

22.11.2019

The Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education
Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education

adopted the following decision:

To consider the secondary condition imposed on the assessment decision of first and second cycle of studies in the Architecture and Building study programme group at Estonian University of Life Sciences to be met.

Based on subsection 53 (3), clause 66 (2) 3) and subsection 66 (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act, and on the basis of subsection 37 and 48 (4) of the Higher Education Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and point 41.1/41.2 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', and authorised in point 3.7.1 of the above-mentioned EKKA Statutes; the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') affirms the following:

1. According to clause 53 (1) 2) of the Administrative Procedure Act, *a secondary condition of an administrative act is an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act*, and clauses 53 (2) 2) and 3) establish that *a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition, or if issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of an administrative right of discretion*. On 12.06.2017 the EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') adopted the decision to approve the assessment report¹ and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Architecture and Building study programme group in first and second cycle of higher education at Estonian University of Life Sciences in seven years with the secondary condition that Estonian University of Life Sciences submits to the Council a report on eliminating the shortcomings referred to under point 11 of the assessment decision, by 12.06.2019.
2. On 12.06.2019 Estonian University of Life Sciences submitted to the Council the following documents: 1) *Architecture and Building Study Programme Group Progress report*, 2) *Landscape Architecture Progress report*, 3) An action plan for implementing the recommendations on areas of improvement in the Architecture and Building study programme group assessment report concerning the

¹ Assessment report is an integral part of the decision and can be found on EKKA website.

BUILDING specialization study programmes. EKKA invited the following assessment committee member to evaluate the progress made on the secondary condition imposed:

Mark Richardson, Professor emeritus, Chartered Engineer, University College Dublin, Ireland

3. EKKA sent the preliminary report to Estonian University of Life Sciences on 10.10.2019, the university replied and submitted the document *Feedback report October 2019*. The assessor submitted on 28.10.2019 to EKKA a report on the elimination of shortcomings mentioned in point 11 of the 12.06.2017 Council decision. The verdict was as follows:

The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition	Verdict
<p>Subsection 6 (3) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of the Higher Education', prescribes that <i>the objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme shall meet the requirements and trends of international legal instruments that regulate the professional field</i>. The Civil Engineering study programme is not entirely in accord with international minimum requirements for civil engineers – for example, the study programme does not put enough emphasis to geotechnical engineering or construction of infrastructure (bridges and tunnels). The institute should review the study programme and separately itemise the objectives and learning outcomes regarding the fields of civil engineering and rural building.</p>	<p>The shortcoming has been fully eliminated.</p> <p><u>The assessor brought out the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A new online course has been launched in order to strengthen the geotechnical skills of students; a course project on geotechnics, namely one concerning foundations, has been added to the curriculum. 2) The practical learning in Geotechnics has been updated. 3) The learning outcomes in the Applied Geology course have been revised. 4) Capacity to further develop learning in Geotechnics has been enhanced through additional laboratory equipment capacity and through software. 5) The learning outcomes in Special structures course have been revised and the course content extended on bridges and tunnels. 6) A new course Bridges has been added to the curriculum of the Civil Engineering (Rural Building) study programme. 7) Students of the Civil Engineering (Rural Building) study programme may now

	<p>take as an elective the course Hydraulic Structures I (including dams, channels, culverts).</p> <p><u>Recommendations for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The University recognises that curriculum review is an on-going process and that change is a slow process. Nevertheless changes relevant to this assessment are already in train for study year 2020/2021 and future years. Their implementation as designed needs to be ensured.
<p>According to clause 6 (7) 3) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', <i>the conduct of studies conforms to the requirements if ordinary teaching staff have regularly furthered their pedagogical skills.</i> With regard to the Civil Engineering and the Hydraulic Engineering and Water Pollution Control study programmes, the teaching staff members are not engaged in regular development of their teaching skills. Lecturers should be trained to use active learning methods. It is recommended that a strategic plan be developed for future recruitments.</p>	<p>The shortcoming has been fully eliminated.</p> <p><u>The assessor brought out the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Lecturers are being supported through the ASTRA project in developing their resources for e-learning, active learning and other innovative methods. The next iteration of the University's Studies Information System is moving to the Moodle environment, which is encouraging engagement with state-of-the-art e-learning resources by staff at both beginners and advanced level. 2) Lecturers are creating e-courses based on best practice, through e-learning guides prepared for them by the University's educational technologist. 3) The Chair has committed (May 2019) to provide the resources that will ensure that each full time lecturer can improve their pedagogical skills at least once in every evaluation period. <p><u>Recommendations for further development activities:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The University is currently in the process of changing the system of academic appointments. Further to recent legislation, a career model is being developed at the University that includes a tenure system. This should help ensure

	that current positive developments will be sustainable.
<p>If the University wishes to encourage both outgoing and incoming international mobility, it will be essential to include more courses taught in English in the study programmes, involve more English-speaking international lecturers, improve language proficiency of the core staff and also prepare the University for internationalisation in a cultural and organisational sense.</p>	<p>The shortcoming has been substantially eliminated.</p> <p><u>The assessor brought out the following positive developments:</u></p> <p>1) A university-wide module is being introduced in spring semester of 2019/2020 for developing social competences that includes Intercultural Communication. A seminar for staff with similar content will precede the student module.</p> <p><u>Recommendations for further development activities:</u></p> <p>1) The growth in the number of courses taught in English in the study programmes is modest but the progressive enhancement of the English language proficiency of academic staff represents an important building block on this journey.</p>

4. Taking into account that all shortcomings have been either fully or substantially eliminated, the Council

DECIDED:

To consider the secondary condition imposed in the assessment decision of 12.06.2017 of first and second cycle of studies in the Architecture and Building study programme group at Estonian University of Life Sciences to be met and to leave in force the decision to conduct the next quality assessment in seven years.

The decision was adopted by 8 votes in favour and 0 against

5. A person who finds that his or her rights are violated or his or her freedoms are restricted by assessment procedures conducted by EKKA or by a decision made by the EKKA Quality Assessment Council may file a challenge pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Procedure Act. The challenge shall be filed with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding.

The Assessment Council shall forward the challenge to the Appeals Committee who provides the Assessment Council with an unbiased opinion regarding the

validity of the challenge within 5 days after receiving the challenge. The Assessment Council shall adjudicate the challenge within 10 days after the challenge is delivered to the Council, taking into account the justified opinion of the Appeals Committee. If the challenge needs to be further examined, the Assessment Council may extend a term for review of the challenge by up to 30 days.

A decision by EKKA Quality Assessment Council may be challenged within 30 days after its delivery, filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Tauno Otto
Vice-Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council