

30.06.2021

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

To impose a new secondary condition on the decision of the Tallinn University personal services study programme group of 26.02.2019.

On the basis of Section 53(3) of the Administrative Procedure Act and Section 10(4) of the Universities Act and points 41.1 and 42 of the document 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education' established on the basis of the authorisation contained in Section 24(5) of the Statutes of the Republic of Estonia Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Quality Assessment Council (hereinafter Council) of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education states 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 26.02.2019 the Higher Education Quality 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 conduct the next assessment of the quality in the first and second cycles of higher education in the personal services study programme group at Tallinn University in 7 years with the secondary condition that Tallinn University shall submit to the Council a report on the elimination of the shortcomings set out in paragraph 12 of the assessment decision² no later than on 26.02.2021.
2. On 26 February 2021, Tallinn University sent to the Council the following document: 1) Personal Services Study programmes report.
3. EKKA included the following members of the assessment committee in the assessment of the secondary condition:

Christopher Cooper	Professor, Oxford Brookes University, the United Kingdom
--------------------	--

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

² The assessment decision is available on the EKKA website.

Berit Skirstad	Associate Professor, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway
----------------	---

4. A virtual assessment visit to the university took place on 19.04.2021 and 22.04.2021.
5. EKKA sent a draft report to the higher education institution on 13 May 2021, to which the HEI submitted a reply on 25 May 2021. On 18 June 2021, the assessment committee submitted to EKKA a report on the elimination of the shortcomings described in paragraph 12 of the Council decision of 26.02.2019. The assessment was as follows:

Shortcoming on the basis of which the secondary condition was established	Assessment: The secondary condition is fully met
Section 6(3) of the Government of the Republic of Estonia Regulation 'Higher Education Standard' (hereinafter referred to as HES) requires that the <i>objectives and learning outcomes of the curriculum are equivalent and comparable to those at the levels of higher education described in Annex 1 to this Regulation, comply with the requirements and trends of international legislation regulating the profession and, if a professional standard exists, take into account the acquisition and application of the knowledge and skills described therein</i> . Section 6(4) of the HES requires that the <i>objectives and learning outcomes of the curriculum be formulated in such a way that it is possible to assess the knowledge and skills of the graduate of the curriculum on the basis thereof</i> . In the bachelor's, and in particular, the Master's programme, learning outcomes are not formulated to reflect learning at different cognitive levels (from knowledge to analysis, evaluation and creation), as is done in the European Higher Education Area (Dublin Descriptors). Learning outcomes should be redesigned to reflect more clearly all cognitive levels of learning, modern key competences and skills.	<u>The assessment committee noted the following positive developments:</u> 1) The Institute has carried out a review of learning outcomes and aligned them with Dublin descriptors.

Shortcoming on the basis of which the secondary condition was established	Assessment: The secondary condition is partially fulfilled
<p>Section 6(7)(1) of the HES provides that, <i>for teaching purposes, there are regular teaching staff and research staff who meet the qualification requirements laid down in legislation and whose number is sufficient, depending on their tasks, the volume of study and research carried out and the number of students to be supervised, to achieve the objectives of the curriculum and the learning outcomes.</i> For both curricula, a clear framework for the workload of teaching staff needs to be developed and implemented in a transparent manner. The current problem is the lack of supervisors and it is difficult for teaching staff to find time for research.</p>	<p><u>The assessment committee noted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Master’s programme will now admit new students every other a year, which will create opportunities for lecturers to devote more time to research. <p><u>Areas for improvement and recommendations:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Research conducted by teaching staff on the recreation study programmes is still limited. The workload-sharing system for teaching staff needs to be made more transparent. There is currently no such transparent system. The workload must also include the research component. 2) The problem of workload planning is exacerbated by the lack of clarity about research related to the personal services study programme group. The Institute must develop a clear research strategy for the recreation study programmes, with specific objectives in terms of publications, projects, impact and student research. 3) Only a few teaching staff members on the recreation study programmes have a PhD and there are not enough supervisors. A plan for the recruitment of academic staff providing instruction on the recreation programmes should be developed.
Shortcoming on the basis of which the secondary condition was established	Assessment: Secondary condition is not met
Sections 5.3.6, 5.4.4 and 5.5.4 of the Regulation “Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education” require that the learning process support mobility. <i>Qualified</i>	<p><u>The assessment committee noted the following positive developments:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If necessary, Master’s thesis can be written in English.

<p><i>foreign and visiting lecturers and practitioners participate in teaching. Students study as foreign or visiting students in other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions during their studies.</i></p> <p>Internationalisation is a separate goal for both study programmes. However, there is no clear plan for its implementation. It is therefore advisable to develop a comprehensive plan for internationalisation. The plan should include key indicators and ensure their monitoring. The study programmes should have more international partners and foreign lecturers, the number of courses taught in English should be higher and it should be possible to write the graduation thesis in English.</p>	<p><u>Areas for improvement and recommendations:</u></p> <p>1) The main challenge is the lack of a strategic approach to internationalisation. Student participation in international mobility is low. An internationalisation strategy needs to be developed and mobility of students and teaching staff promoted. The strategy must include objectives and detailed implementation programmes as well as measurable performance indicators. A benchmarking of recreation study programmes with similar programmes in foreign universities must be carried out in order to create opportunities for mobility through similar modules.</p>
<p>Shortcoming on the basis of which the secondary condition was established</p>	<p>Assessment: The secondary condition is substantially fulfilled</p>
<p>Section 6(2) of the HES provides that <i>curricula and the conduct of studies are in accordance with the internal quality standards of the educational institution and with national and international quality standards and agreements.</i> Point 7.2.1.5 of the regulation 'Conditions and procedures for institutional accreditation', which is a national quality requirement, provides that <i>students are provided with opportunities to study in higher education regardless of their specific needs.</i> The physical aptitude test for entering the Bachelor's programme is discriminatory, does not take into consideration students with special needs and is somewhat anachronistic. Nor does it link up with today's understanding of inclusive education.</p>	<p><u>The assessment committee noted the following positive developments:</u></p> <p>1) The admission to the study programmes has been made more flexible.</p> <p><u>Areas for improvement and recommendations:</u></p> <p>1) A similar admission model as last year should be pursued, where students did not pass the physical aptitude test but declared their swimming skills themselves. It is necessary to ensure that students with special needs have access to the study programme.</p>

6. Section 53(3) of the Administrative Procedure Act provides that if an administrative act becomes unlawful upon expiry of the secondary condition, the administrative authority shall immediately repeal the administrative act or establish a new secondary condition.

7. On the basis of the assessment committee's report, the Council found that the shortcomings underlying the secondary condition had not been eliminated to a satisfactory extent. Consequently, the Council

DECIDED:

To impose a new secondary condition on the decision of the Tallinn University personal services study programme group of 26.02.2019:

- 1) It is necessary to develop an internationalisation strategy for the recreation study programmes in order to increase the international mobility of teaching staff and students, as well as the international visibility and comparability of curricula. The strategy must include objectives and detailed implementation programmes as well as measurable performance indicators.
- 2) The Institute must develop a clear research strategy for the recreation study programmes, including specific objectives in terms of publications, projects, research impact and student research, and a plan for recruiting teaching staff with doctoral degrees on the direction of recreation.

Tallinn University shall submit to the Council a report on the fulfilment of the secondary condition in English by 30.06.2022 at the latest.

The decision was adopted by 10 votes in favour. Against 0.

8. A person who finds that his or her rights have been violated or his or her freedoms restricted by this decision may file a challenge 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 Council shall forward the challenge to its Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge.

The Council shall resolve the challenge within ten days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If the challenge needs to be investigated further, the deadline for its review by the Council may be extended by a maximum of thirty days.

A legal challenge to this decision is possible within 30 days after its delivery, by filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court under the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Hillar Bauman

Secretary of the Council