

16.09.2021

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 doctoral study evaluation decision of the Estonian Business School Business and Administration Study Programme Group has been met.

Based on § 53 (3) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and § 10 (4) of the Universities Act and bearing in mind clauses 40.1, 41, and 43 of the document "Quality Assessment of the Study Programme Group of the Doctoral Studies" established on the basis of the authorization contained in clause 24 and clause 5 of the Statutes of the Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter the Council) states the following:

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 26.02.2019, 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 report ¹ and to carry out the next quality assessment of the doctoral studies of the Business and Administration Study Programme Group of the Estonian Business School (EBS) after seven years, with the secondary condition that the EBS submits a report to the Council no later than 26.02.2021 ² on the rectification of the deficiency referred to in clause 11 of the assessment decision.
2. On 26.02.2021, EBS sent the following document to the Council: 1) *Interim report for quality assessment of the doctoral program in Estonian Business School*
3. EKKA involved the following members of the committee in the assessment of the fulfillment of the secondary condition:

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.

Roger Levy	Professor emeritus, London School of Economics, UK
Janek Uiboupin	Admirals Group AS, Business Developer, Estonia

4. EKKA sent a preliminary report to the higher education institution on 06.07.2021, in response to which the higher education institution announced no comments on 12.07.2021. On 12.07.2021, the assessment committee submitted a report to EKKA on the elimination of the deficiency described in clause 11 of the decision of the Council of 26.02.2019. The assessment was as follows:

Deficiency underlying imposition of the secondary condition	Assessment: The deficiency has been substantially remedied.
<p>Pursuant to § 6 (7) 1) of the Government of the Republic Regulation "Standard of Higher Education" (SHE) stipulates <i>that there are full-time lecturers and researchers who meet the qualification requirements established by legislation and whose number is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme due to their tasks, the volume of teaching and research carried out and the number of supervised students.</i> The share of full-time lecturers in the higher education institution is dangerously low. Immediate action is needed to recruit new qualified staff. The age profile of doctoral thesis supervisors is also a concern. New faculty should be quickly integrated into the supervision process.</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the recommendations of the 2018 assessment, the number of full-time lecturers has increased significantly. At the professorship level, the increase is 77%. The average age of supervisors has also fallen from 55 years to 52 years. • Supervision co-operation with non-university institutions has expanded, and participation in the MIDOK doctoral school has strengthened. Compared to the previous assessment, 21 doctoral students now have a co-supervisor instead of 12. • The university also offers free places for doctoral studies. <p>Areas for improvement and recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An EBS employee is not the first supervisor of two doctoral students. It is necessary to ensure this. <p>Further development opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All doctoral students should be provided with a co-supervisor through existing partnerships with the university. • The drop-out rate of doctoral students is relatively high, and the reasons for drop-out are not always clear. The university should investigate the causes of dropping out more thoroughly and take preventive measures.
Deficiency underlying imposition of the secondary condition	Assessment: The deficiency has been substantially remedied.
<p>§ 6 (7) 2) of the Government of the Republic Regulation "Standard of Higher Education" (SHE) <i>prescribes that the conduct of studies meets the requirements if the lecturer or</i></p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The changes implemented after 2018 demonstrate EBS's ability for critical self-reflection and finding solutions. A key tool

<p><i>researcher conducting studies in a specific subject has the necessary teaching competence (which also includes supervision according to § 2 (6) of the SHE), and his or her qualification supports the achievement of study programme objectives and learning outcomes. § 6 (7) 7) of the KHS prescribes that there are sources of funding for the conduct of studies and research and development activities related to doctoral studies and a strategy to support their acquisition. Clause 5.4.1 of the Regulation "Assessment of the Quality of the Study Programme Group of Doctoral Studies" prescribes that lecturers participate in research, development, and/or creative activities at a level and volume sufficient for conducting doctoral studies in the study programme group and supervising doctoral theses. Supervisors have few research projects and no clear understanding of how and when a solution to the situation will be found. Given the gravity of the situation, the research teams need to consolidate urgently. Investing in research teams, additional staff, collaborating with other universities and junior researchers pursuing their doctoral degrees is critical.</i></p>	<p>for assessing the success of R&D is the introduction of key indicators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive steps include the recruitment of an R&D project manager, the involvement of external partners, the creation of junior researcher posts, a focus on high-level publications, and the restructuring of research teams. <p>Further development opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional ways to get feedback on failed grant applications should be explored, and staff awareness events should be organized to learn and share good practices. • EBS has set a goal to increase R&D revenue fivefold in the next three years, which is very ambitious. To this end, the number of successful grant applicants among EBS lecturers must increase significantly. It is recommended to use the corresponding key indicators as well.
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5. Considering that the deficiencies which led to the imposition of the secondary condition have been substantially rectified, the Council

DECIDED:

To consider that the secondary condition set for the quality assessment decision of the doctoral studies of the Business and Administration Study Programme Group of EBS adopted on 26.02.2019 has been fulfilled and to maintain the decision to carry out the next quality assessment after seven years.

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

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 a decision of the Assessment Council of EKKA is possible within thirty (30) days 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