

**Assessment Report on Meeting the  
Requirements of the Secondary Condition**

Study programme group of  
Teacher Training and Educational  
Science

**Tallinn University  
University of Tartu**

2019

## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
1. GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT SINCE LAST ASSESSMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMME GROUP .....	6
1.1. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE TALLINN UNIVERSITY WITH REGARD TO IMPROVEMENT AREAS PRESENTED IN THE EKKA COUNCIL 10.03.2017 DECISION.....	6
1.2. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU WITH REGARD TO IMPROVEMENT AREAS PRESENTED IN THE EKKA COUNCIL 10.03.2017 DECISION.....	8
2. REPORT ON MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SECONDARY CONDITION, TALLINN UNIVERSITY	10
2.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND .....	10
2.2 MEETINGS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECONDARY CONDITION .....	10
3. REPORT ON MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SECONDARY CONDITION, UNIVERSITY OF TARTU	14
3.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND .....	14
3.2 MEETINGS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECONDARY CONDITION .....	15

## Introduction

### Background and aim of the assessment

Quality assessment of a study programme group involves the assessment of the conformity of study programmes and the studies and development activities that take place on their basis to legislation, national and international standards and developmental directions with the purpose of providing recommendations to improve their quality.

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

Quality assessment of a study programme group takes place at least once every 7 years based on the regulation approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education *Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups at the Level of Doctoral Studies*.

In 2016, international expert panel assessed the quality of the study programme group of Teacher Training and Educational Science at the Tallinn University and University of Tartu. As a result, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education decided at its meeting on March 10, 2017, that the next assessment is to take place in seven years if the universities meet certain requirements set by the Council.

**The aim of the current assessment committee's work** was to evaluate whether the requirements (secondary condition) set by the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education have been met by the Tallinn University and University of Tartu.

### Assessment committee

The following members formed the assessment committee:

Milan Pol	Professor, Masaryk University Brno; Czech Republic
Margit Timakov	Head, Estonian Teachers' Union

### Assessment process

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

The committee members visited the Tallinn University on May 27, 2019 and the University of Tartu on May 28, 2019 and had discussions with the following people:

#### Tallinn University

Meeting with the management of the School of Educational Sciences

**Tiia Õun** – director, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education

**Tiina Anspal** – Administrative Head

**Mari-Liis Lind** – Head of Studies

**Merle Pajus** – Research Coordinator

**Liis Raudsepp** – Internationalisation Coordinator

**Kätlin Vanari** – Head of Educational Innovation Center

**Eve Eisenschmidt** – Head of the Council of the School of Educational Sciences, Professor of Education Policy and Management

Meeting with the heads of subject teachers study programmes

**Katrin Poom-Valickis** – Professor of Teacher Education

**Madis Lepik** – Head of Teacher of Mathematics Study Programme, Associate Professor of Mathematics Didactics

**Krista Kerge** – Head of Teacher of Estonian Language and Literature, Professor of Applied Linguistics

**Andry Kikkull** – Head of Teacher of Craft and Technology Education Study Programme, Lecturer of Craft and Technology Education Didactics

**Mare Oja** – Head of Teacher of History and Civic, Lecturer of History Didactics

Meeting with the head and staff of the Educational Sciences programme (master level):

**Airi Liimets** – Head of Educational Sciences Study Programme, Visiting Professor of Education Philosophy

**Tiiu Kuurme** – Associate Professor of Educational Sciences

**Marit Koit** – Member of the Educational Sciences Study Programme Board, involved in study programme development, teaching and supervising activities

**Lilian Reinments** – Member of the Educational Sciences Study Programme Board, involved in study programme development, teaching and supervising activities, Head of Development in Gustav Adolf Grammar School

**Piret Lilover** – Member of the Educational Sciences Study Programme Board, involved in study development, Project Development Manager in Foundation Innove

## **University of Tartu**

Meeting with the management of the Institute of Education and Pedagogicum

**Äli Leijen** – Head of the Institute of Education

**Margus Pedaste** – Head of Pedagogicum and Vice Director for Development of the Institute of Education

**Pille Nelis** – Vice Director for Academic Affairs of the Institute of Education

Meeting with the heads of study programmes of the Narva College via Skype

**Mai-Liis Palginõmm** – Acting Director of Narva College

**Marianne Kivimurd-Tarelkina** – Head of Primary School Teacher in Multilingual Environment study programme and Humanities in Multilingual School study programme

**Lehte Tuuling** – Head of Early Years Teacher in Multilingual Environment study programme

Meeting with the heads of study programmes and staff of Special Education programmes

**Pille Häidkind** – Head of the Department of Special Education and Programme Director for Special Education study programmes

**Evelyn Kiive** – Professor of Special Education

**Marika Padrik** – Associate Professor of Speech Therapy

In the following sections, the assessment committee summarizes its findings regarding the fulfillment of the secondary condition, and also provides feedback on the progress the universities have made in connection with experts' recommendations made in their report in 2017.

The current report is a public document and will be available on [EKKA website](#) after EKKA quality assessment Council has made its decision.

# 1. General progress report since last assessment of study programme group

## 1.1. General assessment of the actions taken by the Tallinn University with regard to improvement areas presented in the EKKA Council 10.03.2017 decision.

### Comments

Since the last assessment in 2016 the university has initiated several changes based on the recommendations provided by the evaluation panel. It is important to acknowledge that the university presented a thorough and very informative evidence-based report and action plan for the intermediate period which gives evidence that the changes are not arbitrary but a result of continuous and participatory planning, implementation, and analysis. What is more, the supportive examples were confirmed in practice during the visit to the university.

The report indicated efforts to make positive changes and it is evident that work is in progress. Many of the changes are collective in nature involving various groups on several levels of leadership at the university. While visiting the university and meeting with different people, this collaborative working atmosphere was well evident. It was clearly seen that openness of the people supports their efforts to find meaningful solutions and if needed in taking some calculated risks.

Tallinn University for example has taken several measures to address the drop-out issue, approaching it in a complex way and dealing with it from admission up to graduation. Taking more seriously into account the student feedback by encouraging students give it more thoroughly, analyzing it with program leaders, and connecting it with staff development interviews shows that the university is not only interested in improving the quality of their work but it is also taking actions to continuously support the process of quality improvement.

The evidence was given that in addition to the above-mentioned, in response to the issues pointed out by the evaluation report of 2017, the university plays an active role in public space, doing what they can from their part to improve the reputation of the teaching profession; they are working with their study programmes, i.e. including more electives, and enabling more flexibility in thesis writing; efforts are made to improve the organisational culture both by continuously including staff in change making processes as well as critically over-viewing research part of the teaching staff's workload, and encouraging students in giving feedback; the university is also updating study materials on a regular basis, and puts the effort to make them available in Estonian language by finding ways to get important sources translated; they are including more lecturers from abroad which improves a variety in teaching for students; the university also supports continuous development opportunities for its staff members; ongoing further collaboration with Tartu University is well combined for example within the topic of inclusive education where both universities work together in learning from and in collaboration with the universities in Norway. All the 68 points for improvement or recommendations pointed out in the report of 2017 have been addressed in one way or another, very often already in a resultative manner.

### Commendations

- Collaborative participatory culture – continuous discussions for analysis, planning, and implementation and evaluation of changes have proved to be effective, people are involved in decision making processes, they understand what is going on, and they feel a need to contribute.
- The university has mapped the situation of drop-outs first and is trying to distinguish what can be influenced by the very university and what not – possible solutions being study counsellors, updating the research module, overviewing admission and graduation procedures. It is highly commendable that the university is fighting against the drop-out rate by implementing various complementary measures which are in synergy; putting emphasis on admission on one hand – interviews are conducted to find out the motivation of applicants; making sure students are well informed about the expectations as well as supported in developing their time management skills; also counselling and peer support (small group peering) is practised during studies and especially during thesis writing period, efforts are made to improve the supervision process. In case of part time students the university has provided them more individualised study paths which means they allow more flexible graduation e.g. by prolonging the time for students who work and study at the same time.
- The university has creatively worked with the format of the graduation thesis since part of the drop-out was related to students not knowing how to write a graduation thesis. Introducing and encouraging different formats of graduation thesis (from pair and group to article and action research based) is also a very positive measure in tackling the problem of dropouts.
- In the field of mobilities, the university has recognised the problem of low number of outgoing students by providing extra scholarships to students, developing a mobility window. Since not all students can go for a long period, the university has also focused on shorter study stays and also practice stays by Erasmus internships. Each program now has one obligatory course in English which increases the language proficiency of students. The number of incoming students is relatively large, and there are number of courses in English offered (60 ECTS worth), all these courses are also open for Estonian students, thus more chances for integration of local and foreign students is provided which on its own can also help to encourage local students to consider their studies abroad.
- It is positive that new PhD study research projects are increasingly linked with the existing research projects of the staff. Also, scholarships are made more valuable by combining money from state, the university and institute level.

### Further considerations

- Workload of the staff – it remains to be seen how the new model and its projection into a real work of the academic staff will work.
- Mobility (especially the quantity of outgoing) – developing further the use of more practical solutions, e.g. shorter periods for staying abroad.
- Internationalization of some programs could be develop broader, for instance the program Educational Science.

## 1.2. General assessment of the actions taken by the University of Tartu with regard to improvement areas presented in the EKKA Council 10.03.2017 decision.

### Comments

Changes have been made in reaction to recommendations formulated by the panel such as the topics of inclusive education and valuing research groups more. Although many things remain in the stage of planning, it can be seen that university has e.g. used student feedback to make changes in study format in special education to improve attendance and avoid drop-outs. In many occasions it was evident from the visit to the university that there are many more things that are done which are not recorded in the documents provided prior to the site visit.

The University of Tartu has put together detailed job descriptions which should help solve workload as well as teaching quality issues. It is crucial that the process be monitored on a regular basis.

Collaboration with Tallinn University as well as some examples of international ties with some foreign universities is evidenced. At the moment, the dominant projects are on a long term basis, and seem to play an important part.

The large project on inclusive education with Tallinn University will not only encourage collaboration but will also increase knowledge of best practices; University of Tartu has made it a requirement now that at least one course of inclusive education is compulsory on bachelor and master levels. In addition, providing more electives as well as making changes in the content of other courses is done to support the idea of inclusiveness in education.

Collecting feedback from students both via group discussions as well through more anonymous practices seems regular, although not completely systematic. Some examples are putting effort to support work-study balance, e.g having a block of full-week of studies instead of individual classes spread all over many different days/weeks, or differentiating instruction on teaching practice according to existing or previous work experience of the students. Work is being done to support Narva College both language- and study material-wise.

Some evidence could be found about optimising the programs due to a number of students, e.g. merging history and civics teacher training programs.

### Commendations

- Good initiative is shown by the field of mathematics. Bringing money together from development fund and Institute of Math and Pedagogicum created a chance to compose new mathematics-didactics team, new people were hired which shows that this is important for the university to find solutions to crucial problems in the society.
- Taking measures to upgrade the staff members – there are strategies to upgrade the staff by updating the resources, adding more people with doctoral degree on who can more effectively make links between teaching and research.



- Working with the drop-out rate has become a strategic aim and e.g. in Special Education this has meant study format change (becoming different, flexible, more student-based). To improve finalising diploma work, a new course, diploma seminar, has been introduced; older students are meeting with the younger ones which seems to be efficient; diploma work can be written also in pairs although not many use this option at this point.
- When addressing the issue of mobilities there are steps that have been taken, e.g. university has developed a mobility window (15 credits), outgoing students are offered a language seminar, the university is trying to improve marketing of mobilities as well as offer practical stages for working students. A great change in the number of mobilities has not yet occurred, though. As far as academics are concerned, there are some incoming, and some outgoing ones: two leading professors of the University of Tartu spent either six months or four months abroad within the last two years.
- Within the last several years, the university has undertaken some measures, partly related to the workload, partly related to establishing the new research groups incl., didactics, virtual reality group etc. In Narva College there is the evidence about small scale research (e.g. bilingual gymnasium), and it is positive that (graduate) students have a chance to be involved right from the beginning.
- Internal evaluations means both collecting feedback from students as well as having a critical perspective on job descriptions. Study program committees include student and teacher representatives whose collaboration can initiate changes in study programs. Narva College and special education group being good examples of this.

#### Further considerations

- Consider more collaboration with and support to Narva College, consider (and reconsider) best use of resources (staff, money, time).
- Analyse the situation of mobilities more thoroughly, try to find innovative methods to support the students in their decision making. In addition, consider a possibility to further increase of flexibility of the study programs where already good examples exist, i.e. greater differentiation within the courses with tasks + mobility windows according to student profiles.
- Monitor how new job descriptions help to decrease staff overload.
- Take alumni feedback more into consideration.
- The University of Tartu is understandably aiming towards self-directed learners, and considering formative feedback is very valuable, yet this is highly time and energy consuming.

## 2. Report on meeting the requirements of the secondary condition, Tallinn University

### 2.1. General background

At its meeting on March 10, 2017, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education decided that the next assessment of the study programme group of Teacher Training and Educational Science at the Tallinn University will take place in 7 years (maximum term) but set a secondary condition that the Tallinn University should meet in 2 years.

Based on the Assessment Report of the international panel and the Decision of EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education, the Tallinn University submitted the following documents to EKKA in March 2019:

- 1) Improvement areas connected with additional conditions
- 2) Teaching staff TLU
- 3) Action plan-report on other recommendations

### 2.2. Meeting the requirements of secondary condition

The following are the requirements set by the Quality Assessment Council to be met by the Tallinn University, and the committee's assessment on the developments Tallinn University has made in this regard.

According to clause 6 (7) 2) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of Higher Education', a member of the teaching or research staff who conducts studies in a given subject must have the necessary teaching competence and his or her qualification must support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. According to clause 2 6) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', teaching competence involves the planning of a teaching process, the conducting of teaching, assessing, giving feedback, supervising, 10 reviewing and engaging in educational methodological work. In many programmes for subject teachers, there is a shortage of staff time resources and staff's expertise to supervise various theses. Thus, not all lecturers who deliver courses have the necessary teaching competence to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes, as defined in the 'Standard of Higher Education'. This partially explains the problems that students have with their thesis writing. According to the students, teaching staff are not sufficiently aware of contemporary practices or the modern challenges faced by schools and pupils.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is fully met**

### Comments

Tallinn University has taken necessary steps to find solutions to the problems posed in secondary conditions. They have provided staff development opportunities by organising seminars and conferences to introduce new methods and encourage discussions on ongoing changes. They have invited visiting lecturers as well as encouraged teaching staff to participate in conferences and strengthen collaboration with universities abroad. In addition, it is evident that the university has tried to support the students in their thesis writing by organising various seminars along the way, e.g. bringing together students from various course levels to initiate peer support and mutual problem solving through sharing personal experiences. Furthermore, encouraging various graduation thesis formats can become a solution for struggling students. The changes in the workload of teaching staff have been made very recently and these should also reduce or even solve the danger of shortage of staff time resources.

### Commendations

- Statutes of study programs, unified guidelines, defined best practice for learning and teaching, study regulations, set rules for best practice, since 2018 new university-wide definition of plagiarism and updated measures features for handling plagiarism cases. They have a working group, have moved from one software to another, well followed policy – all in all, it can be pointed out that the university has responded positively and meaningfully.
- Teacher Professional Development – annual evaluation and analysis on institute level, as well as development interviews are ways to support each staff member. Also, one-time or short or longer time visiting lecturers help in implementing important and complex issues like inclusive education for example.
- Including more teachers who are at the same time working at school provides valuable input, feedback, and collaboration opportunities.
- Doctoral level collaboration between universities in Tallinn and Tartu, including University of Helsinki + inclusion project with Norway + the work of Center of excellence creates opportunities for supporting mobilities throughout number of universities, organise joint seminars for subject didactics, and pay short term visits.

### Further considerations

The workload of lecturers working at the same time also as teachers can sometimes exceed the optimal amount not for the university but for the individual/lecturer – therefore, it is crucial that the new model of the workload composition is monitored, analysed and discussed regularly.

According to clause 6 (7) 1) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', the conduct of studies conforms to the requirements if the teaching is performed by ordinary teaching and research staff who meet the qualification requirements established
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in legal instruments and whose number, based on their responsibilities, loads of conducted studies and research, and numbers of students supervised, is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. The proportion of research in the workload of teaching staff is generally small. The teaching loads of some lecturers do not allow them to adequately focus on research, and thus the quality of teaching inevitably suffers. Therefore, given the number of students, the number of lecturers whose research supports achievement of the objectives of the study programmes is not sufficient, as defined in the 'Standard of Higher Education'.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is substantially met**

### Comments

Tallinn University has analysed the situation and developed a new model of workload composition in which more specifically a proportion of teaching, research and activities related to organisation/administration and public outreach are defined. Different proportions of these three sets of activities are then related to different academic staff categories. Since this is a very new initiative, it will take some time to prove itself. Support of implementation of this change is needed at the moment.

### Commendations

- Redefined the workload which should more freely and explicitly identify the research element in the work of the academics. Since it is a new thing since September we recommend monitoring and regular analysis.
- Staff mobility is going on in both directions and is partly focused on research profile development of participants.
- Seminars on supervision are taking place as an initiative to support research element and link it with the teaching/learning.

### Further considerations

- Monitoring and evaluation of how new workload serves the quality of academic staff's work needs to be conducted.

According to subsection 6 (2) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', study programmes and the conducting of studies must be consistent, inter alia, with national and international quality requirements and agreements. According to point 5.2.2 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education' there must be a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching resources and they must be available. The Educational Sciences study programme is currently taught completely in Estonian and, as a result, the choice of teaching materials and research articles for teaching is limited.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is substantially met**

### Comments

The university is buying what is available in the market of Estonian language study literature, in some cases the staff takes individual actions to provide students with some other resources by translating the texts (parts of the texts) from other languages, for instance. Also, some staff members write course textbooks or other texts that serve as a study literature for the students, too. The university supports these activities of the staff.

### Commendations

- 1) Regular updating of the materials, e.g. books are translated, there are projects to encourage that, e.g. a competition for the best study material has been conducted.

### Further considerations

- Continuous need to update materials, and translate materials into Estonian.
- Improve the level of language proficiency of the students so that they understand more also the resources in English and other foreign languages.
- Conscious effort should be made to monitor the amount of available learning materials.

According to subsection 6 (1) of the 'Standard of Higher Education' a study programme must take into consideration the needs of the labour market and the target group. Point 5.1.5 of the document 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education' prescribes that study programme development must take into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders. In the Educational Sciences study programme, stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in the process of study programme development or teaching. In collaboration with its stakeholders, the study programme must, besides theory, also put emphasis on development of other competencies that educational experts need in modern societies.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is fully met**

### Comments

The university has updated the student feedback questionnaire, tried to focus it not only on teaching but also on student learning, Interactive part where teachers can respond to feedback and plenty of open questions – meaningful – oral (seminars) and written (replied by teacher). Student representative is in the program committee, some teachers make special meetings. Communication back to the students is given at the beginning of the next course.

Student feedback is considered important and is gathered through regular discussions and feedback seminars or personal interviews. In addition, relevant training is organised for the staff supporting their skills.

Also, the Education Sciences program's curriculum has been recently revised and advisory board is busy with the curriculum development of the program. The advisory board is composed of representative of academic staff, students, alumni, school teacher, museum pedagogue and an education journalist. This was, a heterogeneity and richness of perspectives is available when considering ways of program development.

In order to strengthen the link between theory and other competencies of prospective educational experts (graduates of the program), new courses were introduced, such as Practice (6 ETCS), Internship Abroad (9 ECTS). The course LIFE (6 ECTS) is linked to courses focused on intercultural education and creativity, life style, learning style and individual culture, different pedagogical concepts and their application, curriculum, society and individual. This way, a interlinks between theory and practice are clearly made.

#### Commendations

- Student representative in the program committee
- Students are encouraged to give feedback
- Stakeholders (alumni, employers) are involved

#### Further considerations

- Consider ways how students can better view how their feedback is taken into account and used in the improvement of courses and studies in general
- Pay permanent attention to monitoring of evaluation processes.

## **3. Report on meeting the requirements of the secondary condition, University of Tartu**

### **3.1. General background**

At its meeting on March 10, 2017, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education decided that the next assessment of the study programme group of Teacher Training and Educational Science at the University of Tartu will take place in 7 years (maximum term) but set a secondary condition that the University of Tartu should meet in 2 years.

Based on the Assessment Report of the international panel and the Decision of EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education, the Tallinn University submitted the following documents to EKKA in March 2019:

- 1) Progress report (secondary condition)
- 2) Job descriptions of academic staff

3) Action plan – other recommendations

### 3.2. Meeting the requirements of secondary condition

The following are the requirements set by the Quality Assessment Council to be met by the University of Tartu, and the committee's assessment on the developments University of Tartu has made in this regard.

Subsection 6 (5) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of Higher Education', prescribes that the title and structure of a study programme must be consistent, and the study methods used and the teaching and learning process, including the loads for independent work and practical training, must support achievement of the objectives of the study programme. According to subsection 6 (2) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', study programmes and the process of teaching and learning must be consistent, inter alia, with national quality requirements and agreements. Point 5.1.2 of the regulation, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', authorised in subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act and in point 3.7.1 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, prescribes that the structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme must support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme. In the structure and content of the study programmes, insufficient attention has been paid to inclusive education issues and to working with pupils who have special educational needs. The Early Years Teacher programme at Narva College does not focus on pre-school education in a sufficiently clear manner. The number of joint subjects with the Primary School Teacher programme should be decreased and the number of subjects regarding the teaching and development of preschoolers increased. Practical training opportunities created for students in the Special Education programme are not sufficient. In the Special Education programme, students should have exposure to children with special educational needs at early stages of their studies.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is fully met**

#### Comments

The University of Tartu has initiated a mutual project with Tallinn University to learn from best practices of inclusive education in Norway. Within the university this has improved collaboration between staff members from departments of educational sciences and special education. This, in return, will help to improve not only the programs of special education but also other courses in educational studies, as well as help with the preparedness of staff members on the issue.

More emphasize on inclusive education issues and on practical training opportunities of students in Special Education program can be seen in Narva College, too. A proportion of hours of practical training was increased, and during the practical period the work with SEN children is explicitly made a part of the students' focus.

### Commendations

- Changes in study programs including special courses as well each subject course taking the inclusive education perspective into account support the overall objectives.
- Cooperation between Educational Sciences and Special Education programs is very promising – this kind of mutual effort is needed to understand best how to support different students in the best way, what is the message given from universities to schools and education system in general, what kind of further research is needed etc.
- Narva College has clarified their focus, and included more pre-school practice into its programs.

### Further considerations

- Ongoing staff development on the topic of inclusive education should form a solid system in which best practices are shared and sought for consciously.
- Seminars and discussions on different levels of staff should be encouraged to support the change, tackle the problems, and deal with emerging new challenges (see below).
- Being ready for a growing number of students, or at least for the possibility of that because of state priority funding.

According to point 5.3.6 of the regulation, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', the process of teaching and learning must support learning mobility, and point 5.5.4 prescribes that, as part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students. The international student mobility rate is low. In the study programmes, mobility options are narrowed by the overly strict rules for transferring ECTS credits earned abroad. In the study programmes at Narva College, international mobility or learning mobility is not seen as part of the studies. Students' outward mobility should be strongly encouraged and international students should also be recruited to the programmes.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is substantially met**

### Comments

At the university and program levels there seems to be an understanding for supporting learning mobility, and some changes have been initiated like the mobility window, courses in English, involving students in international research groups, supporting staff mobilities which also serves as a good example for the students. It seems that the university has put a significant effort into this, yet results take time and usually do not come within a short time period of couple of years. Since the issue of student mobility is a thorough and complex one, it is definitely a topic that has to be kept on the agenda continuously.

### Commendations

- Mobility window allows students to have their studies abroad to be taken into account or to have an "excused" leave from their studies.



- Discussions and seminars for solving the mobility-related problems have been held which helps to build a mutual ground for the staff.
- Flexibility of the study programs allows an individual perspective to be considered when needed.
- Sharing good practices by students themselves can be more encouraging than any campaign initiated by the University or state, which can give support for students considering a mobility in overcoming their fears and obstacles.

#### Further considerations

- Taking a more systematic approach in introducing flexible solutions to students – gathering the information together, presenting the information to students.
- Considering also more short term visits may be a solution for students who cannot leave for a longer period. Once having had a positive short mobility which has been part of their studies and not anything extra can encourage them also to be involved in longer mobilities.
- More collaboration between Tartu and Narva could serve a learning experience for both sides. Possibly also such mobilities can support students in their decision-making.
- Developing English-language study courses for incoming students is a permanent challenge.

According to clause 6 (7) 1) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', the teaching and learning process conforms to the requirements if the teaching is performed by ordinary teaching and research staff who meet the qualification requirements established in legal instruments and whose number, based on their responsibilities, teaching and research loads, and numbers of students supervised, is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. The proportion of research in the workloads of the teaching staff is generally small. The teaching load of some lecturers does not allow them to engage sufficiently in research, and consequently the quality of teaching suffers. Teaching and research are not interrelated, and students of the study programmes at Narva College are not involved in research. Thus, given the number of students, the number of staff members whose research would support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes is not sufficient, as defined in the 'Standard of Higher Education'.

**Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is substantially met**

#### Comments

University of Tartu has established more research groups (incl. Didactics, Inclusive Education, Virtual Reality) in recent years and involved more students in their activities. Several large-scale projects has also supported a research focus and links between teaching and research. Also, Pedagogicum serves as a platform to support these initiatives. There is still a room for improvement as for the research performance of some parts of academic staff, and consequently as for their practice in linking teaching and research, but significant steps have been made to improve the situation, incl. the re-definition of the workload of the academic staff.

More attention has been paid to staff development and evaluation of the academic staff performance (with regard to the research performance, too). Teaching skills development activities take inclusion of research in teaching into the consideration, too.

#### Commendations

- Thorough Job descriptions of academic staff adopted by the Senate of the University in December 2017 and amended in December 2018 state the rights and responsibilities, job descriptions and requirements of the staff, thus giving also a clear proportion of various tasks in the workload.
- Involving students more in the work of research groups allows opportunities to integrate teaching and studying and research both for staff and students.
- Narva College students have been more involved in research teams the last two years.
- Annual development interviews with the staff members are important in initiating necessary changes.

#### Further considerations

- Involving all the members of the staff and distributing the workload more evenly.
- Training in research skills provided to staff members in need; monitoring and evaluation of their performance.
- Providing staff development opportunities to strengthen their skills to link teaching and research.
- Finding further opportunities to include students in Narva College into the work of research groups also from Tartu.