

29.08.2019

The Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided:

To consider that the secondary condition set for the assessment decision of the first and second levels of higher education of the Teacher Training and Educational Science study programme group of Tallinn University has been fulfilled.

Based on § 53 (3) and § 66 (2) (3) and (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and pursuant to § 10 (4) of the Universities Act and clause 3.7.3 and clause 3.7.1 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education on the basis of clause 41.1/41.2 of the document "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education" established on the basis of the authorization contained therein, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter the Council) states:

1. § 53 (1) 2) of the APA provides that *an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act* and § 53 (2) 2) and 3) provide that *a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act: if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition or if the issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of the administrative right of discretion*. On 10.03.2017, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter the Council) adopted a decision to approve the assessment report¹ and to carry out the next quality assessment of the first and second levels of higher education of the Teacher Training and Educational Science Study Programme Group of Tallinn University in seven years, with the secondary condition that Tallinn University submits no later than 10.03.2019² an action plan and activity report for the elimination of the deficiencies set out in clause 11 of the assessment decision.
2. On 11.03.2018 Tallinn University sent the following documents to the Council: 1) Changes made to meet the secondary conditions, 2) Table on the lecturers conducting teacher training, 3) Activities carried out and planned in the study programme group and in the study programme to take into account the recommendations and areas for improvement. EKKA involved the following

¹ The assessment report is an integral part of the decision and is available on the EKKA website.

²The assessment report is available on the EKKA website.

members of the Committee in the assessment of the fulfillment of the secondary condition:

- 1) **Milan Pol**, Professor, Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic
- 2) **Margit Timakov**, Chairman of the Board of the Estonian Teachers' Union
3. The members of the Committee visited Tallinn University on 27.05.2019 and submitted to EKKA on 09.07.2019 a report on the elimination of the deficiencies described in clause 11 of the decision of the Council of 10.03.2017. The assessment of the Committee was as follows:

Deficiency underlying imposition of the secondary condition	The assessment of the Committee
<p>Pursuant to § 6 (7) 2) of the Government of the Republic Regulation "Standard of Higher Education" (SHE), <i>a lecturer or researcher conducting studies in a specific subject must have the necessary teaching competence and his or her qualification to support the achievement of objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.</i> According to § 2 (6) of the SHE, <i>teaching competence includes planning the study process, conducting studies, assessment and giving feedback, supervision and review, and teaching methodology activities.</i> In many subject teacher study programmes, lecturers lack the time and substantive expertise to supervise various graduation theses. Thus, not all lecturers teaching in the subjects have the necessary teaching competence in the sense of SHE in order to achieve the objectives and the learning outcomes of the study programmes. The students' problems in writing their graduation theses are also partly due to this fact. Also, in the opinion of the students, the awareness of the teachers of the subject teacher's study programmes about the practices of the modern school and the challenges facing the school and the student is not sufficient.</p>	<p>The deficiency has been completely remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) New graduation thesis formats (in pairs, groups, in the form of research articles, etc.) have been introduced to reduce student drop-out. 2) In order to support the professional development of lecturers, the institute conducts annual evaluations and analyzes. 3) Extensive involvement of visiting lecturers, which allows, for example, a deeper examination of the topic of inclusive education. 4) Involving teachers working in schools provides a variety of useful input and feedback to teaching and expands opportunities for collaboration. 5) There is a regular (once a month) cooperation network of didactics and internship supervisors, which enables to create a common understanding of teacher training practice and didactics, to share best practices and to support internships in general education schools. The network also

	<p>includes seminars for school internship supervisors, study visits and training courses.</p> <p>6) A new career model for lecturers is being introduced.</p> <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <p>1) In the new workload model for lecturers, it is necessary to take into account that for lecturers who work as teachers in a school, the workload may be higher than optimal. The implementation of the workload model needs to be regularly analyzed, and the results discussed.</p>
<p>Pursuant to § 6 (7) 1) of the Government of the Republic Regulation "Standard of Higher Education" (SHE), the conduct of studies conforms to the requirements: <i>if ordinary teaching staff and research staff are available for the studies, who meet the qualification requirements established in legal instruments and whose number is, based on their responsibilities, the volume of conducted studies and research and the number of supervised students, adequate for achieving the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.</i> The share of research in the workload of lecturers is mostly small. The teaching workload of some lecturers does not allow them to focus enough on research, which inevitably affects the quality of teaching. Thus, the number of lecturers whose research would support the achievement of the goals of the study programmes is not sufficient in terms of the number of students for the purposes of SHE.</p>	<p>The deficiency has been substantially remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <p>1) A new workload model for teaching staff has been developed, which clearly shows the ratios of teaching, research, and administrative work for different positions.</p> <p>2) The two-way mobility of lecturers is developing, which is also aimed at promoting their research profile.</p> <p>3) Mentoring seminars are held to support research and its relevance to teaching and learning.</p> <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <p>1) The extent to which the new workload model affects the quality of lecturers' work needs to be monitored and assessed.</p>
<p>Pursuant to § 6 (2) of the SHE, <i>study</i></p>	<p>The deficiency has been</p>

<p><i>programmes and the conduct of studies must, inter alia, be in accordance with national quality requirements and agreements. According to Section 5.2.2 of the document "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education, there must be sufficient selection of study literature and other teaching aids and they must be available. In the master's study programme in education science, studies are currently conducted only in Estonian, which is why the selection of modern study materials and research articles used in teaching is limited.</i></p>	<p>substantially remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The lecturers have translated some of the necessary texts for the students themselves. Lecturers also write textbooks and other study materials. The university supports these activities of the lecturers. Competitions for the best created study materials are organized for regular updating of study materials. <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The need to modernize and translate teaching materials is ongoing. 2) It is necessary to increase students' foreign language skills.
<p>According to § 6 (1) of the SHE, <i>the study programme must take into account the needs of the labor market and the target group. Section 5.1.5 of the document "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group at the First and Second Levels of Higher Education stipulates that the feedback of students, employers, alumni, and other stakeholders must be taken into account when developing the study programme. In the study programme of educational sciences, stakeholders are not sufficiently involved in study programme development and teaching. In addition to the theoretical part of the study programme, in cooperation with stakeholder's emphasis must be placed on the development of other competencies that educational experts need in today's society.</i></p>	<p>The deficiency has been completely remedied.</p> <p><u>The Assessment Committee highlighted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A study programme council has been formed, which includes representatives of lecturers, students, alumni, and employers. Active study programme development is going on, and the study programme has recently been updated. 2) In addition to the theoretical part, in order to develop other competencies, the study programme includes internships in Estonia (6 ECTS) and abroad (9 ECTS), as well as the interdisciplinary subject ELU (Innovation Integrating Specialties).

	<p>3) Student feedback is considered very important. The feedback questionnaire has been updated, regular discussions, feedback seminars, and personal interviews are conducted.</p> <p><u>Recommendations of the Assessment Committee for further development activities:</u></p> <p>1) Students need a better explanation of how their feedback has been taken into account in the development of the courses and the study programme as a whole.</p>
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4. Taking into account that the deficiencies identified in the secondary condition have been fully or substantially remedied, the Council

DECIDED:

To consider that the secondary condition set for the quality assessment decision of the first and second study levels of the Teacher Training and Educational Science Study Programme Group of Tallinn University adopted on 10.03.2017 has been fulfilled and to maintain the decision to carry out the next quality assessment after seven years.

The decision was adopted by eight votes in favor, none opposed.

5. The Council requests Tallinn University to submit information on the consideration of the recommendations for further development activities of the Assessment Committee mentioned in this decision no later than 29.08.2020.
6. A person who finds that the decision of the Assessment Council has violated his or her rights or restricted his or her freedoms may file a challenge pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act. The challenge shall be submitted to the Assessment Council of EKKA within thirty (30) days after the person who filed the challenge became aware of or should have become aware of the contested act.

The Assessment Council shall send the challenge to the challenge committee of the Assessment Council of EKKA, which shall submit a written, impartial opinion to the Assessment Council on the reasoning of the challenge within five (5) days of receipt of the challenge. The Assessment Council shall resolve the challenge within ten (10) days of receipt, taking into account the reasoned position of the appeal committee. If the challenge needs to be further investigated, the

Assessment Council may extend the term for reviewing the challenge by up to thirty (30) days.

Challenging of a decision of the Assessment Council of EKKA is possible within thirty (30) days as of its service by submitting an appeal to the Tallinn Courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Court Procedure Act.

Eve Eisenschmidt
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council