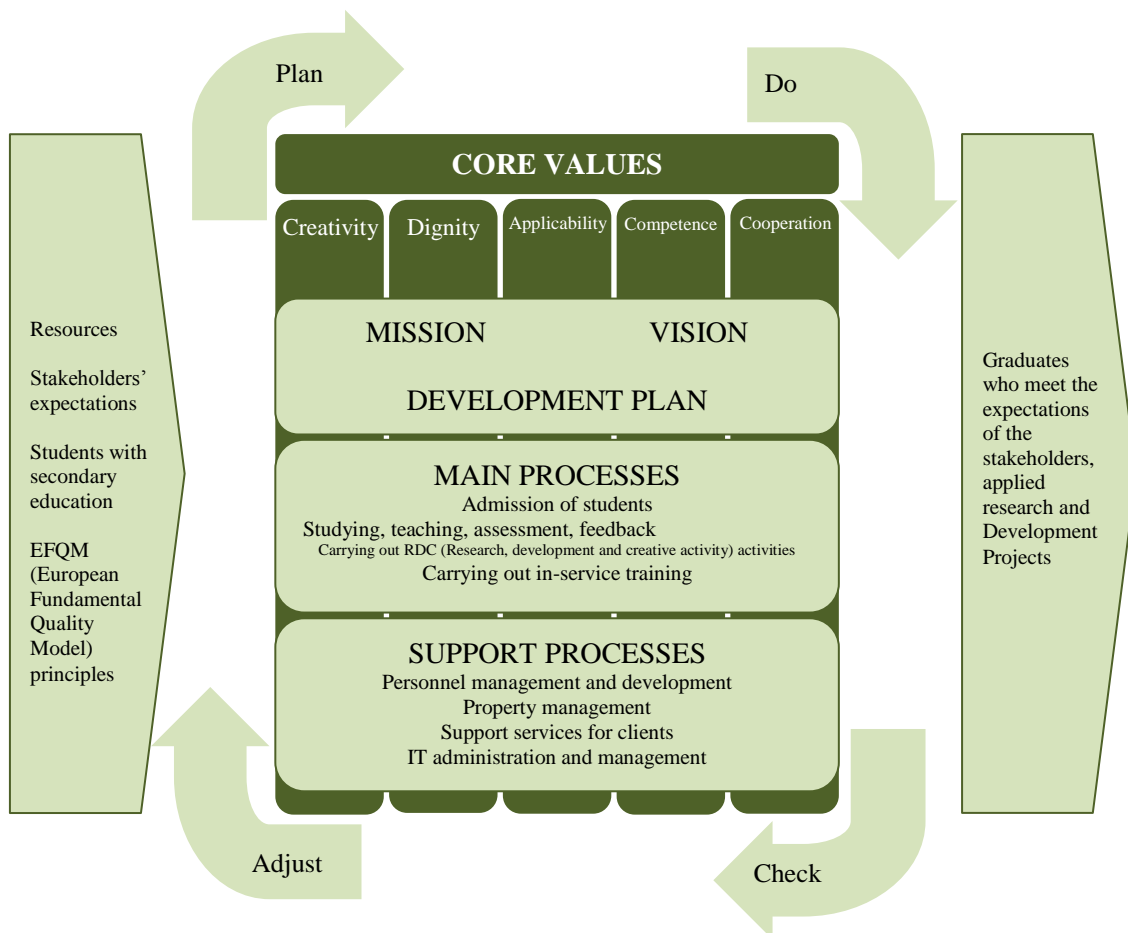


Figure 1. Process-based functioning model of the College

1.1.1 The Role of the College in the Estonian Society

The role of the College in the society has been defined in article 4 of the Statutes (est, eng). The goal of the College is to be a nationally and internationally recognised educational institution with a contemporary learning environment that offers instruction in the areas of economics, management, entrepreneurship, services and social affairs and helps raise the population’s awareness of entrepreneurship and innovation, provides lifelong learning opportunities and carries out applied research and development activities in the specialities it teaches. Arising from the College’s goals, role in society, the region’s expectations regarding the education of specialists in the curricula taught, the carrying out of in-service training and applied research, the College’s development plan is prepared, describing the objectives, vision and mission of the next five years.

Results and analysis:

- 1) we have affiliated the quality agreement of the institutions of professional higher education and the Agreement on Good Practice in the Internationalisation of Estonia’s Higher Education Institutions;

- 2) we have voluntarily taken part in many external assessments, including higher education quality projects and in the work of the quality workgroup of the Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences (RKRN);
- 3) as a member of RKRN we are involved in the development and cooperation projects related to higher education;
- 4) the College is the only educational institution in Estonia in which students can acquire professional higher education in the curricula of Commercial Economics, Business Information Systems Management, Assistant Manager and Accounting;
- 5) the number of students and graduates was relatively stable in 2015-2017 and as such ensures the sustainability of the College; 600 economics and social work specialists have entered the labour market and their three-year-average **speciality** employment was 77%;
- 6) we are a significant partner for the Association of Estonian Accountants (AEA) and the Estonian Assistants Society both in the field of employee training and the development of the field, as well as in carrying out vocational exams;
- 7) in cooperation with companies/agencies the teaching staff has carried out 15 research studies within the last three years; most graduation theses are also of a practical nature, targeted at solving the problems of companies/agencies;
- 8) the In-service Training and Retraining Centre has become an important regional centre that offers in-service training, retraining and counselling services, providing life-long learning and counselling services for different target groups (see chapter 4.2).

1.1.2 The conformity of the development plan and operational programme to the mission, vision, core values and national priorities and the expectations of society

The vision and mission of the College are based on the objectives arising from the statutes of the College and the expectations of society. The College considers its task to be the shaping of student and employee attitudes based on core values in order to transform them into intelligent, competent and dignified employees in their field. The College designs its development plan and the operational plan based on the statutes, mission, vision and core values. The development plan is complemented by yearly strategies and the operational plan. During the compilation of the development plan the following were taken into account: laws and regulations that govern the work of the College (Institutions of Applied Higher Education Act and Vocational Educational Institutions Act, higher education and vocational education standards), national strategies, speciality and sectoral development plans (including international development trends) that influence the College activities and curricula and the development thereof.

In its development plan the College has specified the following areas for carrying out its objectives: membership, studies, development activities and applied research, serving the society, management and communication and study and work environment. The areas have defined objectives and the present report analyses the achievement of these objectives in the respective sections.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the most important guidance documents during the compilation of the development plan 2014-2018 were the following: the Estonian Strategy of Higher Education and Internationalisation of 2006-2015; the Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy "Knowledge-based Estonia 2014-2020"; the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020; the workforce demand estimate of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications up to 2017;

- 2) admission criteria conform to the mission and objectives of the College and enhance the development of a motivated body of students;
- 3) in the planning of study positions the following are taken into account: the needs of society, the proposals of the OSKA system of monitoring and forecasting demand for workforce and in the launching of curricula the national strategies and the expectations of society;
- 4) the development plan and operational plan are based on the results of stakeholders' feedback, the experts' proposals (including those by the Curriculum Councils and the Advisory Council) and comparisons with institutes of higher education;
- 5) the operational plan and other action plans take into account the recommendations given by external evaluators (quality assessment experts for institutional accreditation and study programme groups, etc.) to ensure the quality of studies and effectiveness of RDC activities;
- 6) participation in RDC networks enhances the competitiveness of the areas taught in the College and ensures the quality and comparability of curricula;
- 7) the College has very actively contributed to serving society with different activities.

1.1.3 The determination of the key results of the College

In order to achieve the objectives of the College development plan, measurable key results will be defined and the respective agreement will be based on the most important objectives, sectoral priorities and expectations of the stakeholders, including those of society and the goals set by the Ministry of Education and Research for the College that help to ensure the sustainability of the College. The achievement of key results will be analysed by the Rector's Office twice a year and the results will be announced to the College Council, Advisory Council and the employees. When the period of the development plan is completed, the heads of the fields will compile a summary on the achievement of the results of the previous period.

The achievement of key results by 2017:

- 1) the total number of students has decreased as we will close vocational education curricula in 2018. However, the number of students has increased about 10% compared with 2015. The average number of students by curricula is 158 (objective in 2017 was 140);
- 2) the proportion of dropouts, which was 12.6%, was within the limits established (objective 13% in 2017);
- 3) eighty percent of graduates work in their field of specialisation (objective 72% in 2017);
- 4) in 2015-2017 in-service training was provided for 1,552 people in the amount of 9,722 training hours and 1,070 hours of counselling services (psychological, debt, financial and entrepreneurial counselling) were provided. The revenues received from in-service training have increased by 55% compared to the base year;
- 5) in 2017 the international mobility of students was 2.4% (objective 4.0%); 35 employees went on to teach and acquire experience;
- 6) the number of students per lecture was 38 in 2017 (objective at least 35);
- 7) 43 applied research studies were conducted during the last three years (including 15 commissioned by companies/agencies, the objective was 14) and 60 publications were released (see Table 14).

The expected key results for 2018 (see operational plan 2018, est):

- 1) the proportion of dropouts: not more than 13% per year as it supports the achievement of greater graduation effectiveness;
- 2) increase the graduates' **speciality employment**: at least 78% **in all curricula**;
- 3) carry out annually at least five applied research studies commissioned by companies/agencies;
- 4) increase the sales revenue from in-service and retraining courses by at least 5%;
- 5) increase the students' mobility to the level of at least 4.2%;
- 6) retain the number of students at a curriculum on the level of at least 150;
- 7) retain the number of students per lecturer on the level of at least 35.

1.1.4 The drafting of the development plan and the operational programmes and the management of their implementation by senior management, the involvement of members and stakeholders

The drafting of the development plan and operational plan is launched by the Rector's Office and the process is managed by the Rector and the Vice Rector for Development. The Rector's Office will analyse the results of the previous development plan (each head of field will highlight the most important results and shortages; the analysis is also based on the curriculum development reports drafted by leading lecturers), the starting points of the new development plan will be confirmed (if necessary the College strategies will be amended, e.g. the RDC and the internationalisation strategy (est, eng) and IT-strategy (est)), the structure and the theme groups for the compilation of the development plan. The defining of the starting points of the development plan is based on sectoral and national development plans and strategies, demographic changes in the country, stakeholders' feedback, the needs and possibilities of the state and the area, possible risks and the performance targets set for the College by the Ministry of Education and Research. Together with the heads of working groups the vision and mission and core values will be renewed and a SWOT analysis will be carried out that will be presented to the members for public discussion. Work on the development plan will continue in working groups in which the result indicators for every field (including key results and activities for the achievement of activities) will be agreed upon. Result indicators will also be defined based on the indicators compared with other institutions of higher education. The working groups will include cooperation partners, employers, Curriculum Councils, employees and students in their discussions. The draft development plan and operational plan will be submitted to the Advisory Council and the Ministry of Education and Research for making proposals. The development plan will be approved by the College Council.

The compliance with the operational plan of the development will be analysed twice a year in the Rector's Office (in January and August), in Chair meetings (in June and December) and once a year in the College Council and Advisory Council.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the compilation and implementation of the development plan involves students, the student council and the members of Curriculum Councils. The students' assessment of involvement as an average of the last three years has been 3.06 (on a 4-point scale), slightly down as compared to 2014 (-0.14). This may be accounted for by the increased proportion of students in cycle study because of which it is often difficult to find a suitable time for cooperation;

2) the members of the management take an active part in networks and decision-making bodies in order to be involved in decision-making in the area and receive new information for making management decisions. **Rector Helle Noorväli** is a member of the Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences (RKRN), a member of the ERASMUS+ steering committee, the chairman of the professional council of business services and other business activities, a member of the advisory body of the Association of Estonian Accountants, a member of the board of the Lääne-Viru Education Personnel Union, and a member of the accountants' Professional Qualifications Committee of the Estonian Association for Advancement of Vocational Education (EKEÜ). **Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Quality and Human Resources Manager Eda Vahero** is a member of the working committees of RKRN Vice Rectors for Quality and Academic Affairs; **Vice Rector for Development Hille Ainsar** is a member of Eurament and Business Game, the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) network and the working group for RKRN research, development and creative activities (TAL); **lecturer of social work Meeli Männamäe** is a member of the professional council of social welfare; **the Head of the Centre for In-Service Training and Retraining Tiia Murulaid** is a member of the board of Association of Estonian Adult Educators (AEAE) Andras and the Estonian Assistants Society and an evaluator of adult educators; **the Head of Academic Service Reet Niilus** is a member of the steering committees of the Student Information System (SIS) and admission information system (SAIS); the leading lecturers of curricula, Head of the Chair, etc. take part in the work on national working groups for the development of vocational education curricula, etc.

1.1.5 Defining and describing responsibility on all levels of management to support the achievement of College objectives and the cohesive functioning of core processes

The management of the College is based on College statutes, its structure (est, eng), the statutes of structural units, job descriptions and other legal acts. The College is managed and represented by the Rector, who is responsible for the general state and development of the College and the legal and purposeful use of its funds. The highest collegial decision-making body of the College is the **Council** that is elected for the term of three years. The members of the Council (see home page) include: vice rectors, financial and administrative director, head of chair, lecturers (3) and student representatives (2). The Council is led and the fulfilment of its decisions is ensured by the Rector. The Rector's advisory body is the **Rector's Office**, which consists of the following: vice rectors, the financial and administrative director, the head of chair, the head of academic service, the quality and human resources manager and the head of the centre for in-service training and retraining. The advisory body of the College is the **Advisory Council**, which increases the coherence between the College and the society. The Rector appoints Vice Rectors to manage different fields of activity and specifies their area of responsibility, rights and duties, and accountability. Vice Rectors act as the Rector's substitute under authorisation of the Rector.

The structure of studies is managed by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, who ensures the conformity of academic affairs to statutes, laws and other legal acts. The position of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs has temporarily been combined with the position of the Quality and Human Resources Manager.

The whole of the quality management system is the responsibility of the **Quality Manager**, who is guided in his/her activities by the quality management action plan (an annex to the operational plan of the development plan) and procedure for the collection of feedback and indicators.

The structure of studies is formed by the chair and the academic service, the activities of which are specified in their respective statutes. The **chair** is a structural unit which organises the implementation and development of six curricula of higher education and six curricula of vocational education. A chair is led by the head of chair and assisted by secretaries whose task is to ensure the conformity of study-related documents to the laws and formatting requirements. The head of the chair is responsible for the results of the work of the chair, the development thereof and the lawful and optimal use of the funds, the development and quality of curricula, the coordination of the work of the leading lecturers and the teaching staff of the curricula in the process of conducting studies and curricula development. The **leading lecturers** arrange the implementation and development of curricula, cooperation with stakeholders and the work of the Curriculum Council.

The main task of the **Head of Academic Service** is to ensure the organisation of high-quality academic work in the College and the conformity of the work of academic services to the applicable legislation, its statutes and job description.

The **Structure for Development** is formed by the Centre for In-Service Training and Retraining, the library and the chair that conducts substantive development work. The **Structure for Development is headed by the Vice Rector for Development**, whose responsibilities involve work on the development plan, internationalisation, external communication, cooperation relations with partners and project work. The objective of **library** activities is to support the academic, research and development activities of the College and to provide high-quality library and information services to students, lecturers, employees and the people living in the municipality and to other readers.

The objective of the **In-Service Training and Retraining Centre** is to create opportunities for lifelong learning and to provide consultation services to various stakeholders.

The **administrative structure of the College** is formed by the following units: accounting and administrative department (including the canteen and student homes) the main activity of which is to support development and studies.

The administrative structure is headed by the Administration and Finance Director, whose main tasks involve budget drafting and supervision, cost accounting, etc. The accounts and human resource accounting of public institutions of professional higher education is centralised, but the source documents are prepared in the College.

The task of the **administrative department** is to organise and develop administrative activities in order to ensure the sparing use of state property given into the use of the College and provide an infrastructure that meets the modern requirements and endorses studies and work.

The representative body of the students that is responsible for and organises the activities for students is the **student council**; the student council represents the students in their relations with the College, international organisations in Estonia and abroad, and agencies and individuals. The student council will select student representatives to the College Council and other decision-making and advisory bodies in the manner specified in the statutes (est).

The College has defined core and support processes. The more important and more complex process for the functioning of the College have been described. In order to map and adjust the processes, working groups are formed of the experts in the respective field under the leadership of the quality manager.

Different working groups and committees which involve employees, students and graduates are formed for the development and improvement of the College. As 85% of students are enrolled in cycle study, it is often difficult to find a suitable time for all for development activities.

The management and development activities of the College also involve **external stakeholders** (Advisory Council, Curriculum Councils, etc.) Cooperation has been

established with professional associations, the Ministry of Education and Research, the representatives of the employers, local municipalities and other partners. Cooperation agreements have been signed with major partners.

The documents that govern the activities of the College are regularly renewed: for example, the remuneration regulation, internal procedure rules, rules for the organisation of work (est), etc. are reviewed and, if necessary, improved once a year. The latter defines the employer and employee obligations and rules of behaviour in work relations. An ethics committee has been established for solving ethical misunderstandings; the committee is guided in its activities by the procedure for managing academic fraud and inappropriate behaviour (est, eng).

The management will receive information about the effectiveness of management from the annual student and employee surveys and performance appraisal interviews that are subsequently used to make amendments: for example, job descriptions, different procedures and other documents are changed, the areas of responsibility are specified, etc.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College management is purposeful; it supports the achievement of set objectives; the Rector and other members of the management take part in and lead all College activities and working groups;
- 2) the same management structure applied remained the same since 2007 and it ensured the stability and clarity of management. However, in order to make the functioning of the College more effective, to achieve the objectives of the College and to take into account the proposals made by the IA committee, it was reasonable to implement structural amendments: in 2017 the management of curricula was centralized under one chair as there was no admission to the vocational education curricula; in 2018 a transfer will be made to the matrix structure that will help to increase the effectiveness of applied research and ensure clearer tasks, chain of command and employee motivation, etc. The implementation of the matrix structure will be preceded by a comprehensive analysis of the management structure and work positions/tasks;
- 3) ratings for the support provided by the management have been high, remaining in the range of 4.09–4.64 (Appx. 7, Table 1).

1.1.6 The management of internal and external communication in the College

The objective of internal and external communication in the College is to ensure that the stakeholders have necessary and adequate information that creates the prerequisite for high-quality co-working, and stable and motivated membership.

Communication-related courses of action are described in the marketing strategy (est) that was created due to the College's development requirement, intensive competition in higher education and demographic trends. The strategy is implemented in the management of the structure for development and in cooperation with the chair.

The objective of internal communication that supports the achievement of the College's strategic objectives is to inform the members of the College, the participants of in-service training and internship supervisors and to involve them in the management of the College by making proposals and decisions. The College uses several electronical information channels to forward information and receive documents, for example the EKIS document management system, the intranet, e-mail lists, homepages, Skype, SIS, Moodle, etc. Information is also exchanged in information hours, working group consultations, internal training, and the meetings of the chair, Rector's Office, College Council and Advisory Council. The staff and students of the College have e-mail addresses and use lists for communication. The study

buildings and student homes are equipped with free-of-charge wireless internet connection and the A-block is equipped with the ability to hold video conferences.

The objective of external communication is to create a positive image for the public, media, partners and other interested parties of the study and work environment of the College. External communication is targeted at employers, internship agencies/companies, graduates, potential students, institutions of professional higher education and international cooperation partners as well as the region, the Ministry of Research and Education and society as a whole. In order to enrol motivated students, cooperation is taken with secondary schools and vocational educational institutions that are notified of the option to continue studies via different channels: information fairs, articles and advertisements in the media and web media, and the introduction of specialities in schools. Communication activities are planned throughout the calendar year, based on the objectives of the College and taking into account the analysis of the previous year's results and the feedback gathered about the effectiveness of communication. The most important channel of external communication available to all target groups is our homepage that lists links to social media channels: Facebook, YouTube, etc. The College has carried out digital marketing campaigns in Facebook and has used Google AdWords and Google Remarketing opportunities to advertise the specialities taught (including different study forms) during the admission period and for the marketing of in-service courses and counselling services. The possibilities of Google Analytics have been used to define the target groups of marketing and to analyse the results. The homepages of our most important cooperation partners (e.g. the Estonian Traders Association, the Association of Estonian Accountants, the Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences) provide information about our College. Marketing activities are carried out based on the academic calendar of the College, marketing strategy, event calendar and College budget.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College has a motto: "A distinguished beginning - better future" and insignia (Rector's ceremonial chain of office, a mascot, a college cap, etc.);
- 2) the availability of information is ensured via different channels;
- 3) the College has a functioning homepage (the feedback of applicants of 2017 showed that according to 60% of respondents the homepage is the initial source of information about the College) and intranet;
- 4) the members consider internal communication to be sufficient The employee satisfaction with the availability of study- and management-related information has been on the rise (see Figure 2). This increase is related to the sharing of information in various communication channels (briefings, the use of IT environments, direct everyday communication, etc.);

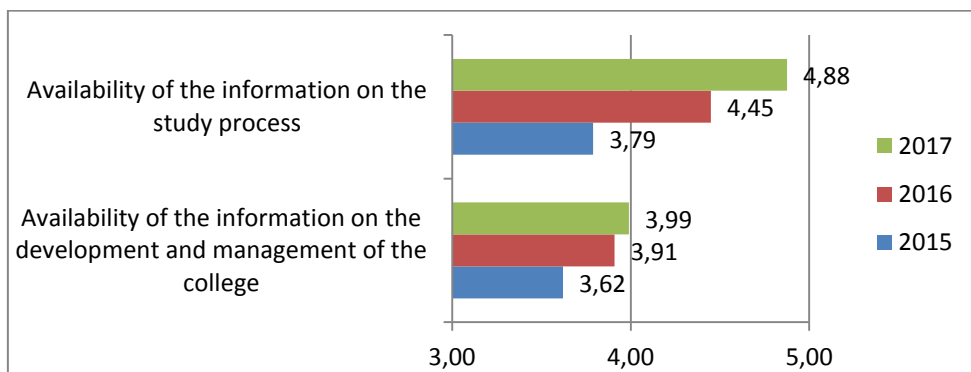


Figure 2. The employees' ratings of internal communication 2015-2017 (5-point scale)

- 5) the College has a functioning external communication system as also reflected by the students' high ratings as regards the information necessary for entrance (see Table 9);
- 6) the College representatives have introduced study and cooperation options by visiting foreign institutions of higher education (e.g. in Sweden, Finland, Portugal, France, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, Poland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, etc.) as members of county and national delegations and of the Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences and by taking part in projects;
- 7) in 2016 a Facebook content marketing plan was implemented. As a result, there are more than two posts a week. The number of people following the College graduates' page has increased by 200 a year;
- 8) with the help of Google Analytics the marketing activities are better channelled at the target groups, thereby enabling a decrease in marketing costs by 2%. With the help of Google Remarketing the provision of paid advising services was launched in 2016.

1.2 Human resources management

1.2.1 Employee recruitment and development principles and procedures

The objectives of the College in relation to human resources management: the College employees have professional competence, they are cooperative, results-oriented and a good example to the students. Employee development supports their well-being, competitiveness and ability to work.

The recruitment and development of employees is based on the statutes of the College, the requirements arising from law, the College development plan that defines the objectives of human resources development and the following documents: "The positions and qualification requirements of College teaching staff" ("LVRKK õppejõudude ametikohad ja kvalifikatsiooninõuded", est), "The procedure for the selection of teaching staff based on competition" ("LVRKK õppejõudude konkursiga valimise kord", est, eng) and "The conditions and procedure for the attestation of teaching staff and the self-evaluation of teaching staff in vocational education" ("LVRKK õppejõudude atesteerimise ning kutseõppe õpetajate enesehindamise tingimused ning kord", est). The employee recruitment and selection principles and the process thereof is outlined in the College human resources policy (est). In the selection of teaching staff (also during the attestation process at least once every five years) the candidates' conformity to the qualification requirements and the core values agreed upon in the College are monitored.

The selection gives preference to the candidates who are familiar with modern teaching methods, have compiled study materials as well as methodological materials and have improved their skills and knowledge required for teaching and research. Pedagogical and professional experience, as well as experience in student supervision and R&D achievements, are considered important. The average professional experience is 16.7 years and pedagogical experience is 17.6 years.

In the re-election and attestation of lecturers the feedback received from the students and the immediate superior is taken into account. Student satisfaction with the lecturers who have been re-elected with the help of a competition has been 3.91 on average in the last two years (4-point scale).

In the selection of support staff the conformity of candidates to the requirements set for the position (specified in the job description) and the readiness to work in the College are taken into account.

The recruitment process uses different communication channels - homepage, national newspapers, employment portals and communication networks. The recruitment of academic staff includes finding candidates from among successful visiting lecturers (who were given

positive feedback by the students) and amongst graduates. The lecturers are selected by the College Council and other staff by a committee appointed by the Rector. The Student Council is involved in the selection of teachers - they listen to a sample lecture delivered by the candidates and present their opinion to the Rector.

The development of staff (including lecturers) is based on the expectations of the stakeholders, the objectives and needs of the College, annual priorities and the results of performance appraisal interviews. In staff development internship, performance appraisal interviews, training and, in the case of new employees, the mentor system are used in addition to daily supervision and support. All employees have the opportunity to have internship in companies/agencies; the process is governed by the “Procedure for the employee internship” (est). Performance appraisal interviews are conducted with the direct superior once a year. During the interview the achievements are assessed (in the case of lecturers the activity report is analysed) and objectives and activities are set for the next academic year; training needs are agreed upon and these will be taken into account as input for the training plan. In addition to the employees’ wishes, the compilation of the training plan will take into account the development needs of the College, including the requirements arising from law and the feedback received from the students. As specialists in their field the employees will in general choose professional training courses themselves. The College supports the improvement of the employees’ level of education by giving paid time off for learning (e.g. the teaching staff has the right to 200 hours paid for doctoral studies, 80 hours paid for self-development, different study-related costs are compensated, etc.). Based on the “Procedure for applying for a free semester for teaching staff“ (est) the teaching staff has the ability to take one free semester every five years for creative activities. The effectiveness of employee development is assessed with the help of satisfaction surveys and performance appraisal interviews.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the active participation in training by the teaching staff (92–95% of academic staff takes part in training (see Table 2)) ensures up-to-date teaching: student satisfaction with the relevance of the subject course has as the average of the last three academic years been 3.84 (4-point scale);
- 2) the teaching staff is systematically supported, and the satisfaction of the teaching staff with the work of the support staff has been on average 4.4 (5-point scale) for the last three years (been);
- 3) arising from the human resource policy of the College, the employees are encouraged to take part in professional training. The training volume per employee has during the last three years remained on the level of 37 hours, but the number of training hours per lecturer is twice as high. In 2017 many employees took part in free-of-charge training courses organised by cooperation partners and as a result training expenses have decreased (see Table 2).

Table 2. Vocational training for the staff 2015–2017

	2015	2016	2017
Training hours	2577	2259	2192
Training hours per employee	39.7	35.9	37.2
Training hours per lecturer	81.3	61.5	77.9
The proportion of academic personnel in the training (%)	92.9	95.8	95.7
The proportion of support and administrative personnel in the training (%)	81.6	86.8	83.3
Total training expenses (€)	36,200	24,000	18,000

- 4) the training activity of the teaching staff ensures student satisfaction with the acquisition of knowledge and skills (see Figure 8);
- 5) the staff has been prepared to cope in extreme situations – 76.2% of the staff have completed training to cope in case of a sudden attack or crisis; 33.9% have completed first aid training;
- 6) the teaching staff is willing to take into account the special needs of the students; 53.5% of the lecturers have completed training to be able to notice dyslexia and dyscalculia;
- 7) to meet the expectations of the working world, all in all 11 lecturers have had internship abroad and 15 in Estonian companies/agencies in 2015–2017;
- 8) employee satisfaction with the opportunity to take part in in-service training is relatively high, and during the last three years it has been on the increase, remaining in the range of 4.00–4.60 (on a 5-point scale) (Appx. 7, Table 1);
- 9) the lecturers with PhD or respective level of education (including visiting lecturers) amounted to 81.6% of the academic staff of the College in 2015–2018 as a four-year-average; half of the support staff have MA degrees or a respective level of education, ensuring the high-level implementation of the main process and thereby guaranteeing the sustainability of the College (see Table 3). Three lecturers will shortly complete their doctoral studies. One of them started studies last year and one in 2018 after having completed the preparatory courses for doctoral studies. Although the number of lecturers with PhD or a respective qualification has increased, the number must be increased further to improve the quality of studies and applied research (objective 10% of the number of lecturers);

Table 3. Qualification of academic and support staff (as at 01.01)

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Academic staff, including visiting lecturers				
Doctoral level degree or equivalent (%)	4.1	5.6	6.0	5.7
Master's level degree or equivalent (%)	75.3	75.0	76.1	78.6
Proportion of academic staff (%)	79.4	80.6	82.1	84.3
Support staff				
Master's level degree or equivalent (%)	50	50	50	50

- 10) the breakdown of the staff by age is generally balanced (see Table 4);

Table 4. The breakdown of the academic, support and administrative staff by age (as at 01.01)

	Academic staff				Support and administrative staff			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
Age groups								
Up to 30	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	3
31–40	9	6	4	5	6	7	6	6
41–50	10	10	9	9	3	3	3	2
51–60	7	6	7	5	17	14	14	13
61 and older	2	4	4	4	9	10	11	12
Average age	47.3	48.4	50.0	49.5	51.8	50.1	51.9	52.5

- 11) the three-year average competition for the post of a member of academic staff has been 3.6, and for support staff 7.0. The staff turnover of the last three years (6.9%) shows that the College is an attractive yet stable place of work;

- 12) the proportion of graduates in the staff is 28.8%, and the proportion of graduates among academic staff is 34.8%.

1.2.2 Remuneration and employee motivation principles

The remuneration principles of the College have been defined in the “Remuneration Regulation” (est, eng). The remuneration is determined on the basis of the position in the structure, scope of responsibility, content and complexity of work, education and qualification. The work of the teaching staff is governed by Annex of the remuneration regulation “The basis for the calculation of lecturers’ work load” which defines which tasks are performed by the teaching staff, how the working time is calculated and how the reporting and performance pay is organised. The remuneration regulation are adjusted based on the collected feedback and changes to the law in the beginning of the academic and calendar year. In order to motivate the employees the College has compiled “The staff motivation system” (est). The motivators are divided into material (monetary) and immaterial categories. The immaterial motivators are divided into motivators that support self-development, health and personal well-being and motivators related to social needs (joint events, etc.). An important motivator is recognition. Every year the students will choose the best lecturer. The employees are recognised for their remarkable achievements (supervising students who take part in competitions, projects and applied research completed successfully, coping in extreme situations, etc.). The employees are remembered when they have jubilees, have a baby, get married, reach a work-related jubilee, and retire. Every year the members of the College elect “The Deed of the Year”. Employee feedback is taken into account during the renewal of the motivation system.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the employees are remunerated and the work load of the teaching staff is calculated based on the agreed principles, and the changing of the above takes into account employee feedback. The employee satisfaction with the remuneration regulation is in the range of 3.63-3.82 on a 5-point scale (Appx. 7, Table 1);
- 2) the College has a functioning staff motivation system, and its development involves all employees; the employee satisfaction as regards recognition has increased during the last three years (Appx. 7, Table 1).

1.2.3 The survey of employee satisfaction and the application of the results thereof in improvement activities

The employee (including teaching staff) satisfaction is studied pursuant to the “Procedure for the collection of feedback and indicators” (est). The GoogleDrive environment is used for the collection of data. The survey studies satisfaction with the work load, development opportunities, access to information, management and working environment. The employees are able to comment on their ratings and make proposals for improvement. The proposals are forwarded to the managers of structural units. The survey results are available in the intranet. The improvements that can be applied quickly are implemented immediately, while the activities that require more time are included in the next year’s operational plan.

Results and analysis:

Employee satisfaction surveys are conducted annually; the results thereof are used to plan and implement improvements. Some examples of feedback:

- 1) the respondents have regularly highlighted good work and beautiful nature, the ability to use modern work equipment, supporting colleagues and development opportunities (training, project work);
- 2) the amount of information concerning employee satisfaction has been on the rise (see Figure 2); the intranet was taken into use to improve people's access to information;
- 3) satisfaction with the state of the public rooms and work equipment has remained high (see Figure 3);

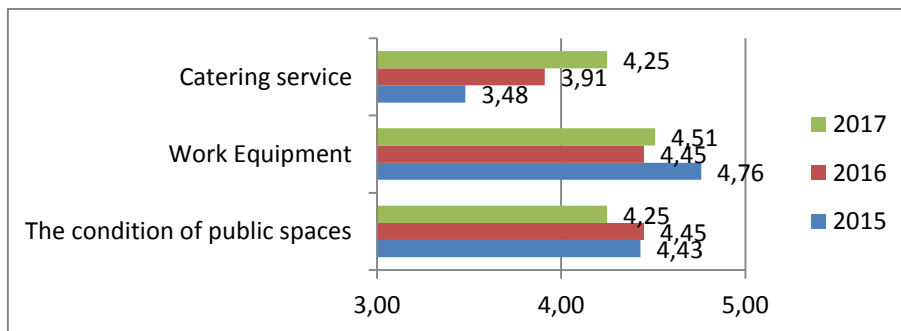


Figure 3. The staff satisfaction with the condition of public rooms, catering service and work equipment (5-point scale)

- 4) in order to improve catering services the canteen interior has been renewed and an electronic food ordering system created with the help of students has been taken into use (e-shop); kitchen equipment has been modernised and the skills of the canteen staff have been improved - as a result, satisfaction with the catering service has increased remarkably;
- 5) working premises have been renovated and ICT equipment has been renewed.

1.2.4 Employee participation in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks

Employee mobility planning is based on the priorities of the internationalisation of Estonian higher education, the internationalisation strategy of the College, the objectives of the College (including curricula development) and the development plan. The opportunities for mobility have been ensured with the help of different programmes and projects. The participation in cooperation projects is based on the principle that each curriculum has its international contacts. Internationalisation supports employees' self-development; people are allocated working time and financial resources for that purpose.

Employee participation in various international networks (see Chapter 3.2.3) supports the acquisition of international experience and the professional development of employees.

Results and analysis:

- 1) employee mobility has been on the rise in the last three years; the teaching staff has conducted studies abroad and received in-service training: for example, eight lecturers participated in in-service training in the United Kingdom in 2017 (see Figure 4);

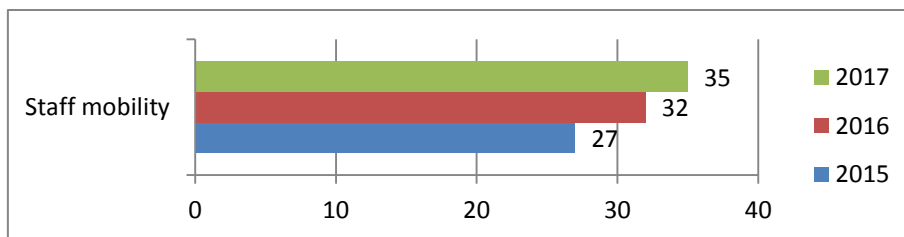


Figure 4. Employee mobility

- 2) the College has acquired additional resources from different programmes (Erasmus+, Interreg, Nordplus) for the international mobility of employees;
- 3) student satisfaction with the relevance of the subject course has for the last three academic years been 3.87 (4-point scale) on average; this shows that teaching is up to date.

1.2.5 The employee adherence to the principles of academic ethics

The College has agreed upon core values that the employees adhere to in their everyday activities; this also creates prerequisites for ethical behaviour. In the recruitment process of potential employees the candidates' attitudes and ethical principles, as well as their conformity to the core values of the College, are determined. The requirement to follow the principles of academic ethics is laid down in the following documents: "Human resources policy" ("Personalipoliitika"), "The College rules for the organisation of work" ("LVRKK reeglid töökorraldusele"), employee contracts and job descriptions. The graduation thesis supervisors are guided by "The Good Practice of the Supervisors and Students" (est), which helps to ensure adherence to the principles of academic ethics in the supervision process.

Results and analysis: the work of the teaching staff is guided by the core values of the College (e.g. dignity, adherence to ethics Principles) and the principles of equal treatment. The students' rating of equal treatment has in recent years remained on a high level (see Figure 5).

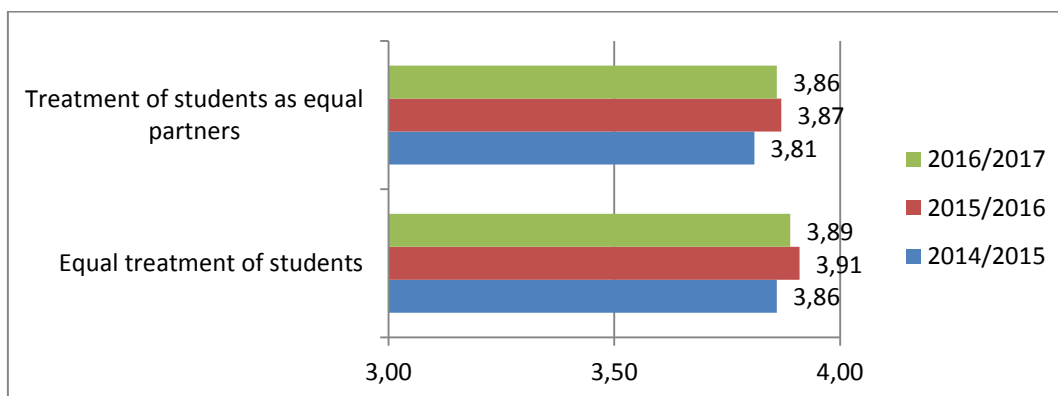


Figure 5. Equal treatment of students (4-point scale)

1.3 Management of funds and infrastructure

1.3.1 The allocation of funds and the expediency of the infrastructure administration and development

The breakdown of the College funds is based on the statutes of the College, the annual operational plan of the development plan (including investment plan), the financial management principles applicable in the College (implementation of the principles for the development/monitoring/fulfilment of the budget and the suitable cost accounting system). The use and management of funds aims to ensure the study and work environment that meets modern needs and supports studying and working. The everyday activities and management is also guided by the principles of nature-friendly and sustainable management. The compilation of the College budget and the presentation of reports is carried out pursuant to the Regulations for the Use of State Budget Funds and the Income from Economic Activity (est). The budget consists of the state budget funds, funds earned from economic activities and the budget for targeted financing, including projects. State budget funds are received from higher education activity support, the state-commissioned vocational education and resources allocated for special purposes (study allowances, etc.). Due to the principles of higher education funding (activity support does not depend on the number of students), any possible decrease in the number of students will not reduce the resources received from the state. However, the number of students at the College has been stable over the years and the demand for the graduates of the college (e.g. social workers, accountants, specialists with entrepreneurship, trade and IT skills) is increasing in society.

Funds earned from economic activities for budget funds constitute the partial compensation of study costs from degree studies, paid in-service training, the fees for the use of dormitory and other services (based on the “Procedure of Determination of Fees for the Paid Services of LVRKK”, est). Projects’ budget revenue refers to the targeted financing of the respective project or external aid. Budgetary expenditure is estimated by expenditure entries (including based on the applications submitted by structural units and the operational plan of the development plan, investment plan), whereas both cost-based as well as zero-based budgeting is used. The budget is discussed in the Rector’s Office, College Council and Advisory Council. The College budget that is accessible to the staff in the intranet is approved by the Rector’s decree. In order to manage the monetary resources of the College and to manage risks, the Rector and the financial and administrative director analyse budget implementation on a monthly basis, i.e. the compliance of revenue and expenditure with the budget and the prudential and expedient use of assets. An additional budget may be compiled if additional funds are received. Budget implementation is analysed on a regular basis at the meetings of the Rector’s Office and budget implementation is approved by the College Council at the end of the year.

Results and analysis:

- 1) budget revenue is received from different sources of financing (see Table 5); this helps to mitigate risks and ensure the fulfilment of the tasks arising from the statutes as well as the operational plan. Compared with 2015 budget revenue has decreased 13.9% as state-commissioned vocational education is no longer provided. In 2018 the higher education budget will increase by a couple of per cents due to the improvement of performance indicators. The objective is to increase the sales revenue received from in-service training and retraining and advisory services annually by 5%. The share of foreign funds was smaller in 2016 because the ESF had not yet opened its new calls for proposals;

Table 5. Budget revenue by financing sources (in euros)

Financing sources	2015	2016	2017
State budget funds	1,657,756	1,648,937	1,534,155
targeted state financing (state allowances, travel expenses etc.)	165,418	165,073	142,275
Revenue from economic activities	299,880	269,061	274,147
External resources	269,138	68,375	108,990
TOTAL	2,392,192	2,151,446	2,059,567

- 2) the effective use of budgetary funds is supported by the optimal ratio of students and teaching staff: in the College the ratio was 38 (objective 35) in 2017, whereas the average of Estonian institutions of higher education was 13;
- 3) the improvements in the objects of study and work environments (in 2015-2017 in the total amount of 354,303 euros) have been mostly made at the expense of revenues from economic activities and budgetary resources;
- 4) the College supports student activities annually in the amount of 6% of study expenditure budget.

1.3.2 The use of information systems that support the College management and the cohesive functioning of core processes

The use of modernized IT equipment and resources and the renewal, development and licencing of software takes place pursuant to the IT strategy of the College and creates a functioning and safe information system that supports the management of the College and the cohesive functioning of the core processes, thereby ensuring good study and work conditions for College members.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the internet speed is 1 Gb/s and there is free Wi-Fi in all buildings;
- 2) the admission information system SAIS is used for organising the admission process; Student satisfaction with the admission procedure has increased over the years for most indicators (see Table 8);
- 3) the study information system used is the SIS; the SIS is used to forward students the timetable and study results, including current information as regards the completion of the curriculum and the average grade, to print the students' graduation documents, and by students for submitting scholarship applications and applications for the Recognition of Prior Learning and Work Experience (RPL). In the implementation of SIS the student satisfaction with access to study information and results was low, but it has increased over the years. Since 2017 it has also been possible to log into the SIS by using Mobiil-ID;
- 4) the use of the study environment Moodle simplifies conducting the core process, i.e. studies. The students also find that the information systems could be better integrated (e.g. Moodle and the SIS). In 2019 a new SIS will be launched and it should solve the shortcomings of the former system;
- 5) the document management environment used is the EKIS document management system; EKIS is constantly being developed and its capabilities are gradually being taken into use;

- 6) for the submission of holiday and business travel applications and expenditure reports we use the e-Riigitöötaja Iseteenindusportaal (state employee self-service portal) where we receive overviews of training courses and the resources in use;
- 7) in order to compile and analyse human resource reports and financial reports we use the electronic BO environment of the business software SAP;
- 8) we use the WordPress content management system to create and administer the homepage as it enables a more flexible updating of information and is more user-friendly. The homepage is connected to the intranet, document register and different web environments (Moodle, SIS, RIKSWEB, the students' e-mail, etc.);
- 9) to ensure the sustainability of IT systems the servers have been renewed.

1.3.3 The conformity of the staff working conditions and the students' study and RDC conditions to the requirements arising from the specific character of the College and the expectations of the members

College buildings are located in Mõdriku and Rakvere: there are three academic buildings, two dormitory, a gym and auxiliary buildings in Mõdriku, and an academic and dormitory building in Rakvere that houses a student home and the In-Service Training and Retraining Centre; some rooms have been leased.

All in all the total area of the College buildings is 8,607 m², of which the area suitable for studies is 4,351 m² and the area of dormitory is 3,527 m², which is sufficient for the implementation of all curricula, RDC activities and in-service training and retraining.

The college constantly analyses the expedience and effectiveness of property use. The learning and working environment are constantly updated according to curricula development, the needs of students and employees (on the basis of membership satisfaction surveys) and occupational health requirements. The proposals and comments given in feedback have been discussed at the annual meetings of the work environment council and the College Council has been submitted proposals as regards the improvement of study and work environment.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College has a study environment, including IT equipment (five computer classes, the staff has work stations equipped for working with computers and laptops) and a secure IT system that meets modern needs;
- 2) the College has modern study laboratories (social services, commercial and digital) both for carrying out degree studies and in-service training and for conducting applied research, and a video conference room with the option to use the cloud service for lecture capture (Echo360). In order to diversify learning opportunities the lectures could be more actively recorded;
- 3) the College has the best library of economic and social sphere literature in the region, the objective of which is to support academic, research and development activities and to provide high-quality library and information services to students, teaching staff, employees and the people living in the municipality and other readers. The library holdings are compiled in cooperation with the teaching staff, based on the requirements of the curricula. The library users are ensured access to the EBSCO full text database and the web versions of the specialised magazines subscribed to by the library. In addition, the College has purchased access to EBSCO e-book collections: eBook Academic Collection, eBook Business Collection, SocINDEX with Full Text. The library provides its readers an ILL (interlibrary loan) service that enables readers to order publications and copies of research articles that are missing from the holdings from other libraries in Estonia and abroad. The

library uses the modern RIKS library software and readers are served upon the presentation of an identity card. For the better mobility of information the electronic catalogue of the library is connected to the SIS study information system;

- 4) in 2015-2017 the expenses for obtaining study materials have increased, but the costs for study equipment have remained on the level of 2015 due to a decrease in the proportion of vocational education. The great difference of expenses in IT equipment as compared to the base year is due to the digital laboratory established in 2015 with the support of ESF funds, which constituted 40% of the total costs (see Table 6);

Table 6. Expenses for obtaining study aids (in euros)

Study aids	2015	2016	2017
Textbooks:	15,270	15,434	17,640
Study aids	56,240	73,762	57,000
IT resources	67,265	26,763	26,800
Total	138,775	115,959	101,440

- 5) there are three dormitory for the students to use: three in Mõdriku and one in Rakvere, for a total number of 350 students; the rooms in the dormitory are renovated as resources accumulate from economic activities; unfortunately the state has so far not allocated additional resources for renovation;
- 6) the members can use the canteen, cafe and gym;
- 7) the resources of the College, including energy, are used sparingly: the buildings have been renovated and are energy-saving, solar-panels have been installed and geothermal heating is used in Mõdriku (we have built four geothermal boiler houses). As a result the energy-use of the buildings has decreased (see Figure 6). In addition, we have our own water, sewerage and cleaning equipment - as a result, the College's heating, water and sewerage costs are relatively low;

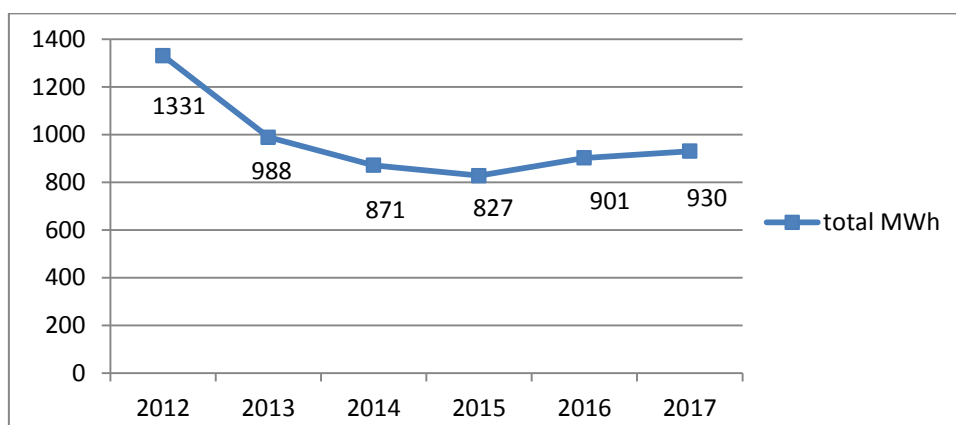


Figure 6. The energy consumption of buildings (MWh) in 2012-2017

- 8) to ensure safety there is video surveillance on the territory of the College;

Table 7. Student satisfaction with the study environment (4-point scale)

	2015	2016	2017
Condition of public rooms of the College	3.36	3.60	3.55
Condition of lecture halls	3.33	3.57	3.50
Library services	3.74	3.71	3.68
Catering service	2.77	2.95	3.34
Copying capability	3.70	3.75	3.71

9) student satisfaction with the study environment has been relatively good (see Table 7), and satisfaction with catering service has improved remarkably. This is probably due to the electronic food ordering system (e-Shop) created with the help of students. Staff satisfaction with working conditions and work equipment have been analysed in chapter 1.2.3.

Aggregate analysis of organisation and management

Strengths (+)	Activities for the maintenance/amplification of strengths
Purposeful, leading and inclusive management	Continuous inclusion of the membership in the management and development process
Competent and motivated employees, including teaching staff	Continuous training and motivation of staff
Contemporary and unique learning environment, including information systems	The continuous modernisation of the learning environment pursuant to the development of curricula and the students' needs
The management of risks arising from the price increases of resources	Geothermal heating and use of solar energy, monitoring cost-effectiveness
Areas for improvement (-)	Activities to remove shortcomings
The amendment of management structure to support study and RDC activities and to improve cost-effectiveness	The analysis of the current management structure, the determination of the areas of responsibility of structural units/unit managers, etc., the transfer to the matrix structure of management
An increase in the number of lecturers with a PhD	Implementation of the motivation package for doctoral studies (granting working time, compensation of expenses, etc.)
Renovation of dormitory	Finding resources for renovation

2. STUDIES

2.0 Report on the consideration of recommendations made in the previous report for institutional accreditation

Proposal: *the College must associate the learning outcomes of higher education clearly with the requirements set for level 6 of the Estonian Qualifications Framework and in the Standard of Higher Education.*

The preparation and development of all higher education curricula proceeds from the statutes of the curriculum, the Standard of Higher Education and the level 6 requirements of the Estonian Qualifications Framework (EstQF), the College's goals under the Development Plan, the expectations/needs of stakeholders (employers, graduates, teachers, students and society), and considers the state's strategies (lifelong learning strategy, etc.). The modernised curricula have undergone expert analysis both by specialists as well as curriculum experts (see Table 11 and analyses of curricula).

Proposal: *the College has to change the admission process based on the Recognition of Prior Learning and Work Experience (RPL), give its employees necessary directions as how to record the academic assessment of the applicants' prior learning and achieved learning outcomes and determine how to assess the applicants who have already completed a part of their studies.*

Arising from the proposals of the international accreditation experts we have made several improvements as regards RPL. The College does not apply RPL in following the admission criteria. All student candidates compete to be admitted to the **first year on the same basis**.

The earlier studies and work experience is taken into account pursuant to the **RPL procedure** (see also Chapter 2.3.3). The conformity of the learning outcomes acquired by RPL applicants to the learning outcomes of the curriculum/module/subject is assessed **individually** based on a personal application by using different methods (practical tasks, interview, etc.). Assessment results (minutes) are electronically available in the SIS environment for applicants and form a basis for assessing the completion of the curriculum.

Proposal: *the College must improve its admission procedure in order to better assess the level of student candidates and identify the candidates who do not speak Estonian as their mother language and who may therefore need additional support.*

A candidate who has not acquired secondary education in Estonian, must provide documents to prove their Estonian skills. In addition to documents that prove language skills, the actual Estonian language skills of the candidate will be determined during the interview and the admissions committee may send the student to have additional Estonian language lessons pursuant to the criteria and procedure established in the College. Following the principle of student centredness the students are offered individual organisation of work during their studies, if necessary.

Proposal: *the College must monitor the use of MOODLE by the students enrolled in cycle studies and their taking part in the study sessions in Mõdriku in order to receive better information about their progress more quickly. The students' progress must be measured more effectively in order to provide better support to those who are less successful in their studies.*

Based on the evaluation report, we have improved the use of the Moodle learning environment, which enables the teachers to manage the study process, incl. distribute study materials and organisational information, and assess and give feedback about the independent work of the students. Moodle will also help to monitor the students' progress more effectively. The contemporary study methods used include e-learning, which is especially

important for students in cycle studies (Moodle e-courses, forums, video lectures, etc.), as they allow students to focus on studies at the time that suits them. Online materials and e-courses allow students who work, have small children, etc. to study at their own pace, and revise what they learnt if necessary.

In order to support the students' academic progress and prevent their dropping out, we continuously monitor their participation in studies and their academic progress (see Chapter 2.3.1 and 2.4.2).

Proposal: *the measures to identify plagiarism and prevent the breaking of other academic rules of behaviour need to be applied more effectively. The College must periodically carry out rapid analyses of students' work or, if necessary, subcontract such analyses, in order to make sure that there is no plagiarism or other violations of academic rules of behaviour.*

Arising from the recommendations made by the assessment committee, we have more effectively applied the measures to identify plagiarism and prevent the breaking of other academic rules of behaviour (see Chapter 3.3.3). According to the procedure the prevention of non-academic behaviour is carried out throughout the study process; all curricula involve explanations to prevent the occurrence of plagiarism. The cases of plagiarism have been mapped and analysed by the committee. The use of the tools to identify plagiarism is systematic, in general; different programmes (incl. URKUND) are used. During the current academic year the College teaching staff will conduct an applied research study entitled: "The problems encountered using intellectual property in the theses in Lääne-Viru College".

2.1 Effectiveness of study activities and the formation of the body of students

2.1.1 The determination and achievement of study-related objectives

The general objectives of study activities have been determined in the development plan; an operational plan is prepared annually for its implementation into which the chair also gives its input. When setting study objectives, the following are taken as a starting point: the performance targets, development plans of different areas, the objectives of curricula and the proposals made by the Curriculum Councils. The goal of study activities is a constant and sustainable development of curricula that considers all stakeholders and uses best practices, incl. international ones. The key results of studies are: graduation effectiveness and proportion of dropouts, the employment of graduates in their specialisation and the optimal number of students in a curriculum. The organisation of study is flexible, student-centred and supports the implementation of curricula and achievement of key results. The graduates are competitive on the labour market and they have developed prerequisites for lifelong learning. The counselling services that support academic progress and coping in College are accessible to all students.

The study activities are governed by the following main documents: curricula, rules of organisation of studies (est, eng), study schedule (est), the statutes of the curriculum (est, eng), academic calendar (est), admission criteria and procedure (est, eng), RPL procedure (est, eng) and students' statutes.

A quality management system has been applied to complete study-related activities; we have taken part in various external assessments, including quality-related projects; we have analysed the academic progress of students and the employment of graduates on the labour market.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the number of students has increased compared to 2015 by 10%; this is due to high competition and partly by OSKA proposals, having by now achieved the optimal level (see Table 8); the average number of students on a curriculum has increased by 18 as compared to the objective;
- 2) the number of graduates has been relatively stable; a slight decrease in 2016 was due to the great number of students on academic leave (also on parental leave). As a result, the proportion of graduates who have completed their studies within the nominal length of a curriculum in the number of all enrolled students is the lowest of the last three years but has been higher than the average of Estonian institutions of higher education (47%);

Table 8. The number of candidates admitted, the number of students and graduates and effectiveness (as at 10.11)

	2015	2016	2017
Number of students admitted	387	354	320
Number of students	862	951	948
The average number of student in a curriculum (6)	144	158	158
The number of graduates	213	188	199
The effectiveness of graduation (%)	62	50	53
including the SPG of Business and Administration	57	54	48
including the SPG of Social Services	67	45	62
The average effectiveness of graduation of Estonian higher education institutions (%)	-	47	50

- 3) the graduates mostly find work in their field of specialisation. The level to be achieved (72%) has been attained (see Figure 7).

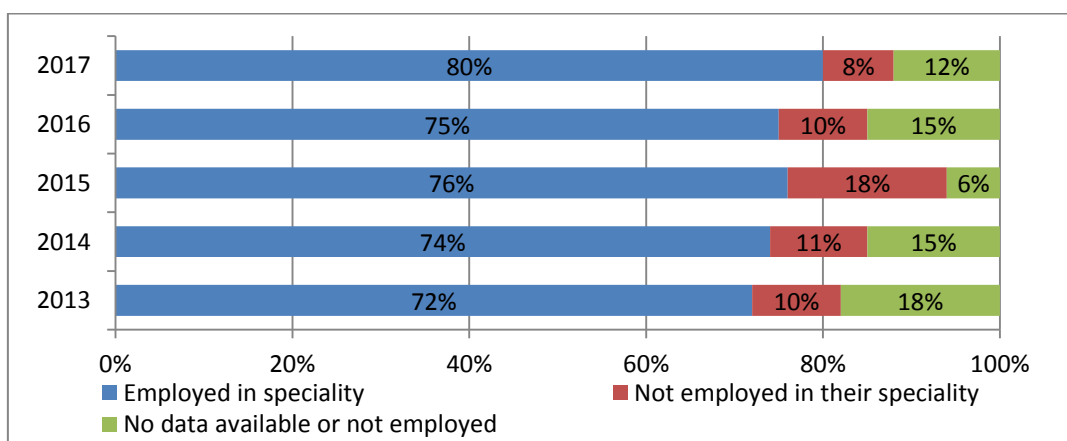


Figure 7. The employment of the graduates

2.1.2 Creating prerequisites to ensure the competitiveness of the graduates both nationally and internationally

The College curricula are guided by the expectations of society and the region and are based on professional standards which are developed in cooperation with the College teaching staff. The learning outcomes of curricula, modules and subjects are formulated based on the speciality and its development and the achievement of these will ensure the competitiveness of the graduates. The curricula have been compared with both those of Estonian as well as foreign establishments of higher education (see Chapter 2.2.2). The competitiveness can be

improved by the international mobility of students and teaching staff (see Chapters 2.4.3; 1.2.4).

Internship that is organised in cooperation with the employers plays an important role in curricula. The studies (including the committees involved in the defence of graduation thesis and assessment of final exams) involve employers and practitioners as visiting lecturers. The College has laid down the qualification requirements for the teaching staff and the conformity with the requirements is assessed by the competition committee during the selection process. Full-time academic staff is obligated to have two weeks internship in companies/agencies within three years, thereby improving their professional skills. Professional skills are also improved by participation in international projects and cooperation networks as well as by access to a library equipped with up-to-date specialised literature.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the students are asked to provide feedback as regards the study process, which helps to assess the students' satisfaction with the acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills (see Figure 8). The results are improving; the highest rating has been given to the skills of independent work and acquisition of theoretical knowledge; compared to the reference year the rating given to the acquisition of practical skills has increased the most (10.2%);

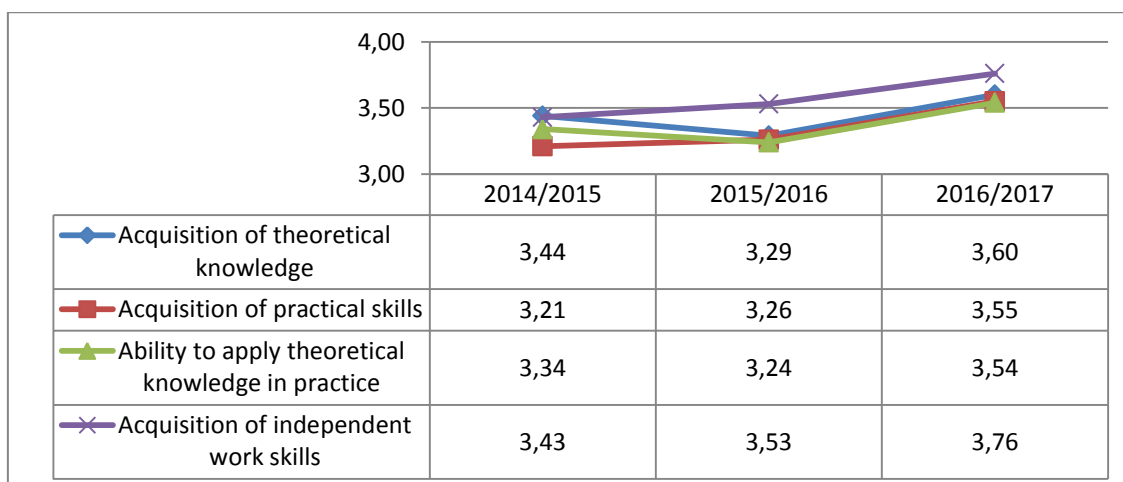


Figure 8. Student satisfaction with the acquisition of knowledge and skills (4-point scale)

- 2) internship forms a very important part of the curriculum (depending on the curriculum 16-27%); therefore the objectives of internship, its content and organisation has constantly been improved. The principles for the organisation of internship are outlined in the handbook (est), internship documents have been renewed, and a connective internship model has been introduced in order to better associate the things learnt in the company and school with the transfer of knowledge. Good cooperation with internship companies/organisations, trilateral assessment of internships and constant training of internship supervisors (187 supervisors were trained in 2015–2017) supports the achievement of the learning outcomes of the internship and improves the competitiveness of the students;
- 3) the College collects feedback from the internship supervisors from companies/agencies as regards the students' knowledge, skills and coping with work tasks; the feedback is then analysed and the results are, if necessary, used to improve the curriculum, organisation of studies, and subject and internship programmes (see chapter 2.2.2);

- 4) the students themselves also give feedback as regards supervision received during internship. Of respondents, 98% are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with company supervision and 96% of the respondents with the organisation of internship by the College (see Appx. 8, Table 2);
- 5) studies involve competent practitioners with entrepreneurship experience and/or practitioners competent in their field; on average 30 practitioners a year;
- 6) the competitiveness of the graduates is witnessed by the high rate of employment in the field of specialisation (see Figure 7);
- 7) the College has the best library in the region equipped with the specialised literature in the fields of business and social services.

2.1.3 The planning of student places and development of a motivated body of students

In the planning of student places the College is guided by its objectives and resources, the activity support for higher education, student employment, the needs of the labour market and the wishes of the students. The planning involves the head of the chair, the academic service and the leading lecturers of the specialities, but the final decision as regards the number of student places is made by the College Council.

Admission criteria of the College conform to its mission and objectives and are a prerequisite for the development of a motivated body of students; The admission criteria are unambiguous and defined by the admission criteria and procedure that is renewed annually due to the amendments to the law and received feedback (feedback from the candidates, the proposals by the admission staff, proposals by the leading lecturers of the speciality and the teaching staff). In recent years the main admission criteria have been the average grade of the certificate of secondary education and the admission test. The admission test will consist of a written part and an interview. The test is used to assess the candidate's expression and communication skills, learning motivation, familiarity with the speciality and professional willingness. A candidate who has not acquired secondary education in Estonian, must provide documents to prove their Estonian skills. In addition the admission committee has the right to determine the Estonian language skills of the candidate during the admission interview and impose an obligation to study Estonian additionally pursuant to the criteria and procedure established in the college.

The admission information and the admission criteria and procedure concerning the admission, as well as curricula and other information, are available on the homepage at least three months prior to the start of admission. Potential students will receive additional information by e-mail and phone from the academic service, the chair, the leading lecturers of the speciality various fairs, social networks, open house days, etc. The College uses the SAIS admission information system for receiving applications.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College offers flexible study options that encourage studying and working at the same time;
- 2) the number of students admitted has been decreased compared to 2015 by 17.3% to ensure a motivated body of students and sufficient coping with the budget (the budget no longer depends on the number of students) (see Tables 1 and 8);
- 3) arising from the proposals of the OSKA system of monitoring and forecasting demand for workforce and high competition, the largest number of students was admitted to the

- curriculum of accounting; at the same time, fewer students were enrolled in the curriculum of social work;
- 4) the average grade of the students enrolled was 4.1 in 2017 and the competition to one study place was 2.7;
 - 5) the satisfaction with the organisation of admission of first year students is very good (see Table 9). The proposals arising from the feedback and made in the course of admission procedure are either applied immediately or next year.

Table 9. The satisfaction of first year students with the organisation of admission (5-point scale)

	2015	2016	2017
The comprehensiveness of the information necessary for entrance	4.68	4.81	4.69
The availability of the information necessary for entrance	4.73	4.69	4.75
Reception of additional information from school	4.57	4.94	4.78
The organisation for the reception of documents	4.82	4.81	4.86
Receiving information about the entrance results	4.85	4.81	4.88

2.1.4 Creating opportunities for studying at the College despite of special needs

Equal opportunities have been created for all candidates who want to be admitted to the College.

Students with special needs (in the 2017/2018 academic year there are 19 students with special needs studying at the College) have been created a counselling system (est) (See also Chapter 2.4.2) and a physical environment that takes into account special needs (classrooms and the library have wheelchair access, it is possible to apply for a scholarship for students with special needs). 53.5% of the lecturers have completed training to be able to notice dyslexia and dyscalculia.

The principle of focusing on the students is followed, which means that individual organisation of work is implemented for students during their studies if necessary (e.g. it is possible to change the time of the internship, replace a written exam with an oral one, etc.).

2.2 Curriculum development

2.2.1 The launching of curricula depending on the objectives of the College and the labour market needs, taking into account national strategies and society's expectations

When launching curricula the College is guided by the objectives of the curriculum and the needs of the labour market and takes into account the national higher education strategy and society's expectations. Curricula are launched when there is a clearly justified need for the relevant specialists to be trained based on the given curricula as well as adequate academic and material resources. The curricula meet the Standard of Higher Education and professional standards, and have been approved by the College Council and registered in EHIS. The launching, amending and closing of College curricula are governed by the statutes of the curriculum. Most recently a curriculum was created due to the needs of the working world in 2013 (Business Information Systems Management).

2.2.2 Systematic and regular nature of curriculum development activities and the involvement of different stakeholders

Curriculum development is systematic and regular and curriculum development involves both internal (students and teaching staff) as well as external (professional associations, employers, internship companies/agencies, etc.) stakeholders. Curriculum development (including studies) in the College is governed by the statutes, development plan, the rules of organisation of studies, the standard of higher education, curriculum statutes and other guidelines (final exam/graduation thesis instructions, handbook on the organisation of internship, etc.). The needs and expectations of the stakeholders are taken into account by collecting feedback from the students, graduates, employers, the internship supervisors from the companies and lecturers. To collect feedback from the employers, annual seminars take place in cooperation with employers and internship instructors.

In order to be aware of the changes in the working world and consider the needs of various stakeholders, Curriculum Councils have been formed for the development of the curricula, which consists of representatives of professional associations, employers, graduates, teachers and students. The meetings of Curriculum Councils take place once a year and the work of the councils is organised by the leading lecturers of the speciality. During the meetings of the Curriculum Council, information can be received directly about how the respective fields develop, what the new trends are, and how laws and guidelines are applied in real working life; information is received for the development of curricula, etc. The taking into account of the needs of stakeholders during the development of curricula is also supported by the active participation of teaching staff in the work of professional associations (Estonian Traders Association, Association of Estonian Accountants, Estonian Social Workers Association, the Estonian Assistants Society) and other associations (the Association of Estonian Accountancy Teachers, the network of teachers in the field of trade, occupational committees and professional councils). Curriculum development is a continuous process that is the responsibility of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, the Head of the Chair and the leading lecturers. Amendment proposals are collected from various stakeholders in the course of the academic year. These are discussed in working groups and constructive proposals are taken into account. The curriculum development takes into account the 2016 OSKA survey "Future Demand for Workforce and Skills", which involved the following areas: accounting, social work, and information and communication technologies.

The amendments are made to curricula at the end of the academic year and the amendments usually take effect starting with the next admission process. The teaching staff updates the course programmes in cooperation with leading lecturers in the beginning of the academic year. The curricula are approved in the College Council and this means that students are also involved in curricula development.

Results and analysis:

- 1) curriculum development takes into account the results and recommendations of the external assessments, as well as the expectations/needs (incl. OSKA) of the stakeholders and the amended professional standards and laws (see more specifically the part concerning the SPG analysis);
- 2) based on the assessments given by the students to the subject courses, the curriculum has been amended (the volume of the subject has been increased or decreased, the sequence of subjects has been changed, assessment criteria and methods have been complemented; study methods and tools have been modernised, instructions have been compiled and improved, choice of elective subjects has been diversified, etc.) (see also SPG);

- 3) in the framework of trilateral cooperation (the College, internship company and student) the connective internship model is implemented;
- 4) there are annual training seminars with employers and internship supervisors, and within the last three years 187 internship supervisors have been trained;
- 5) the curricula have been internationally compared (see Table 10), content analysis is in the analysis of SPG;

Table 10. International comparisons of curricula

Curriculum	Object of comparison	Time
Commercial Economics	Varna University of Economics “Economics and Trade“	2016
	Varna University of Management “Marketing and Management“	2016
Assistant Manager	Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences “Multilingual Management Assistants”	2016
Business Administration	University College of Birmingham “Business Enterprise“	2013
	Varna University of Management “Business and Management Studies“	2015
Accounting	Lisbon School of Accounting and Administration “Accounting“ Module	2012-2017
	The University of Kent “Accounting and Finance“	2016
Business Information Systems Management	University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland	2013
	Laurea University of Applied Sciences “Business Information Technology“	2016
Social Work	Kauno Kolegija/University of Applied Sciences “Social Work“	2013-2017
	Häme University of Applied Sciences “Social Services“	2014-2017

- 6) in 2015-2017 the lecturers and students of Commercial Economics, Assistant Manager and Business Administration have taken part in the trade fair in Helsinki and brought new knowledge into curriculum development, and as a result a new elective course entitled E-commerce has been launched;
- 7) curriculum development takes into account the expert appraisal of specialists and the amendment proposals made (see Table 11, content analysis in the analysis of SPG).

Table 11. The expert analyses carried out with higher education curricula

Curriculum	The expert appraisal was given by:	Time
Assistant Manager	Janne Kerdo, Chairman of the Management Board of the Estonian Assistants Society	2016
Commercial Economics	Brent McKenzie, Canada, University of Guelph	2011
	Marika Merilai, Estonian Traders Association	2016
Social Work	Marju Selg, Institute of Social Studies of the University of Tartu, Teacher in Social Work	2017
Accounting	Anne Nuut, a member of the advisory body of the Association of Estonian Accountants, the Accounting Standards Board, statutory auditor	2016
Business Administration	Einike Pilli, PhD, Centre for the Development of Learning and Teaching, consultant, the University of Tartu	2016
Business Information Systems Management	Meelis Rääk, Swedbank Eesti AS, the Head of the IT Project Portfolio and PMO of Financial Services	2016

2.2.3 The survey of employers' and graduates' satisfaction and taking into account the results in curriculum development

Important input used in curriculum development are the results of employers' and graduates' satisfaction surveys; feedback is also received by means of direct communication. Employers and graduates are involved in curricula development by taking part in Curriculum Councils, the Advisory Council and the graduation thesis defence and final exam assessment committees. On a daily basis feedback is received from the internship supervisors in companies in the course of supervision and defence. The College teaching staff belongs to professional associations and professional councils, where they also receive adequate feedback as regards the skills and knowledge of the graduates. The College graduates actively take part in our in-service training courses during which the areas of improvement of the curricula are determined.

Results and analysis:

- 1) during the 2016/2017 academic year a survey was conducted among employers as regards the professional preparation of the graduates of social work. The survey was targeted at employers in the fields of special welfare services, children's welfare, and municipalities' and asylum seekers' accommodation centres. The strengths identified were the ability to acquire professional skills quickly as basic knowledge is associated with practical work during studies. The positive aspects highlighted were the social skills, including communication skills, which are key criteria in social work. The ability to work with clients was considered good; recommendations were made to improve the ability to see problems and the whole picture, as associated with a holistic view of human beings. The document management skills and the ability to write an official letter were considered weaker. In connection with an increased presence of multiple problems both in child protection as well as refugee work, proposals were made to deepen knowledge related to court cases and multi-cultural social work. Certainly, emphasis must be laid on cohesion between subjects when working with laws and the ability to use laws in a case-based manner. The Russian language skills of younger graduates are not sufficient; as regards digital competence everyone needs to constantly improve their knowledge. As an improvement activity the local municipality's social worker will be involved in the teaching of document management. A new elective course - social work in a multi-cultural society - has been launched. Digital competences have been integrated into speciality subjects; this is supported by e-learning. Digital competences are certainly improved by knowledge of new programmes, project management and conducting applied research;
- 2) in the 2016/2017 academic year employees of the specialities in the field of economics were also surveyed to determine their satisfaction with the knowledge and skills of the graduates. The profile of the employers who took part in the survey was very wide: both private companies and public sector agencies were represented. A very high rating was given to the IT skills of the graduates (computer use and file administration skills, the ability to obtain and use information, knowledge of IT-principles, etc.) and the Estonian language skills. The graduates' good communication and leading skills were highlighted. The lowest rating was given to the Russian language skills of the graduates. Improvement activities have been specified in the chapters by curricula;
- 3) the graduates of the specialities in the field of economics are satisfied with management-related instruction, but they also would have desired better foreign language instruction in their field of specialisation. The proposal is to pay more attention to teaching how to communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds;

- 4) the graduates of social work value the practical client work skills. The employers also valued the labour market entrants with practical skills (OSKA report). Respondents were less satisfied with specialised foreign language skills and instruction related to economics. The graduates of social work had expected more effective management-related instruction. The proposal is to improve cooperation with employers by involving practitioners in the study process. It is important to employ programmes and active learning methods used in the field in the study process;
- 5) based on the College graduates' 2015 general survey (see Figure 9) the respondents are most satisfied with specialised theoretical knowledge, independent work skills and acquisition of practical skills.



Figure 9. The graduates' satisfaction with the acquired knowledge and skills (4-point scale)

2.3 *The academic progress and assessment of students*

2.3.1 **The monitoring and supporting of graduates' academic progress**

Studies and study-related relations are governed by the rules of organisation of studies. It is possible to study full-time in all curricula and complete studies within the nominal period of studies, but the student candidate will choose which study load (full or part-time) he/she would like to choose.

The academic progress of the students is supported by the teaching methodology and rules of organisation of studies that are guided by the learning outcomes and the students' individual progress.

The Academic Service will make conclusions about academic progress in the end of the autumn and spring semester, by outlining the volume of curriculum completion in per cents and the weighted average grade (results in SIS). In addition, progress is monitored and supported by teaching staff, leading lecturers, the head of the chair and secretaries. Together with the student, they identify the problems that prevent the student from passing the subject, and if necessary, offer study counselling or prepare an action plan for passing the subject.

The students' participation in studies is also monitored. The leading lecturers and the chair secretaries will communicate with absent students to determine the cause and will offer them help, if necessary.

The students in the risk group of dropping out have the option to receive study counselling, as well as psychological and career-related counselling. The students are given the option to take academic leave to deal with circumstances that prevent studying or change the form of study

or curriculum. Talented students are involved by the teaching staff in giving lectures and the development of the curriculum.

The students' own initiative is supported via the student council. The student have the opportunity to take part in business idea/business plan competitions (the College has organised 14 business plan/-idea competitions, including six international competitions), use the opportunities offered by student exchange programmes to study and acquire practical experience abroad, take part in international weeks, introduce their research at the open house days of the College, take part in work carried out with the development plan, etc.

Results and analysis:

1) by the end of the academic year, an average of 94% of students fulfil the requirements of full-time study (the average of 2015-2017) (see Figure 10). As at the end of 2016/2017 the highest number of students who completed the requirements of full-time study were the students of the Assistant Manager curriculum and Business Information Systems Management curriculum;

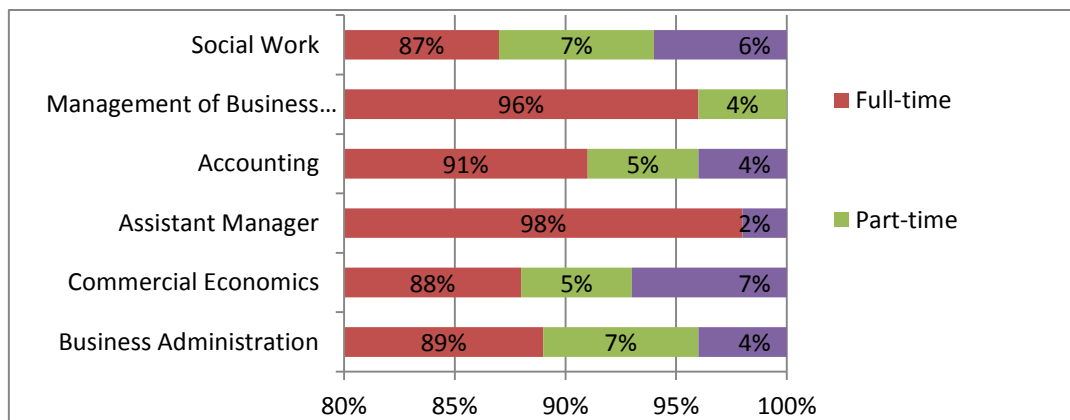


Figure 10. The breakdown of students by curriculum and study volume as at the end of 2016/2017

2) the dropout rate has been an average of 11% in the last three years, (Table 12), thereby remaining in the limits of the set objective (in 2017 the objective was 13%) and is lower than the average of institutions of higher education (16%). The dropout level of students in the curricula of business administration and commercial economics increased in 2017. Studies were terminated for personal reasons in the business administration curriculum by 71% (due to the incompatibility of the speciality, leaving Estonia, etc.) and because of study debts by 26% of students. The reasons were the same for the commercial economics curriculum where most dropouts left in the beginning of their studies because they could not take part in study sessions due to their work.

The result was similar for the survey conducted in 2014 on the reasons of students' stopping their studies (the survey involved 9 schools of institutions of professional higher education): 29% were exmatriculated because of study debts, 19% of respondents stopped studies for economic reasons, 17% because work interfered their studies and 8% because they left Estonia.

Table 12. The proportion of dropouts in the total number of students in a curriculum (%)

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Business Administration	9.8	9.5	16.7
Commercial Economics	12.9	10.9	17.6
Assistant Manager	12.1	10.3	11.0
Accounting	10.9	8.3	8.1
Management of Business Information Systems (MISK)	12.5	12.3	12.1
Business and Administration SPG average	11.2	8.9	13.0
Social Work	5.8	9.4	11.5
College average	9.7	9.0	12.6
Estonian average	16.2	16.1	14.5

- 3) the Rector annually acknowledges successful students, participants of vocational competitions and other competitions with a memento, an excursion, etc;
- 4) successful College graduates are invited to the reception held by the President of the Republic of Estonia, the governor of Lääne-Viru county and the rural municipality mayor of Vinni;
- 5) 10% of the graduates continue their studies in master's programmes;
- 6) the students and graduates of the curriculum of accounting are members of the Association of Estonian Accountants and the best of the graduates belong to its governing bodies (4).

2.3.2 Assessment of students

The general principles of assessment have been set out in the rules of organisation of studies, and in more detail in the curriculum and course programme (available in Moodle). The course programme is compiled by the lecturer in the beginning of the academic year and sends it to be reviewed by the leading lecturer, who will assess the conformity of the course programme to the curriculum and the suitability of the assessment methods for achieving the learning outcomes. Assessment criteria take into account the specific nature of the subject and are worded as accurately as possible to guarantee the achievement of the learning outcomes and objectives of the curriculum and subjects and a more objective and appropriate assessment for students and teachers alike.

When assessing the achievement of learning outcomes the lecturers use both formative as well as summative assessment. Usually the level of a student's knowledge, skills and experience is evaluated in the course of studies using formative assessment and in the end of the subject course the achievement of learning outcomes is evaluated using summative assessment.

The assessment methods increasingly used are the following: reciprocal assessment of student projects, demonstration and self-analysis; essays are used to assess analysis and reasoning skills, etc. The selection of assessment methods depends on which learning outcomes the students must achieve in the respective subjects. The assessment of students supports learning and is compliant with the learning outcomes.

The assessment of some learning outcomes (e.g. test taking, taking part in fora, the assessment of independent work) and the monitoring of the progress of students also takes place in Moodle.

The College has developed assessment criteria for the evaluation of the graduation thesis (see also Chapter 3.3) based on which the reviewer evaluates and the defence committee will rate the student's thesis. The criteria are reviewed annually and are improved, if necessary. The

procedure for contesting the decisions related to the organisation of study, including grades, is specified in the rules of organisation of studies.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the students consider the subject assessment criteria to be understandable (see Appx. 8, Table 1) in the last three years satisfaction has continued to be stable (on a 4-point scale between 3.84-3.86), but there are claims as regards assessment results;
- 2) the student satisfaction with the indicators of the graduation thesis defence procedure is high (see Figure 11), and compared to 2014/2015 the satisfaction with the understandability of the questions presented by the defence committee has increased the most (9.1%). Assessment criteria were made clearer in 2016 and this in turn improved satisfaction.

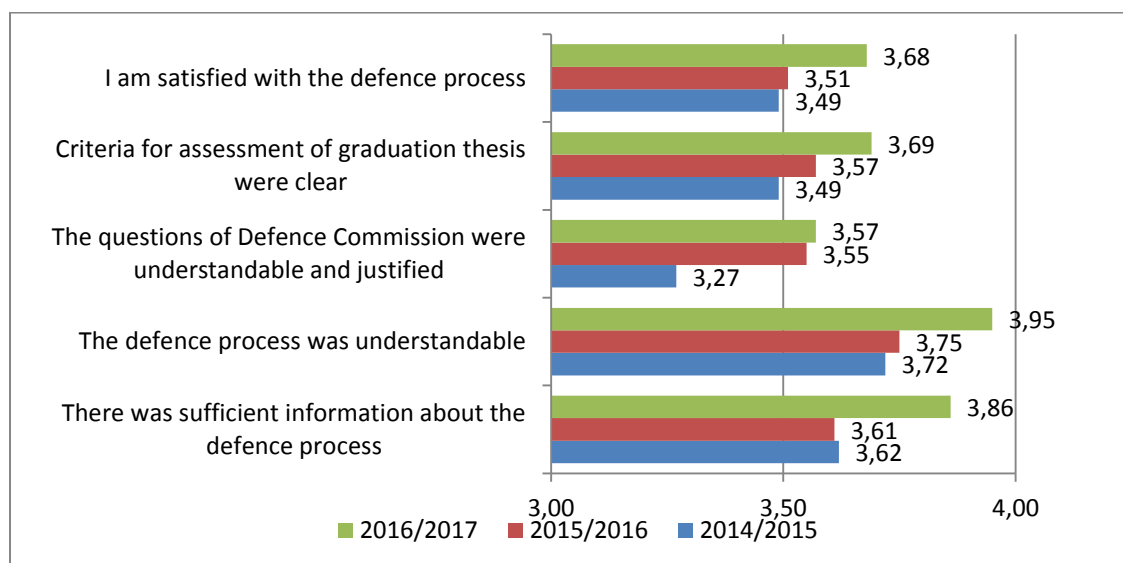


Figure 11. Student satisfaction with the defence procedure of graduation theses (4-point scale)

2.3.3 Procedure for the Recognition of Prior Learning and Work Experience

The prior learning and work experience (RPL) is recognised pursuant to the procedure approved by the council (est, eng). The recognition is subject to the submission of an electronic application in SIS. On the College homepage there is access to the instructions “The processing of RPL documents in SIS” and the form for conducting the interview and the self-analysis form that creates the basis of the assessment of work experience. If necessary, RPL counsellors will advise the applicant, and counselling starts as early as in the introductory lectures and information hours. The applications submitted in the SIS environment must be accompanied by all obligatory proofs and appendixes (see RPL procedure). The applicant must carry out a self-evaluation and find direct connections between what was learnt before and the learning outcomes of the subject/course applied for. The submitted documents are assessed by an RPL committee that is established with the decree of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and that will involve, if necessary, experts/teaching staff/internship supervisors to whom the applicant will demonstrate his/her acquired skills. Assessment results (minutes) are electronically available in the SIS environment for applicants and form a basis for assessing the completion of the curriculum. If the applicant is not satisfied with the result, he/she may dispute the decision.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the number of RPL applications has decreased year by year because of the higher education reform implemented in the academic year of 2013/14 according to which the college is entitled to demand partial reimbursement of study costs from a student who has not, by the start of the semester, cumulatively acquired the volume of study required to be acquired based on the curriculum during the previous semesters. The completed volume of the curriculum does not include the volume of curriculum completed via RPL, i.e. the student must complete the volume of study to be completed pursuant to the curriculum in each semester in addition to credits gained via RPL. The College evaluates every application thoroughly and, if necessary, additional proof is requested and different assessment methods are applied. For example, when assessing work experience we use the internationally applicable STARR method, the form of which can be found on the homepage;
- 2) arising from the proposals made during the institutional accreditation the RPL procedure has been elaborated, and the conformity of the learning outcomes acquired by RPL applicants to the learning outcomes of the curriculum/module/subject is assessed **individually** based on a personal application by using different methods (practical tasks, interview, etc.). The choice of the assessment method also depends on whether the prior learning took place in the course of degree studies, in-service training or during work experience. In the case of combined applications different assessment methods are applied simultaneously (e.g. demonstration, self-analysis, etc.). The assessment is based on sufficient proof and, if necessary, the applicant may be required to submit additional proof and be subject to additional requirements.

2.4 Study support processes

2.4.1 The organisation of work to ensure the completion of study within the nominal period of study

The organisation of study is based on the curriculum, academic calendar, study schedule and rules of organisation of studies the adherence to which enables the students to complete their studies within the nominal period of study. Pursuant to the curriculum and academic calendar the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs in cooperation with leading lecturers and the Head of the Academic Service will compile the study schedule. The leading lecturers of the specialities prepare lesson plans based on the curriculum and this forms the basis for the drafting of the timetable. The timetable is available in SIS and information boards.

Studies are planned according to the principle that the overall burden of academic work is evenly distributed. The weekly study load of the students is 40 hours, which consists of contact studies and independent work. Contact learning covers 50% of credit points in daytime study and at least 25% in cycle study.

The independent work done by students has an important role in the study process because it supports the achievement of subject goals and learning outcomes. Independent work refers to various written tasks or auditory presentations. Teachers plan independent work according to learning outcomes and monitor the proportions of the subject volume and independent work as well as the average time spent by a student on independent work.

Results and analysis:

- 1) as a result of functioning and flexible organisation of studies the dropout level of students has in the last three years been below the average of Estonian higher education institutions

(see Table 12), and hence the graduation effectiveness is higher than the average of higher education institutions;

- 2) the acquisition of learning outcomes is supported by the use of contemporary teaching and learning methods and the possibilities of educational technology;
- 3) arising from student feedback independent work has been made more compact and this often supports the acquisition of several competences. The problems that have occurred in supervising independent work (e.g. feedback from visiting lecturers is delayed, lack of verbal feedback) have been discussed at chair meetings and in individual conversations with students and teaching staff. The teaching staff constantly develop their time management skills and motivate their students to improve their time management (e.g. adhere to deadlines);
- 4) the students are on average satisfied with the availability of the teaching staff, provision of feedback and study materials (Figure 12). The comprehensiveness of study materials is highlighted, but it was suggested that a uniform system could be used for handing out study materials (e.g. only Moodle);

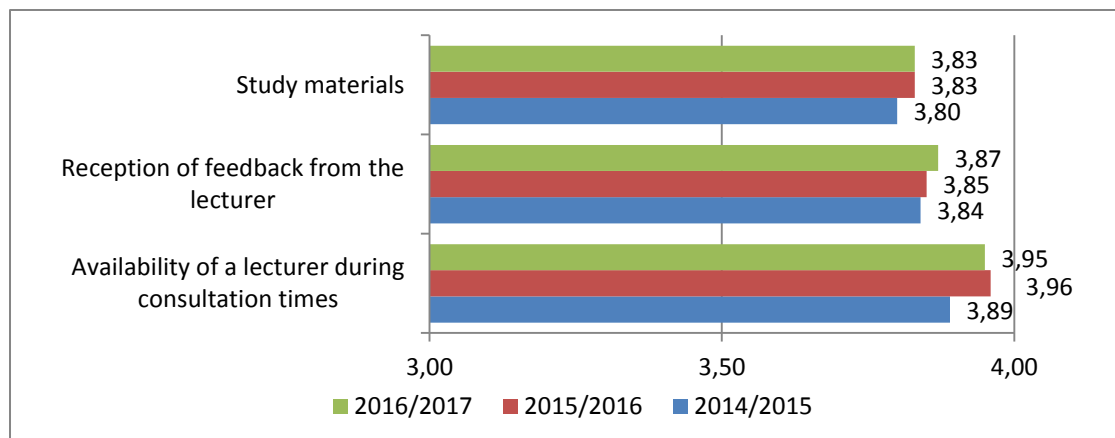


Figure 12. Student satisfaction with the availability of teaching staff, provision of feedback and study materials (4-point scale)

- 5) it is possible for students who don't have Estonian as their native language to additionally study the state language;
- 6) to support the acquisition of learning outcomes and support the completion of studies within the nominal period of study, it is possible also to study English and Russian.

2.4.2 Student counselling

The students have access to study support, as well as psychological and career-related support that is governed by the respective procedure. The students are counselled by the head of the chair and secretaries, leading lecturers, teaching staff, tutors in matters related to the application of the curriculum (incl. the amendment of the study form) and arising problems; in the case of the use of the IT Systems the IT specialist, education technologist and IT lecturer. The work of the student council is supported by the lecturer-coordinator of the student council. The contact information of the teaching staff and counsellors and the consultation hours (every full-time lecturer one hour per week) are listed on the homepage, in SIS and on the office door plates.

Results and analysis:

- 1) student satisfaction with the overall atmosphere of the College and student counselling has been good, on average. As regards the latter there is some fluctuation by year (see Figure 13);

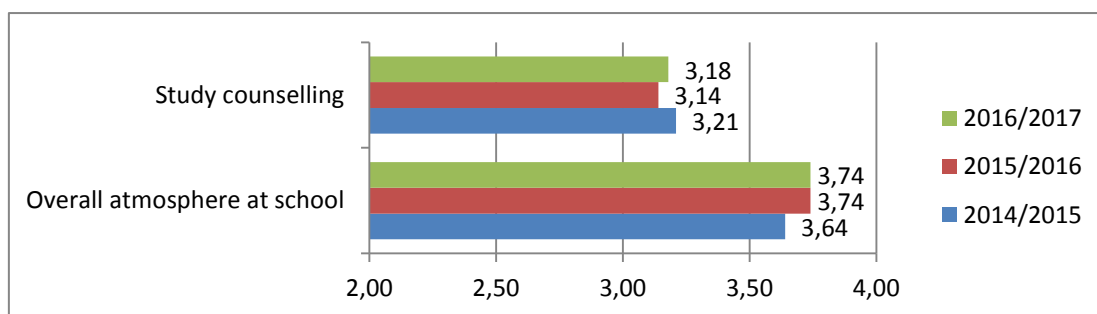


Figure 13. Student satisfaction with the general atmosphere and student counselling (4-point scale)

- 2) the first year students have the option to take part in the course called “Learning in Higher Education”. All first year students are organised introductory information days and adjustment to student life is supported by the electronic “Student guidebook”;
- 3) in the last three years 34 tutors have been trained to support first year students;
- 4) in the last three years psychological counselling services have been used by 87 students, including 27% repeatedly.

2.4.3 Support for the International Mobility of Students

The College takes part in various networks and international projects and this supports the development of curricula, students and teaching staff. A contract is entered into in order to study abroad and studies are coordinated with the curriculum so that it is possible for the student to finish studies at the College within the nominal period of study. We offer incoming students studying options (including internship) both in the framework of the Erasmus programme and in the framework of international cooperation networks. Both SPGs have one English language module for foreign students (15 CP) and we have also prepared smaller study programmes. Mobility opportunities and application criteria are available on College homepage. An Erasmus programme coordinator advises students about the organisation of studies and internships abroad.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College has the Erasmus charter in the framework of which eight bilateral cooperation agreements have been entered into;
- 2) the proportion of students who took part in mobility programmes has fluctuated in recent years (2.42-3.99%) (see Table 1 and 13). For example, in 2016 the College was able to support students’ short-term mobility in a larger scope and increased the number of outgoing students;
- 3) the incoming students have in 2015-2017 taken part in studies mostly in the framework of short-term mobility programmes, and 10% of such students have had internship with the help of the Erasmus programme.

Table 13. Student mobility

	2015	2016	2017
Number of students (as at 10.11)	862	951	948
Number of outgoing students	23	38	23
Proportion of outcoming students (%)	2.67%	3.99%	2.42%
Number of students incoming	30	10	45

2.4.4 The use of contemporary technical and educational tools in the organisation of work

The use of contemporary technological and educational tools enables the organisation of study to be improved, enriches the choice of study materials and widens the study options. The College has different technical and educational tools for the better organisation of studies (see chapter 1.3.3).

The SIS study information system contains study-related information: curricula, a timetable and study results; it is also possible to apply for RPL and scholarships and give feedback for studies. The SIS user name and password are valid when logging onto computers, in the Moodle e-learning environment, in intranet and when using the College e-mail.

The ordering of student cards is web-based (www.minukool.ee); the College has joined MS IT Akadeemia and as a result the students have the ability to use the office software MS Office free of charge and receive software for project management and software development and MS study materials. The students are given an e-mail address by the college for official use and group e-mail addresses are in use for official proceedings.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the adoption of contemporary solutions (SIS, Moodle, etc.) in teaching and in the organisation of studies has remarkably increased the satisfaction of the teaching staff with the availability of study-related information (see Figure 2), but students expect even quicker and more systematic information;
- 2) thanks to online materials and e-courses, the students who work, have small children, etc. can study at their own pace and revise what they learnt in lectures, if necessary;
- 3) study laboratories enable contemporary technical tools to be used: the students' satisfaction with the diverse and contemporary teaching methods of the teaching staff has been on a good level as an average of last three years (3.85 on a 4-point scale) (see Appx. 8, Table 1);
- 4) in speciality studies special software is used: accounting, human resource management, social work, project management and document administration programmes and software development environments;
- 5) the library interface is connected to SIS, and all loans can be administered in SIS.

2.4.5 The collection of regular feedback from the students as regards the functioning of the study and support system and the taking into account the results thereof in improvement activities

The College collects feedback pursuant to the procedure (est), which determines the feedback target group, the time and manner of feedback collection, and the person responsible for collecting feedback and carrying out the improvement activities. The students will give a rating to the subject courses carried out, the organisation of studies and the study environment and the first year students will assess the organisation of admission. Feedback as regards internship is collected after internship is completed and for each internship case separately. If necessary, additional surveys are organised. To collect feedback, the surveys are forwarded in SIS, GoogleDrives and in the internship feedback system.

Feedback is collected and systematised by the quality manager, internship supervisors, the head of the Centre for In-Service Training and Retraining, leading lecturers and teaching staff, who send the collected data to the persons responsible for improvement activities in the area for an in-depth analysis. The results of feedback analysis are introduced in the Rector's Office and at general meetings and events aimed at specific target groups (e.g. training for internship supervisors, meetings of the Curriculum Council). The collected data and analyses are accessible to the members on the intranet and the starting point for improvement activities. Smaller improvements are made immediately; activities that require more time are planned in the operational plan of the Development Plan for the next year.

Results and analysis:

- 1) response rate to electronic surveys has so far been relatively low, remaining in the range of 17-20% of the respondents, and this has an effect on the representativeness of the results. The response rate of internship feedback is high, on average 80-90%, and this is due to the application of the connective internship model. To increase the response rate of the students, the course of students that has been most active in giving feedback during the previous academic year is acknowledged during the public ceremony in the beginning of the school year and cooperation is enlisted with the student council;
- 2) based on the feedback given to internship, the internship programmes have been adjusted, new topics have been added to the curriculum, the time of the internship has been changed and the internship supervisors at companies have been trained;
- 3) based on the feedback given to the organisation of admission, the admission timetable and organisation has been changed;
- 4) based on the feedback given to the organisation of studies, the SIS study and information system (e.g. log in with Mobiil-ID) has been improved;
- 5) based on the assessments given to the study environment, ICT tools have been modernised, parking lots have been extended, student housing has been refurbished, the canteen has been renovated and the catering service has been improved;
- 6) arising from the students' feedback it is possible to choose elective courses from among all of the elective courses offered by the College (for example, beginners course in Russian, beginners course in English, modern selling technologies, robotics, etc.) The elective subjects are free of charge for those interested and the College has not set any limits as regards the volume of such subjects.

Aggregate analysis of learning activity

Strengths (+)	Activities for the maintenance/amplification of strengths
Curriculum development involves both internal as well as external stakeholders	A continuous improvement of curricula resulting from the systematic cooperation with the stakeholders
Learner-centred organisation of work that takes into account the students' needs and ensures a relatively low dropout level	The continuous improvement of the admission procedure to enrol motivated students, diversification of flexible learning options, support of students' individual development
Learning is supported by contemporary technical and educational tools and study laboratories	The development of the SIS and MOODLE environments and the digital competence of the teaching staff
Application of the connective internship model	Cooperation with internship companies, the transfer of knowledge from school to work and from work to school, the evaluation of the effectiveness of internship
Practitioners (incl. graduates) are involved in the study process	Constant cooperation with employers, graduates
There is a counselling system to support the students - the special needs of the students are taken into account and their own initiative is encouraged	The continuous development of the counselling system. Talented students are involved in various projects involving the whole College
High specialty-employment of the graduates	The development of curricula pursuant to the expectations of the working world, the continuous development of the teaching staff
Areas for improvement (-)	Activities to remove shortcomings
Increasing international mobility	The implementation of foreign-language modules, improvement of cooperation, material support of mobility
The students' dropout rate	Preventive work and the continuous development of the counselling system

3. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OR CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)

3.0 Report on the consideration of recommendations made in the previous report for institutional accreditation

Proposal: *the College's objectives as regards research and development and its development plan should be more ambitious than before. The College has to manage the area of research and development activity more systematically.*

In order to take into account the institutional accreditation recommendations and objectives related to the development plan, we submitted a project application in the framework of the 2015 ASTRA programme to develop a regional expertise centre in the fields of social work, accounting and commercial economics that would also support the College's RDC activities. Unfortunately the project did not receive a positive financing decision due to the merging process with the Tallinn University. Nevertheless, we have carried on with the planned activities and as a result we will carry out structural changes in 2018 in order to transfer to matrix structure in the RDC fields. The integration of the matrix structure to the management structure of the College will presumably increase the staff's motivation to carry out RDC activities, clarify work tasks and eliminate duplicated roles. We have also chosen three fields managers - in the fields of accounting, commercial economics and social work - who have an important role in redesigning research taking first and foremost into account the needs of the entrepreneurs and the society. Their competence is also to set objectives for applied research, make proposals as regards teaching staff training, internships and assignments abroad and involve experts, with the objective to ensure the existence of necessary competences for the development of the field and participation in international specialised research and cooperation networks.

In order to improve the quality of applied research and to support the teaching staff we have in recent years organised seminars/academic discussions. We have also added the obligation of applied research into the work contracts and we have entered into respective written agreements with all of the lecturers.

The timely completion of applied research is supported by the system of performance pay that we have implemented.

Proposal: *the must employ lecturers with a PhD degree who are actively involved in research in their field to curricula as this will support the development of the College in the field of research and development.*

We have contributed to the quality of offered degree studies and research - to achieve this end we have involved lecturers with PhD degree, experts and doctoral students in the RDC activities.

3.1 Effectiveness of RDC

3.1.1 The determination of RDC objectives and the measurement of their fulfilment

The RDC activities of the College are based on the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, the statutes, the RDC strategy of the College (est, eng), the IT strategy, the development plan for 2014-2018 and the procedure for conducting applied research (est, eng). The objectives of RDC activities are:

- to support the development of the specialities taught at the College, the use of evidence-based knowledge in studies and the achievement of the general goals of the College;
- to improve cooperation with other higher education institutions, research agencies, companies/institutions and internship providers, combining the existing fields in an innovative manner;
- to take part in various RDC networks (incl. international), to increase the effectiveness of RDC;
- to support the professional development of its members;
- the first priority should be the development of research objectives in the fields of social work, accounting and commercial economics.

Arising from the development plan the College has involved the academic staff, students, representatives of structural units and stakeholders in its development activities and applied research. RDC activities are coordinated via the management and the RDC steering group. The Vice-Rector for Development and the head of chair (henceforth also the managers of fields) will manage the development of the research fields/topics of the College and will coordinate applied research based on these fields/topics and the procedure for conducting applied research.

The actual RDC activities and expected results are presented in the operational plan and the completion of these is analysed at the Rector's Office (in January and August), at chair meetings (in June and December) and in the College Council, the Advisory Council and in the management report of the annual report. The teaching staff's RDC results are taken into account in the completion of the workload of the academic year and in the payment of performance pay.

The results of RDC activities are introduced to the stakeholders during the meetings of Curriculum Councils, seminars and conferences and in professional literature.

Results and analysis:

- 1) a steering group has been formed for RDC activities; it is a working group that coordinates the applied research activities of the College (incl. approving the research fields and projects, taking part in applied research presentations, giving an assessment of the completed applied research/publications and selecting the best applied research/publication of the academic year) and its development activities;
- 2) **three cooperation networks** have been formed for carrying out RDC activities at the College in which research is carried out in the following fields: social work, accounting and commercial economics. These are supported by management and IT research (see the research fields and topics in detail on our homepage);
 - the results of applied research carried out in the **cooperation network of teaching staff** are used in the development of curricula, as examples in the discussion of various topics, for explaining research methods during the graduation thesis process and for preparing and implementing in-service training curricula. Teachers share their practical research experience with the students via their participation in applied research. Completed research has been the drive behind new approaches to topics in the studies. For example, the results of the study carried out by AS R-Kiosk Estonia are analysed in the subject of organisational behaviour and human resources. The results of the applied research projects "Importance of Accounting Policies and Procedures", "Analysis of Profit in Estonian Companies" and "Measurement and Application of Eco-Efficiency in a Company" are used in the subjects of the curricula of Accounting and Business Administration. Examples of planning research, types of research, preparation of questionnaires, data

analysis, etc. are given in the subject of research methods. The study on the topic “Assessment of Customer service at the Universaalne OÜ Rakvere based on *Mystery Shopper* method” has been the basis for carrying out in-service training for the store in question;

- **in the teaching staff and student cooperation network** the students are involved in applied research carried out by the teaching staff; they have jointly published publications with the aim of developing the students’ research skills and widen the scope of research. For example, students of business administration have participated in the following research projects with their teachers: “Study of Internship Opportunities among Employers”, “Study of Internship Opportunities among Students of LVRKK” and “LVRKK Marketing Research”. The students of accounting took part in the study “Assessments given by Accountants and Managers to the Competencies Arising from the Professional Standard”, and a graduation thesis was written on the topic of “Construction and Analysis of Eco-efficiency Indicators of a Company Producing Nitrogen Fertilizers“ about which an article was published in the publication *Eesti Majanduse Teataja*. Students of Management of Business Information Systems created the professional framework database as commissioned by the Association of Estonian Accountants and the object of studies in fundamentals of programming, which gave input for the development of the MISK curriculum. The web-based application for the internship documents of the College was completed as the graduation thesis of a student of the same speciality. Students of Commercial Economics participated in the studies “Analysis of Work and Assessment of Positions in the Structural Unit of the Estonian Cooperative of Consumers” and the students of Social Work took part in the survey “Food Banks as a Supporting Social Service to Reduce Poverty and Exclusion in Estonian Society”;
 - **an external cooperation network** has been compiled based on the needs of the stakeholders (incl. employers). The biggest amount of applied research commissioned by the employers has been carried in the field of commerce (we are the only ones in the republic who teach commercial economics on the level of higher education): for example, “The Social Media Survey of Rakvere Põhjakeskus”, The Service Quality Evaluation in Different Sales Units in Valik Kauplused OÜ”, “The Service Quality Evaluation in the Rakvere Store of N Kaubanduse OÜ“, “The Satisfaction of the Employees of AS R-kiosk Estonia with Work and Expectations to the Employer“, etc. International cooperation networks are formed for the purpose of pan-European development and applied research. For example, the research carried out for the preparation of the professional profile of assistant manager within the scope of the AGEFA PME network, the innovation study carried out in the cooperation network of Central Baltic countries (Study of Regional Innovation and Competitiveness) and the business game adaptation survey (from EQF level 7 to EQF levels 6 and 5 “Business Game Testing in Partner Countries in Eastern Europe”) in the MEET (“Management E-learning Experience for Training Business Administration” network. The international study on the topic “The Availability of (organised) Hobby and Sports Activities of the People Living in Rural Regions and the Use Thereof” was the input in planning activities in the framework of “*Villages on Move Baltic*“;
- 3) the total volume of teaching staff publications and applied research and the volume per each lecturer’s position has increased in the three last academic years (see Table 14). In the Business and Administration SPG the teaching staff has during the last three academic

years compiled 50 publications and 31 applied research studies and the Social Services SPG 10 publications and 12 applied research studies;

Table 14. Publications and applied research studies per teacher's position

	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Publications	15	16	29
Applied research	13	16	14
Total	28	32	43
Number of lecturers' positions	27.9	25.9	24.7
Publications and applied research projects per teacher's position per year	1.00	1.24	1.74
In cooperation with companies and institutions	4	5	6

- 4) the College has compared the number of publications based on the data in ETIS with the publications of institutions of professional higher education with a similar teaching field. Based on the number of publications and applied research studies by lecturer we are on the same level (the average 1.77, the College indicator 1.74). The number of College high level publications (e.g. indicator 1.1) compared to others is more modest as it has not been set as the objective of institutions of professional higher education that do not provide Master's level education. In order to develop the fields taught and to meet the expectations of society we have to continue to enhance the research and development activities of the teaching staff.

3.1.2 The study of the needs of society and the labour market and taking them into account in the planning of RDC activities

The information necessary for planning RDC activities is obtained from the Curriculum Councils, employer and graduate feedback studies, implemented applied research studies, participation in the work of professional associations and professional councils, participation by the teaching staff in the working groups for development of strategies and development plans, inclusion of practitioners in studies, internships of teaching staff in companies/institutions and constant exchange of knowledge between companies/institutions and the College. Planning is also based on the College objectives specified in the development plan of the college and its resources.

Results and analysis:

- 1) during the 2015/2016 academic year the needs of the companies/institutions in the region for applied research studies and counselling services were studied; it turned out that research is most needed in the fields of commerce as well as in the fields of human resources and the demand for and provision of social services; the counselling services that were highlighted as necessary were the counselling services related to entrepreneurship and business plans. The results have been taken into account in planning RDC activities;
- 2) taking into account the needs of the working world, the existing competences and the infrastructure, the focus of RDC activities is targeted at the fields of social work, accounting and commercial economics;
- 3) specific research fields/topics have been defined in cooperation with the stakeholders and as a result the teaching staff has carried out 15 research studies during the last three years and two studies are ongoing;

- 4) in order to improve the quality of applied research and offer smart solutions to companies/institutions, both the teaching staff and the students employ the different capabilities of the digital laboratory.

3.2 RDC support processes

3.2.1 The functioning and updating of the RDC support system

There is a support system for the achievement of RDC goals, which includes the library, study laboratories, ICT and digital equipment, software and the support staff that assists with their use. The working time of teaching staff planned for RDC and the involvement of students in research and development activities is also regarded as an RDC resource. The effective functioning of the support systems is measured by the number of publications and applied research studies (see Table 14), the library publications that support applied research, the satisfaction of the stakeholders and the employees with the result of research and development activities. Based on the feedback the College will modernise and develop its RDC infrastructure.

The College will enable its cooperation partners, people living in the area and its graduates to use the RDC infrastructure. The infrastructure will be modernised using the financing from the state budget, revenue from the economic activities and the ESF funds.

Results and analysis:

- 1) when planning the work load of the teaching staff the RDC activities have been allocated 11.8% of working time of the total working time;
- 2) the College has allocated 200 working hours for doctoral studies; in the case of master's degrees the students are granted paid free time based on the study timetable. To complete their degree studies, employees have been allocated paid free time;
- 3) based on the "Procedure for Applying for a Free Semester for Teaching Staff" the teaching staff has the option to take one work-free semester every five years for RDC activities;
- 4) every year the lecturer(s) who has(have) written the best applied research study or the best publication is(are) acknowledged (incl. given a monetary award);
- 5) the teaching staff has the ability to organise their working time in a flexible manner and take part in international cooperation projects where they receive experience for RDC activities. For example, the teaching staff took part in the following European Regional Development Fund's Interreg programme projects: "*Central Baltic Innovation Tools for Practise*", "*Innovative Solutions in Care of Elderly Citizens Living at Home*" and the pan-European cooperation and innovation transfer projects "*Eurasment*", "*SESAMO*" and "*MEET*". In the framework of the Nordplus programme the College participated in the project "*Functional Innovative Tools for Learning*", "*Role of Youth in Society*", Erasmus Sport+ project "*Villages on Move Baltic*" and several mobility projects. Since 2017 the teaching staff has taken part in the Nordplus programme projects "*Healing Greenery*", "*Seeking Together*" and "*Study quality in terms of multiculturalism*";
- 6) the College has entered into 28 contracts and agreements with employers and companies to carry out applied research, student and lecturer internship among others with the following: AS Rakvere Haigla, Rimi Food Eesti AS, Rakvere Põhjakeskus, Bauhof Group AS, Jeld-Wen Eesti AS, R-Kiosk AS, HKSCAN Estonia AS, Trendsetter Europe OÜ, Eesti Teed AS and Hoolekandeteenused AS, etc. and the cooperation partners of the Erasmus programme.

Over the years cooperation partners have been from the following foreign countries: Finland (10), Latvia (4), Lithuania (3); Sweden, the United Kingdom (3), the Netherlands

(4), Italy (5), France (6), Portugal (4), Romania (2), Slovenia, Greece, Denmark (2), Bulgaria (2) and Canada.

Cooperation is more active in the **Business Administration curriculum** with the University College of Birmingham, London Pearson College and Porvoo International College; in the **Assistant Manager curriculum** AGEFA PME; in the **Accounting curriculum** with Instituto Superior de Contabilidade e Administração de Lisboa; in the **Commercial Economics curriculum** with the University of Guelph; and in the curriculum of **Management of Business Information Systems** with the Hague University of Applied Sciences and Leiden University College and in the **Social Work curriculum** with HAMK and XAMK institutions of professional higher education and Aarhus University;

- 7) the best library in the region equipped with publications on economy and social sphere issues offers the opportunity to use specialised articles in studies and research (see more specifically chapter 1.3, 6, 7); the number of exploratory publications (incl. textbooks) in the library has been given in table 15;

Table 15. The number of exploratory publications in the College library

	Items	Copies	including in foreign languages
Textbooks for institutions of higher education	946	4908	1192
Books about research methods	110	435	97
Article collections	343	757	43
Total	1399	6100	1332

- 8) the College has 5 computer classes and a video conference room with a lecture recording system; RDC activities are supported with the existence of three study classes/laboratories: commercial, social services and a digital laboratory that help to carry out degree courses and applied research (see more specifically chapters 6 and 7);
- 9) methodological and educational-technological support in carrying our RDC activities has been offered by the lecturer of the subject of research, education technologist and IT lecturer, for example, in the preparation and design of digitalised study materials, in the design of the study environment/courses, etc.; RDC technical support is offered by the IT specialist;
- 10) the employee satisfaction with the opportunities to take part in research and development activities and with the publications in the library has been quite stable over the years (see Table 16).

Table 16. The employee satisfaction with the opportunities to take part in research and development activities and with the publications in the library in 2015-2017 (5-point scale)

	2015	2016	2017
Opportunities to take part in research/development	3.36	3.36	4.38
Publications in the library	4.79	4.64	4.63

3.2.2 The sources of the funds necessary to develop research and development and creative activities and the strategy for procuring them

In order to develop RDC activities the College has used state budget resources and revenue from its economic activities and project-based financing via different programmes. Pursuant to the statutes the institutions of professional higher education are obligated to carry out RDC activities, but there is no state financing allocated for the purpose. The planning of financial resources is based on the RDC strategy and development plan and budget. The Rector and Administration and Finance Director are responsible for the purposeful use of the resources, and the heads of structural units are responsible for contracting resources pursuant to the activities of the development plan.

Prior to carrying out RDC activities (applied research, project work) the existence of resources is checked and financing from different Estonian and European programmes is then applied for in order to receive additional financing. The financing of RDC activities from different programmes and projects has, over the years, depended on financing possibilities, but it has been relatively stable.

Results and analysis:

- 1) in order to provide financing for RDC activities the College has, in addition to the budget and its own funds, applied for and received additional financing from the EU structural resources and programmes - Primus, Erasmus+, Interreg and Nordplus. Two international applied research studies have been conducted, internet-based study materials have been used and different conferences (8) have been organised (incl. 4 international) with the support of these programmes;
- 2) the proportion of funds allocated for RDC activities in the College budget has in 2015-2017 remained between 8.9%-17.9%. A great fluctuation by years results from the additional financing of EU projects. Approximately 8% of budget resources are planned for RDC activities every year - this has been stable during the period in question;
- 3) with the help of the measure for the modernisation of study infrastructure, social services and a digital laboratory have been established; budget resources were used to equip a study class for commerce and additional equipment and software were acquired.

3.2.3 The participation of the College in various RDC networks

The College considers it important to take part in both internal as well as external networks (including international networks). The participation in different networks support the achievement of the College objectives and the professional development of the teaching staff; it also provides international experience. Networking enhances the competitiveness of the fields taught in the College and ensures the quality and comparability of curricula. The expertise acquired in networks should be applied to a greater extent in the planning and conducting of applied research.

Results and analysis:

- 1) curricula take part in the networks that support RDC activities, including international networks:
 - Assistant Manager curriculum: AGEFA PME Mobilite- leading an Erasmus Consortium and coordinating the AGEFA Mobilite Network, a European network with already more than 10 European countries dedicated to mobility in initial VET, both in Secondary and Higher Education (mobility, internship);

- Social Work curriculum: **European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW)** brings together over 300 different schools, universities and tertiary education institutions supporting social work education. EASSW promotes the development of social work education throughout Europe, encourages international exchange and provides forums for sharing social work research and scholarship.
Council of International Fellowship (CIF) is an organisation that offers possibilities for international study and exchange of professional experience for employees involved in serving people (social workers, care workers, youth workers and other specialists who are employed in similar fields).
Casa Mare- advancement of Social Work in countries with transition economies. Developing and piloting a model of social work professionalization in accordance with international standards and global needs. Social workers in all post-socialist countries share many professional challenges and opportunities.
The network for the enhancement of children’s mental health policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs;
 - Business Administration curriculum: **MEET** – (Management E-learning Experience for Training Business Administration students); The Business Game has been created in Network. The Business Game is a serious game simulating the management of a virtual company acting on a competitive market. The game deals with a competition and the teams involved are in charge of running a company;
ETNA network - non-governmental organisation in Estonia which supports the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) led by women. The NGO also aims to improve the image of rural life, territorial balance and gender equality in Estonian society. ETNA links the importance of increasing opportunities for entrepreneurial women with fostering job creation and growth in the rural economy;
WINNET Baltic Sea Region- the Winnet BSR partnership with Women Resource Centres (WRCs), researchers, associations for women entrepreneurs, business support actors and an association active in BSR are committed to bring about change both in policies and practices;
NEET – youth Neither in Employment nor in Education or Training (participation in the network with Swedish entrepreneurship teachers);
 - Accounting curriculum: **The European Accounting Association (EAA)**- aims to link together the Europe-wide community of accounting scholars and researchers, to provide a platform for the wider dissemination of European accounting research, and to foster and improve research in order to ensure the development and promotion of accounting as well as improvement of teaching skills;
 - Curriculum of Commercial Economics: **Euro Commerce** members include national commerce federations in 31 countries, Europe’s 27 leading retail and wholesale companies, and federations representing specific sectors of commerce;
 - International Association Of Teachers Of English IATEFL (International Association Of Teachers Of English as a Foreign Language);
 - The Estonian Association of Teachers of English (Eesti inglise keele õpetajate selts, **EATE**). The Estonian Association of Teachers of English links and supports English language teachers in Estonia;
- 2) as an institution the College takes part in the following networks:
- RKRN, the Estonian Rectors’ Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences – the objective of the activities of the conference is to develop professional higher education in Estonia taking into account internationally established requirements and take part in the shaping of Estonian educational policy;

- **EKEÜ**, the Estonian Association for Advancement of Vocational Education is a voluntary organisation founded on the principles of uniting independent individuals and public interests in an association that has as its goal the development of higher quality Vocational Education in Estonia through effective teamwork between special interest groups and the communities they serve;
 - **EURASHE**, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education – the objective is to protect the provision of higher vocational education, to consistently emphasize the importance of professional higher education and improve the level of education offered;
 - **TET** – A network of health-promoting workplaces in Estonia the aim of which is to assemble specialists of different agencies, companies and organisations to share good practices, support organisations in the development of the work environment and improving employees' health consciousness and contribute to better prevention of occupational diseases and work-induced illnesses and better work safety;
- 3) in cooperation with county schools and companies the teaching staff participates in the project “Regional initiatives to improve employment and entrepreneurship”, the aims of which are to improve young people's entrepreneurship skills, capacity for innovation and competitiveness on the labour market and an increase in the number of workplaces with higher added value and the established sustainable cooperation networks.

3.3 Supervision of student papers

3.3.1 The involvement of students in research or creative work and the study of supervision-related satisfaction

The students are involved in research with their graduation thesis and a mini-research paper. The subject of Research Methodology is as a subject implemented into all curricula. In order to achieve the learning outcomes of a subject, each student will draft a research project/plan. During their second year of studies (in the case of the curriculum of Business Administration), the students will compile their course papers to demonstrate their basic knowledge of research. For graduation the student may choose whether to write a graduation thesis or take a final exam. The students who opt for a graduation thesis will also have to write a mini-research paper in order to demonstrate their research-related knowledge and skills. The topics/fields of the research papers supervised by College teaching staff are listed in the Moodle study environment. Every year, for first year students, graduation thesis seminars are organised where the problems for conducting research are defined, research topics are discussed and potential supervisors are met. An elective course for generating research ideas entitled “Problem solving methods” has been launched. The students choose their research themes based on the agreed research fields and both students and their supervisors sign the graduation thesis declaration. The responsibilities of the supervisors and students are regulated by the Good Practices for Supervisors and Students. The students are involved in applied research studies conducted by the teaching staff and have released publications together.

Results and analysis:

- 1) graduation thesis processes are described, regularly improved and updated;
- 2) the compilation of the graduation thesis is supported by the regularly updated document called “Guidelines for Written Papers” (“Kirjalike tööde juhend”, est);
- 3) to support application-based graduation research, guidelines for IT models and methods were prepared in 2017;

- 4) the volumes of all graduation theses (8 CP) are standardised in the case of all curricula;
- 5) as a new improvement activity the interim assessment of course papers was introduced in 2016; this motivates the students to start preparing their course papers (parts of their graduation theses) on time and helps to plan the time of both the students and supervisors better;
- 6) since 2008 collections of best research papers are published; about 10-15% of graduates' graduation theses are published there;
- 7) in order to value the applied research studies conducted by the students of institutions of professional higher education, to encourage the students to be active in preparing their creative and applicable projects and acknowledge the students who achieve remarkable results, the Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences awards a scholarship to the best graduation thesis: for example, in 2015 the scholarship was awarded to Mari-Liis Rego, a student of the Assistant Manager curriculum, for her research paper "Attitudes and Experiences Related to the Organisation of Work of Virtual Groups", supervisor Heli Freienthal; in 2016 to Hāli Maurus, a student of the curriculum of Business Information Systems Management, for her graduation thesis "The Development of Web-based Study Materials on the Basics of Programming", supervisor Heli Freienthal; and in 2017 for Taavi Puusepp, a student of the Business Administration curriculum, for his graduation thesis "The Constructing and Analysing of the Eco-effectiveness Indicators of Company that Produces Nitrogen Fertilizers", supervisor Helle Noorväli;
- 8) every year students take part in the national competition for accounting-related research papers to develop cooperation with professional organisations and value graduation theses compiled on accounting-relating themes that have an interesting or innovative approach. The competition is organised by the Ministry of Finance, the Board of Auditors and the Association of Estonian Accountants. For example, in 2017 the best Bachelor's Degree award was given to Olga Poljakova (supervisor Diana Tandru), who addressed the taxing of loan-based P2P crowdfunding transactions and the recording thereof in the accounts based on the example of private and legal entities;
- 9) annual feedback is collected as regards the graduation thesis supervision and the defence process. For all criteria satisfaction has been, on average, high and during the last academic year higher than for the previous ones (on a 4-point scale the ratings are for most criteria above 3.5, see Figure 14);

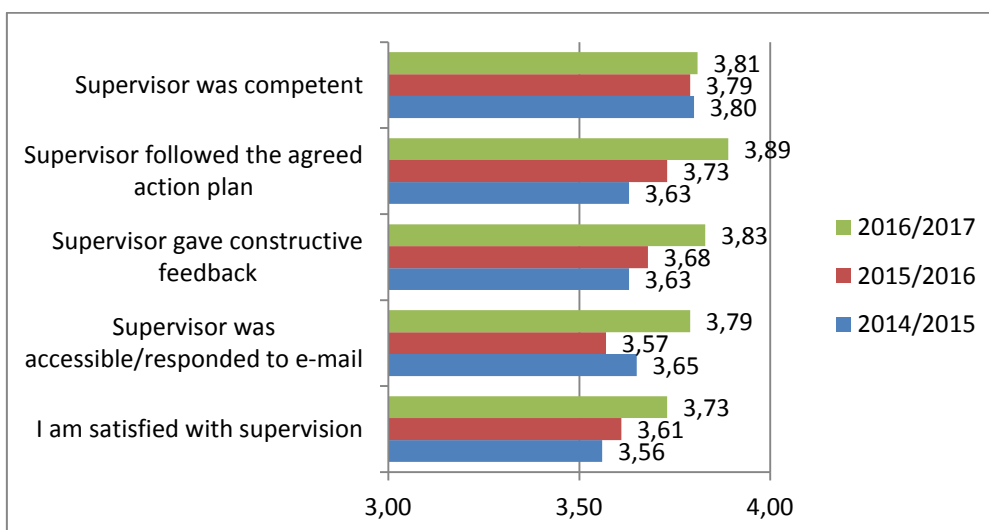


Figure 14. Graduates' rating of supervision (4-point scale)

10) in 2015 an applied research study was carried out to determine the views of the graduation thesis supervisors and the supervised students as regards supervision and the students' expectations of supervision. The study showed that the supervisors consider supervision to be first and foremost a process of guiding, assisting and supporting; the importance of cooperation was also highlighted in the process of supervision. The students highlighted that they expect the supervisors to be smart and well-informed, have an open outlook, and be active and helpful. Students also consider supervision to be a cooperation process, but they expect the supervisor to show interest and make time for them. The study results were presented and analysed during the seminars of graduation thesis supervisors.

3.3.2 Supervisors' professionalism, effectiveness and workload

Graduation thesis supervisors usually have a master's degree or corresponding qualification. In addition, the supervisors may also be specialists with professional higher education and experience in the speciality (preferably experts in the field) if the theme of the supervised thesis so requires. The supervision of graduation theses has been listed as an official duty in the job description of teaching staff.

The supervision workload of the teaching staff has been laid down in the document "The basis for the calculation of lecturers' work load". Full-time lecturers have the duty to supervise and review 10 graduation theses and assistants must supervise 5.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of graduation theses and the mini-research papers as a part of final exams have been described and are reviewed and, if necessary, renewed annually; for example, during the 2016/2017 academic year assessment criteria were developed separately for graduation theses that create applications (curriculum of Business Information Systems Management);
- 2) training courses that support supervision are organised regularly for the graduation thesis supervisors. For example, courses such as "The Development of Lecturers' Educational-Technological Competence", "Academic English", "Student Supervision and Provision of Feedback", etc.;
- 3) there are regular seminars for graduation thesis supervisors where the issues related to supervision are discussed and the understanding of graduation thesis supervision is coordinated;
- 4) the teaching staff also supervises and reviews bachelor's and master's degree graduation theses in other institutions of higher education and take part in defence committees: for example, in Tallinn University and Tallinn University of Technology, etc.;
- 5) research papers are also supervised or consulted on by the representatives of the employers (for example, 13 supervisors in 2017);
- 6) during the last three years (2015-2017) 13% of graduates graduated *cum laude*.

3.3.3 Guiding students to recognize and avoid plagiarism

The concept of plagiarism has been defined in the rules of the organisation of studies, and the avoidance of plagiarism, the processing of cases of plagiarism and the punishments for plagiarism have been specified in the procedure for managing academic fraud and inappropriate behaviour. In order to prevent plagiarism the students are also informed about this issue in subject programmes. The development of awareness of the principles for the

protection of human and intellectual property rights is a continuous process. During the whole time of studies the student will learn to use the compiled materials while taking into account the rules of protecting intellectual property (using footnotes, quoting, reference-making). The topic of plagiarism and the ethical aspects of research are discussed in the subject of Research Methodology during the first year of studies. Ethical principles are taken into account in student papers compiled in the College and in the whole of the study process. The students have the ability to check whether their use of references in their papers is correct with the help of different programmes (referred to in the guidelines for written papers) and the teaching staff with the URKUND programme.

Results and analysis:

- 1) in the Research Methodology module of the curricula the students have also acquired knowledge about issues related to copyright and data protection and about research ethics;
- 2) in 2015 the applied research survey “The Problems of Misuse of Intellectual Property in Professional Higher Education” was conducted; in the framework of the survey an overview was given of the discussion of plagiarism, etc. in foreign institutions of higher education and in which the process for managing academic fraud and inappropriate behaviour was improved;
- 3) the ethics committee meets as required, but at least once a semester. In the case of a doubt about plagiarism the person who discovers it submits appropriate proof to the head of the chair, who will then register the case and will forward the information for decision-making to the ethics committee. Cases of plagiarism have been processed as required by the procedure; due to plagiarism, one student has been exmatriculated in the course of last three years.

Aggregate analysis of RDC activities

Strengths (+)	Activities for the maintenance/amplification of strengths
Cooperation with stakeholders to carry out RDC activities	In cooperation with stakeholders the annual specification of research fields, the involvement of stakeholders in projects
A well-functioning process for the supervision of graduation theses	The continuous development of research and supervision skills of the teaching staff
Graduation theses of applied nature on varied themes, necessary companies/institutions	The wider involvement of outside supervisors The involvement of students in applied research studies carried out by the teaching staff
Established cooperation networks, including international networks	The development of a network that supports RDC activities and the involvement of international cooperation partners for project work and mobility
Areas for improvement (-)	Activities to remove shortcomings
The studies financed by companies and publications with a higher classification	The redesign of research based on the needs of the working world Involvement of companies in the financing of RDC activities
Giving priority to the development of research fields related to social work, commercial economics and accounting.	The offering of innovative (smart) solutions to companies, employing the capabilities of the study laboratories The participation of teaching staff in specialised cooperation networks. The continuous/increased involvement of lecturers with a PhD to lead research areas with higher priority
Plagiarism prevention	Different activities to prevent plagiarism, including the systematic use of the URKUD plagiarism prevention software.

4 SERVING SOCIETY

4.0 Report on the consideration of recommendations made in the previous report for institutional accreditation

Proposal: *the College must increase the use of social media in the framework of its marketing strategy in order to promote its activities in the fields of vocational education, higher education and cycle studies.*

Based on the recommendations of the assessment experts the College has renewed its marketing strategy and will concentrate on the use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) in addition to other information channels. The College has carried out digital marketing campaigns in Facebook and has used Google AdWords and Google Remarketing to advertise the specialities taught and study forms used during the admission period and for marketing in-service and retraining courses and counselling services. The possibilities of Google Analytics have been used to define the target groups of marketing and to analyse the results. As a result the coverage of College activities has been three times more active in social media during the last three years and the number of followers is increasing.

4.1 The popularisation of the College's fields of activity and participation in the development of society

4.1.1 The system for the popularisation of College activities

Based on the development plan, the objective of the College as a socially responsible organisation is to contribute to the development of the community's well-being by popularising its main activities, in-service training and retraining activities and the activities targeted at the public in order to promote the reputation of the College and its position in the Estonian environment of higher education.

Its popularisation activities have been defined in its development plan and operational programme which, among other things, forms a basis for its in-service training and retraining activities and its marketing strategy. Popularisation activities are supported by the centre located in Rakvere (Rohuaia 12) that takes into account the regional needs in providing in-service training and retraining, and counselling services, enabling different target groups to engage in life-long learning and receive counselling services. In addition to the above, popularisation is also supported by the chair and other structural units and the non-profit associations established on the initiative of College staff - MTÜ Mõdriku Arendusselts, MTÜ Ettevõtlusteater and the Adult Educators' Club.

In order to popularise its activities the College cooperates with different target groups and stakeholders and involves students in the organisation of events. The activities targeted at the community have been published on the College homepage, on FB and in the media.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College activities have been covered in various media publications (on average 23 articles per year). The employees have published specialised articles and articles promoting the college in magazines and newspapers (on average 50 articles a year);
- 2) the college has taken part in fairs, promoting the specialities taught and learning possibilities. Participation in fairs has become more active as in addition to the Teeviit, Orientiir and Intellektika annual national fairs the College has also taken part in the

- information and career fairs organised by Lääne-Viru county, Rakvere City Days and the conferences of the Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences;
- 3) during the last three years we have advertised the College among the county career advisors and information specialists;
 - 4) the College has organised events to promote its specialities to the students of other schools and these events have involved students from all over Estonia;
 - 5) in order to popularise specialities taught, the teaching staff and the students have annually visited an average of 40 secondary schools;
 - 6) we have annually participated in the joint marketing campaign of the institutions of professional higher education;
 - 7) there have been 14 business plan / idea competitions, including six international competitions;
 - 8) in the framework of Global Money Week we have annually organised finance-related training courses for teachers of economics and students of secondary schools in the county;
 - 9) the College has supported the promotion of entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial competence with the help of the EU in third countries (Ukraine), including the conducting of business model workshops;
 - 10) taking part in the ESF framework project "Welfare Measures that Support Employment" the College carried out different counselling services in Lääne-Viru County in 2012-2015. In 2016-2018 advisory services will be provided in the context of the same framework project for people who have difficulties in coping;
 - 11) the popularisation of the College involves the graduates through different events: reunions when the College celebrates its jubilees and during speciality days, etc. (social media is increasingly used), but graduate participation rate could be higher;
 - 12) College activities have been covered three times more frequently in social media in the last three years and the number of followers is increasing.

4.1.2 The staff's participation in the work of professional associations and as experts in institutional advisory and decision-making bodies

The College is a cooperation partner for professional associations, has a say in the advisory and decision-making bodies and in the development of national and regional strategies (the development of higher and vocational education, the local municipality development plans, etc.). The employees take part as experts in institutional advisory and decision-making bodies.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College employees have participated as experts in institutional advisory and decision-making bodies, contributing to the national and/or regional development; the teaching staff belong to professional associations and take part in the work thereof (see Table 17);

Table 17. The participation of academic personnel in institutional advisory and decision-making bodies

Curriculum	Councils, professional associations, societies and unions etc.
Accounting/Accountant	Association of Estonian Accountants Association of Accounting Teachers Working group for the development of the accounting professional standard Working group for the development of the accounting

	curriculum Accounting Qualification Committee
Commercial Organiser Economics/Sales	Estonian Traders Association Committee for awarding the profession of a commerce specialist Working group for the development of the sales organising curriculum Working group for the development of the sales organising professional standard
Social Work/Care Worker	Estonian Social Workers Association Professional Council of Social Welfare Estonian Care Workers' Association Estonian Union for Child Welfare Estonian Association of Communication Coaches The Association of Psychologists of Lääne-Viru County Estonian Union for Health Promotion, Lääne-Viru branch Working group for the development of the care worker's curriculum
Assistant Manager/Secretary	Working group for the development of the secretarial curriculum Working group for the development of the secretarial professional standard Working group for the development of the assistant professional standard Estonian Assistants Society
Business Administration/Small Business Owner	Professional council of business service and other business activities Working group for the development of a curriculum for small business owners and business organisation specialists
Business Information Systems Management/Junior Software Developer	Working group for the development of the IT specialist curriculum
Language studies	Association of Estonian Language Teachers Association of Finnish Language Teachers Association of English Language Teachers
Associations involving all specialities	OSKA expert group Estonian Association for the Advancement of Vocational Education Association of Estonian Adult Educators The Association of Education Managers of Lääne-Viru County Network of Health Promoting Workplaces (TET)

2) in addition to fulfilling their work tasks the College management and teaching staff have taken part in community life (for example, in the municipal councils, committees and divisional governing bodies); as a result, cohesion between the College and local bodies of power has improved, more information is exchanged and there are more cooperation

opportunities in the region where the College operates. The number of participants in local bodies of power and associations was stable in 2015-2017 (11-13 participants).

4.2 In-service training and other study activities targeted at the wider public

4.2.1 The determination of study-related objectives and the measurement thereof

The College has a centre that takes into account the regional needs in providing in-service training and retraining, and counselling services, enabling different target groups to engage in life-long learning and receive counselling services. When determining its objectives and planning its activities the Centre for In-Service Training and Retraining is guided by the following documents: the statutes of the College and the Centre, the development plan, the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy, the Adult Education Act, the standard of in-service training, the guidance document “Ensuring the Quality of Adult In-service Training Institutions“ (“Täiskasvanute täienduskoolitusasutuste kvaliteedi tagamine“) and the in-service training and retraining strategy and marketing strategy.

The development of in-service training courses and the organisation of courses is guided by the document “Forms and Process of In-service Training and Retraining” (“Täiendus- ja ümberõppe vormid ja läbiviimise kord” (est). In-service training is carried out within the scope of the ESF programme “Work-related Training and Development Activities for Adults” as state-commissioned education, within the scope of the procurement of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (EUIF), training for a fee, incl. specially commissioned training from the College, and free training offered in order to popularise the College. In-service training is offered in all fields of activity of the College. In addition, advisory services are offered in order to support the development of citizens and organisations.

The achievement of the objective of in-service training is analysed twice a year but adjusted based on the expectations of the stakeholders once year in the development of next year’s operational programme.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the number of in-service and retraining courses, the number of participants, and the volume of lessons and sales revenue is increasing; this is among other things due to the ongoing cooperation with employers and the application of new training programmes (see Table 18). For example, compared to 2015 the number of courses and training has increased by more than half, the volume of training hours 58% and sales revenue (including counselling) 55%;

Table 18. In-service and retraining courses 2015-2017

	2015	2016	2017
Number of courses	26	65	53
Number of participants	242	760	550
Number of participants per one academic staff member employed full-time	9.81	32.34	23.40
Training hours	2334	3696	3692
Volume of training hours per participant	83	48	70
Man-hours	19474	36868	37768
Total sales revenue (€)	85,859	133,705	134,720

- 2) the carrying out of in-service training involves $\frac{2}{3}$ of the whole academic staff;
- 3) the College offers counselling services (psychological, debt, financial and entrepreneurship counselling) and practical help for legal and natural persons and private persons (see Table 19). Compared to previous years both the volume of counselling hours as well as the sales revenue has increased.

Table 19. Advisory services in 2015-2017 in hours and sales revenue in euros

Advisory services	2015	2016	2017
Psychological counselling	399	213	458
Debt counselling	487	417	664
Family counselling	77.5	96	59
Financial and entrepreneurship counselling	11	32	38
Sales revenue (€)	20,533	18,450	29,728

4.2.2 The planning of in-service training pursuant to the needs of the target groups and the possibilities and objectives of the College

In order to widen the opportunities for the improvement of vocational, specialised and professional knowledge and skills, new curricula are developed and the existing curricula are amended based on OSKA reports, the developments in society and employers' recommendations. Curricula are developed in cooperation with the teaching staff and cooperation partners, taking into account the urgent problems in the field, the needs and training wishes of the target groups (employers, working people, the unemployed, graduates, etc.). The in-service curricula are reviewed twice a year and amended as required based on the stakeholder's expectations and needs.

The representatives of professional associations and specialists are involved in the organisation of courses to improve the quality of in-service training and retraining. Flexible training opportunities, including e-courses, are used to improve the accessibility of training. Training has also been offered to non-Estonian speakers and people with special needs in order to create equal opportunities for in-service and retraining. The College cooperates with the Ministry of Education and Research and EUIF in the organisation of project-based training. In order to develop its partnerships the College takes part in various national and international projects. We also work with the Lääne-Viru Development Centre in the activities of the ESF measure Strengthening Regions' Competitiveness.

Results and analysis:

- 1) when planning training the needs of the target groups and the possibilities and the objectives of the College are taken into account. In the total number of training sessions in 2015-2017 the training carried out as state-commissioned education amounted to 58%, paid training and training commissioned from the College 25% and Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (EUIF) training 17%;
- 2) in 2015-2017 six free training courses were organised to advertise new training courses, eleven for non-Estonian speakers and three for students with special needs;
- 3) in 2015-2017 the College rewarded the students with the best knowledge in their field in the county;
- 4) in 2015-2017 joint summer schools were organised with cooperation partners (6);

- 5) a pilot training programme was developed in the framework of the project “Regional initiatives to promote employment and entrepreneurship” and training courses were carried out for the 20 internship supervisors in the county (24 academic hours).

4.2.3 The survey of the satisfaction of the in-service training participants and the use of the results in improvement measures

The satisfaction of in-service training participants is studied regularly. In the end of training the participants are asked to give feedback as regards the organisation, content, competence of lecturers and training wishes. Proposals for improvement are taken into account in organising new courses.

Results and analysis:

- 1) course participants’ satisfaction has been high over the years: according to the participants the training premises are spacious and the fittings meet the modern requirements; the training is carried out by experienced lecturers and practitioners who use various active study methods and thematical handouts (see Table 20);

Table 20. Satisfaction with in-service 2015-2017 (4-point scale)

	2015	2016	2017
Satisfaction with training materials	3.8	3.8	3.9
Satisfaction with structure of training and time management	3.7	3.9	3.8
Satisfaction with training methods	3.8	3.8	3.9

- 2) based on the feedback the share of practical work in training has increased; this is supported by the new study laboratories;
- 3) in the framework of the Adult Learner’s Week the College carried out informal training courses and different workshops in 2015-2017, but according to feedback there should be more of such training courses;
- 4) since 2014 training courses and workshops have been carried out in the framework of the county Adults’ Educators’ Club (from secondary schools, vocational educational institutions and the Rakvere College of Tallinn University);
- 5) based on the training participants’ recommendations the new curricula were developed in 2015-2017: “Category-based Display of Goods”, “Designing the Purchase Environment“, “Category-based Management of Stocks“, “Preparing for the Accounting Vocational Exam”, “Accounting for Small Undertakings) (Based on MS Excel), “Data Analysis and Drafting Reports with the help of spreadsheet computing“, “Reporting on Economic Activities and Financial Management in Micro-Enterprises and Small Enterprises“, “Internet Marketing Options to Develop Company Exports“, “Creating a Homepage/e-Store and Internet Marketing Options for Small Undertakings“, “The Psyche and Help and Care for People Living with Addictions“, “Training for Support Persons”, “Administrative Work and Digital Solutions in Small Undertakings”, “Internet Course for Human Resources Management”, etc.

4.3 Other activities targeted at serving the society

4.3.1 Setting objectives for the activities targeted at serving the society, assessing the activities and planning of improvement measures

The development work on the community level and supporting the development of its members has been defined in the section of the operational programme describing the services provided to the community. When planning such activities, the objectives, competences and the needs of the target groups are taken into account. The activities carried out, the participation rate and satisfaction are assessed regularly (at least twice a year) and improvement measures are taken as required.

Results and analysis:

- 1) on average, the College has organised 33 academic events every year for the public (public lectures (the average number of participants per year is 323), conferences (100), information days (100), etc.). The examples of public lectures include the following: “Multi-cultural Social Work“, “Clinical Social Work“, “Internet Psychology“, “Refugees in Estonia“, “How to Lead People Sustainably and Lovingly“, “Social Media & Shock: The New Level for Advertising“, “US- Estonian Business Relations“, “Preparation of Employees to Work with Volunteers“, “Experiential Education: Motivating People for Physical Activity“, “On the Investigation of Economic Crimes“, “The Organisation Services and the Application of the Foundations of Information Management“, “Trends in Commercial Technologies“, “Developments in the Software Development and Business Activities of the Financial World“, etc. We have annually organised county social worker days. In order to popularise informal training and community work the College has established a series of events called The Creativity Lecture Hall where lectures and workshops are organised; the number of workshops and participants has been increasing (in the last three years 36 workshops and 339 participants);
- 2) in the framework of the Adult Learner’s Week the College has organised free-of-charge counselling, for example: “Vocational and Career-related Counselling of Adults“, „How to Notice Learning Difficulties“, “Financial Counselling“, “Legal Counselling“, “Document and Archive management“, “Business Plan Drafting“, “Psychological Counselling“, “Counselling to Cope with Debt“, etc.;
- 3) international weeks have been organised since 2016 (the average number of participants 200), in the framework of which open lectures and workshops are organised;
- 4) in order to popularise its activities the College has cooperated with different agencies, such as: Lääne-Viru County Government, Rakvere Town Government, Vinni Rural Municipality Government, Rakvere College of Tallinn University, Rakvere Vocational School, SA Innove, National Institute for Health Development, SA Lääne-Viru Development Centre (joint project), Lääne-Viru Local Authorities Association, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonian National Social Insurance Board, Labour Inspectorate, NGO ETNA Estonia, Lääne-Viru Rajaleidja Centre;
- 5) the College has supported its members’ own initiative and innovative proposals for project work and for organising events: for example, on the initiative of MTÜ Mõdriku Arendusselts four projects targeted at the wider audience have been organised in 2015-2017;
- 6) the College takes part in the Network of Health Promoting Workplaces coordinated by the National Institute for Health Development and has organised open health-promoting lectures (6) and public training courses (4) for its employers since 2014.

4.3.2 Contributing to the promotion of the well-being of the community by allocating resources and/or organising public events

The College uses both budgetary resources as well as revenue from economic activities to carry out activities that are targeted at the development of the well-being of the community. Additional financing is also sought from projects and from cooperation partners. Both College members as well as community members are involved in carrying out the events.

Results and analysis:

- 1) the College has provided premises for the organisation of public events and for carrying out the meetings of professional associations/unions free of charge in the period of 2015-2017 altogether 50 times (e.g. LC Rakvere, Estonian National Social Insurance Board, Lääne-Viru County social workers, Association of Estonian Accountants, Association of Estonian Adult Educators (AEAE) Andras, Estonian Assistants Society, Tallinn University, etc.). In cooperation with the non-profit association ETNA the College has carried out a final seminar on the topic of micro-credit and two Fairs for Business and Professional Women;
- 2) the College has lent its premises to the Blood Centre of North Estonia Medical Centre free of charge so that the centre could organise its donor days there;
- 3) the College has the region's best library of economic and social literature, which has been compiled pursuant to the needs of the curricula, providing services also to the wider public (e.g. in 2017 there were 384 users from outside the College). The library follows the sustainable way of thinking and the copies of publications no longer needed by the library are handed out free of charge to the students, the elderly, family homes and book fairs;
- 4) the students have participated in volunteer activities, valuing the importance of volunteer work in civil society and contributing to the development of the community. The volunteers take part in the environmental project "Let's Do It!", as well as in the work of the Estonian Food Bank, social centres, care homes, children's day centres and substitution homes as well as in the work of various support groups. In 2015-2017 all social work students worked as volunteers for at least 156 hours. The College students take part in the events organised in the town of Rakvere and in the county as volunteers, for example the Day for the Disabled, A Sports Day for the Disabled, Rakvere Night Run, at the Fair of Business and Professional Women;
- 5) the College staff who belong to Rakvere Lions Club have collected donations for families with many children and families in difficulties (for example, the club helped to buy a functional bed for a small child with multiple disabilities in 2016 and in 2017 it helped to buy a baby carriage for quadruplets born in Vinni municipality);
- 6) in 2015-2017 twenty charity and social projects written under the guidance of College teaching staff received financing from various foundations and have been carried out (such as "Technology and Model-making Club at Elva Open Youth Centre", "Complex Service for Women and Their Children Who Are Victims of Violence" and "Leevi Community Day 2016").

Aggregate analysis of servicing the community

Strengths (+)	Activities for the maintenance/amplification of strengths
The systematic popularisation of the College	The application of modern IT solutions and social media
The in-service training and advisory services that meet the stakeholders' expectations	Continuous cooperation with employers and other partners. The involvement of employers and professional specialists in conducting training courses
Supporting the social-cultural development of the community	The organisation of lectures and events targeted at the public, continuous participation in advisory and decision-making bodies, the sharing of College resources (library, manor complex, training rooms, etc.) with the community
The historic manor complex with cultural and environmental value	The restoration and preservation of the building in the manor complex

5 AGGREGATE ANALYSIS OF THE FIELDS OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

Strengths (+)	Activities for the maintenance/amplification of strengths
Purposeful, leading and inclusive management	Continuous inclusion of the membership in the management and development process
Competent and motivated employees, including teaching staff	Continuous training and motivation of staff
A modern yet academic study environment, including information systems, technical and educational-technological tools and study laboratories	The continuous modernisation of the learning environment pursuant to the development of curricula and the students' needs, geothermal heating and use of solar energy, monitoring cost-effectiveness
Study activities, RDC activities and servicing the community involves both internal and external stakeholders	The involvement of stakeholders in the study process and curricula development, the application of the connective internship model.
Graduation theses of applied nature on varied themes, necessary companies/agencies	Development of the network for supporting RDC activities (incl. the international network)
Student-centredness	Supporting the individual development of students, the continuous development of the counselling system, the diversification of flexible study possibilities
High specialty-employment of the graduates	The development of curricula pursuant to the expectations of the working world, the continuous development of the teaching staff
Supporting the social-cultural development of the community	In-service training courses and advisory services that meet the stakeholder's expectations, lectures and events for the wider public, the sharing of resources with the community
Areas for improvement (-)	Activities to remove shortcomings
An increase in the number of lecturers with a PhD	Allocation of working time for doctoral studies, compensation of expenses The continuous/increased involvement of lecturers with a PhD to lead research areas with higher priority
Renovation of dormitory	Finding resources for renovation
Increasing international mobility	The implementation of foreign-language modules, improvement of cooperation, material support of mobility