

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institution: Eesti Lennuakadeemia (*Estonian Aviation Academy*)

Assessment committee:

Johann Schneider – Chair; Consultant, expert, and coach in higher education politics (Germany)

Eeva-Liisa Antikainen – Vice President, Humak University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

Jonas Stankunas – Director, Antanas Gustaitis' Aviation Institute, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (Lithuania)

Vadims Stroitelevs - Deputy Head of Development Department, LGS (Latvia)

Tanel Joala - student, TTK University of Applied Sciences (Estonia)

Coordinator: Tiia Bach

Dates of the assessment visit: 5–6 November 2013

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 09.12.2013

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: 19.12.2013

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 5 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: 01.01. 2014

I Summary of assessment areas (mark with 'X'):

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organisational management and performance	x			
Teaching and learning	x			
RDC		x		
Service to society	x			

Comments:

The Estonian Aviation Academy (EAVA) – the Academy thereafter – is the only specialist institution of Professional Higher Education (PHE) for the aviation industry in Estonia and, therefore, a state ensured and financed monopolist with a defined role in the Estonian society. With strong links to the vocational education in the same field and with cooperation with universities, the Academy is well integrated in the system of education. The focus on a well-defined branch makes it easy to build strong connections with enterprises, and the Academy realises these opportunities. Aviation is, at the same time, internationally regulated and due to this the study programmes do not only meet the Estonian requirements for PHE but also the respective international standards well documented by the respective accreditations and certificates. This leads to an international dimension of qualification and orientation on the international labour market.

The basic management structure and the main areas of activities are clearly regulated by approved statutes and special regulations. There is a general development plan and within this framework an annual action plan, both in accordance with the mission and vision of the Academy. The development plan includes a SWOT-analysis as a base for the identification of improvements needed. For all four assessment areas and their sub-areas strengths and fields for improvement are defined and necessary actions are planned. The system of feedback from all groups and stakeholders concerning the main areas of activities is well established and is used for amendments.

The results of surveys carried out among all internal and external stakeholders on a regular basis show a good rate of satisfaction and indicate a successful performance of the Academy in general. The same is true for the employment rate of graduates, which indicates good employability of the alumni.

All internal groups and different stakeholders are regularly involved in preparation and implementation of development and action plans.

Due to the narrow scope of the Academy, the opportunities for Research, Development and Creativity (RDC) activities are limited, and this assessment area remains a big challenge to the Academy. The Academy is working on this and better support is planned, but this area is the only one to be improved in a particular way.

The service to society is focused on popularisation of aviation in general, and activities of the Academy are mainly concerned with finding and attracting more motivated and capable students. There is also a growing number of in-service training on commission. EAVA sees the possibility to reduce the dependence on limited state funds in the planned expansion of fee-charging activities.

The panel wishes to thank the Academy for preparing a comprehensive Self-Evaluation Report (SER) that usefully followed the EKKA guidelines, and for its cooperation during the site visit. During the site visit, all needed additional information was provided and many examples were presented in order to get a more complete picture of the Academy.

Commendations:

1. The curricula are successfully developed and the qualification of the graduates is well appreciated by employers.
2. The main stakeholders, in particular employers and students, are involved in decision-making and giving advice to the Academy, either as members of decision-making bodies or asked for their opinion by regular surveys.
3. The management is structured in an appropriate way and there are clear and transparent regulations for all areas of activity.
4. There is a SWOT-analysis as a basis for the Development Plan and, in addition to this, strengths and weaknesses for the sub-areas are identified.
5. Different ways have been found and efforts made to find and select more qualified student candidates.
6. The Academy is open to society and its facilities are open for external users.
7. The Academy is very active in quality matters and seeks to include the external quality requirements for the training units in its own Total Quality Management System (TQM).

Recommendations:

1. Consider more the opportunities and risks of an open international market concerning all fields of activity and provision of services.
2. The Academy should be more active in the field of RDC interacting with employers, motivating staff and presenting achievements in the country and abroad.
3. The Academy should consider preparing regulations regarding the students with special needs.
4. Due to the international nature of the aviation business, the panel recommends that the Academy evaluate actively different possibilities in upgrading the number of student mobility.

II Assessment areas and sub-areas

1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

General comments:

The Academy has a clear management structure and works very well within this framework, although, due to the small size of the organisation, more informal ways are used for everyday practice. Development plans on different levels are adopted, and these direct the development activities of the Academy. Statutes of the Teaching staff members and a comprehensive personnel development plan ensure a sustainable quality of study programmes. Growing revenues earned by fee-charging economic activities have raised the financial resources in recent years and are reducing dependency from state funding. The Academy conforms to requirements.

1.1 General management	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.
The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country’s priorities and society’s expectations.
Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.
The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans and includes the members and other stakeholders in this work.
Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the achievement of institutional purposes and the coherent performance of core processes.
Internal and external communications of a higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are purposeful and managed.

The Academy sees its role in the society of Estonia as the only professional higher education institution in aviation preparing

specialists for civil, state and military organisations. Employers and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications are members of the Board of Councillors, and the same is true for a representative of Estonian Civil Aviation Administration Academy (ECAA). This way, the most important and responsible societal interests and public perspectives are included in the process of identifying the strategic goals of the Academy.

As a monopolist on the level of professional higher education, the Academy is, in addition to offering study programmes, assigned to activities in R&D, supporting life-long learning and networking with aviation enterprises and organisations. This is meant as a main support for the aviation industry and the Estonian society in general. In particular, the interviews with the employers revealed that in many respects the Academy is losing its role as a monopolist due to the development of EU-wide open markets and has to be aware of this situation. The Academy itself identified the danger of self-complacency due to the situation as a monopolist and tries to support internal competition and provide incentives for innovations. The panel welcomes this strategy regarding international competitiveness.

The Development Plan and the related annual action plan are adopted pursuant to the mission, vision and core values of EAVA in a general way according to the presented documents. A SWOT-analysis has been made as the basis for identifying the needed improvements, and the respective goals and sub-goals are defined. For each sub-area, examples for good practice and fields to be improved are identified. The general development plan is complemented by several specific plans for personnel, laboratories, RDC, and strategies for communication and internationalisation. These plans are published, and the interviews with all groups of stakeholders have confirmed that they are involved in designing these different plans and are fully satisfied with this procedure. Most of the intended results of the planned actions are quantitative including numerical indicators, and the respective responsibilities are assigned in the annual plan, which is revised at the end of the each year if needed. The respective units in charge have been allocated a separate budget, which they can use autonomously. The plans and the available financial resources are observed by administration regularly. There is an annual financial report as the panel could find confirmed in the respective interview referring to this.

In connection with the intended fostering of the organisational culture, TQM system is currently being developed in EAVA and staff is being trained in quality issues. According to the SER and the interviews, many parts and instruments of the planned system are already in use – in particular, surveys among all internal and external stakeholders concerning their satisfaction with the performance of the activities of the Academy. One of the remaining problems to be solved is the integration of the quality management systems of the externally and internationally certified units with TQM of the Academy. A manual for TQM is already

drafted but not yet approved by the management.

The Academy has a clear and appropriate structure of management. The main areas of activities are clearly regulated by approved statutes and special regulations in addition to it. All these statutes were presented, and the interviews demonstrated that many of the regulations are not necessary for the everyday life of the Academy, because the organisation is very small and there are more informal ways to come to a consensus and take the needed decisions. A special focus has been placed on developing the management competencies with the help of a specialised training company. This shows that the Academy is very aware of the importance of managerial competencies.

The cooperation with the University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology and Estonian University of Life Sciences in conducting basic studies for all study programmes and one speciality works well. This is a characteristic of the Academy due to its capacities at the present time. For the time being, this is seen as a good practice and a win-win situation for both universities as well as EAVA. The Academy remains responsible for the curricula and the selection of teaching staff members of the cooperating universities. The cooperation is strictly and efficiently carried out and the panel was provided several examples of the ways in which actual problems are managed mainly by EAVA's Studies Department.

The Academy has defined a Communication Strategy for internal and external communication to raise public awareness and popularity of the Academy, to find more capable student candidates and to promote the organisational culture and internal communication.

The satisfaction with the flow of information shows a positive trend. Although this document was available only in Estonian language the panel could see a lot of documented activities and interviewed the head of the department in charge. Again, due the size of the Academy the flow of information takes often more informal ways and no complaints were presented in the interviews.

Commendations:

1. The Academy has a clear and appropriate structure of management. The main areas of activities are clearly regulated by approved statutes and special regulations in addition to it.
2. All stakeholders are involved in the developing-process of the development plan on different levels and are fully satisfied with the implemented procedures.

3. The Academy defines self-evaluated “areas that need improvement” and takes this into account when planning future developments.							
1.2 Personnel management	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements: <i>The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development arise from the objectives of the development plan of a higher education institution, and ensure academic sustainability.</i> <i>When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities (teaching, RDC, student feedback, etc.) are taken into account in a balanced way.</i> <i>The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.</i> <i>Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.</i> <i>Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.</i> <i>Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.</i></p>							
<p>The recruitment of the teaching staff is defined in the published Statutes of the Teachings Staff and complies with the law and international standards for higher education institutions. The statutes also include conditions and regulations for the different staff groups and defines the respective rights and duties. The conditions and procedure for teaching staff evaluation and assessment of their conformity to qualification requirements are separately regulated, and a system of annual appraisal is implemented to ensure the sustainability. The interviewed teaching staff members were satisfied with the procedures. The interviews with alumni and employers revealed that some graduates are now teaching staff members or part-time teachers at the Academy. This is probably caused by the small size of the country and could be seen as a sign of sustainable personnel development. On the other hand, the panel sees the danger of a possible lack of needed external supplement.</p> <p>There are qualification and performance oriented rules of salaries, including additional remuneration defined in separate statutes, and additional means are applied or planned in order to support the general motivation of teachings staff members according to the</p>							

SER. The interviews with teaching staff members confirmed that these procedures work even if the small size of the Academy and the recruitment of mostly highly specialised posts make case-by-case procedures recommendable. The teaching staff members told in the interviews that the motivation to be at the Aviation Academy is mainly intrinsic but, on the other side, extra salary for extra work is welcomed. Some examples for such extra work were given, e.g. participation in projects with other universities and state organizations. As the interviews demonstrated, the Academy has found some ways to pay extra salary in some cases. The recruitment of non-teaching staff takes place by public advertisement and public competition, and it complies with the common standards of performance-oriented recruitment.

According to the presented documents, the past activities and assessments are taken into account in the procedures of selecting, appointing and evaluating the member of the teaching staff. The same is true for the annual appraisal system for academic staff, which, according to the interviews, is mostly used for the personnel development. The Academy regularly conducts employee satisfaction surveys for finding out general satisfaction and satisfaction with specific fields of performance of the management and several aspects of working conditions. The presented results are used for further improvements.

The panel could confirm from the interviews with academic and administrative staff that the Academy provides a lot of various in-service trainings for its own staff members. These include subject-related courses, courses for improving teaching abilities, and courses for new technologies used by the Academy. There is a general training plan for developing the skills and competences of the staff including budgetary aspects. These activities are evaluated and listed in a quarterly report in order to make corrections if needed. All groups of staff including the management are covered in the plan. A specific attention lies on the master and doctoral students of the teaching staff and also young teachings staff members, so as to establish a new generation. Interviews with all staff member groups confirm that the attendance in in-service training courses is voluntary but, despite this, very high. This separate general training plan is developed on the basis of the needs that have been identified among the staff members, and it is revised regularly.

Different satisfaction surveys indicate that the teaching staff is, in general, content: positive trends can be observed in opportunities for development and self-actualization, with the flow of information and with working conditions. To raise the staff satisfaction is one of the goals defined in the Development Plan of EAVA.

Staff members are participating in international mobility programmes and cooperation projects in a growing number. The

improvement of the respective opportunities is a goal defined in the Development Plan. Several European programmes are used therefore, but there are still some obstacles. The one mostly reported in the interviews is the lack of time. As the organization is so small, absent teachers are not easy to be replaced by another one. Another issue is weak language proficiency of some academic staff members. The Academy plans to improve this situation and offers some support.

There is no specific code of ethics in the Academy, but there is a self-obligation for the management in the Statutes of the Teaching Staff that the Academy shall avoid electing or inviting individuals who have broken the code of ethics of Estonian scientists or the code of ethics of their professional field. When talking about this requirement, the panel has been informed that this has not been a problem up to now and due to the size of the Academy there is a strong informal social control and ways to find a solution if some conflict in this respect would arise.

Commendations:

1. The Academy provides a broad range of opportunities for personnel development.

1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution as well as the administration and development of infrastructure are economically feasible, and are based on the objectives of the development plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).

A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of its core processes.

The working conditions of the staff, and the learning and RDC conditions of students (library, studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.) meet the needs arising from the specifics of an institution of higher education and the expectations of members.

The management of financial resources is strictly ruled by several regulations and is audited and supervised by the Ministry of

Education and Research. Budgets are checked regularly and feedback is given to the management. The allocated funds have been lightly growing – partly by state budget funds, partly by an increase of revenues from economic activities.

The support of the European Structural Funds and other sources have been used. A particular emphasis has been laid on the investment into learning and R&D environment pursuant the Development Plan and a special laboratory development plan. This has lead to an increase of satisfaction of all kind of users in this field. It is planned to increase the number of fee-charging activities and to find new financial sources to reduce current dependencies and risks. This shall be realized in the traditional ways of offering in-service training in commission of enterprises and organisations and of using external funds like European Structural Fund and similar funds. Some interviews indicated that the open market for services includes risks and limits in this respect.

The equipment is up to date and partly excellent. Concerning the working and learning conditions, the Academy meets, in general, the requirements for a higher education institution. The laboratories and other equipment were introduced to the panel. Inevitably, most of the equipment must be up to date in order to get the international certificates. The users are fully satisfied and confirmed this in the interviews. In R&D further improvements are planned.

In 2012, the Information Department was founded in order to manage the activities in a better way. Currently, six different information systems support the management and facilitate a coherent performance of the core processes. The Academy itself diagnoses needed improvements and plans an intensified use of these new instruments.

Commendations:

1. The Academy has raised its revenues from economic activities.

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

General comments:

The curricula have been accredited and development activities related to study programmes are systematically discussed with all stakeholders. The students are giving feedback on a regular basis by answering surveys once a year. The surveys show that the

students' satisfaction with the organisation and schedule of admission process has increased. The number of student places is planned in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and the national aviation industry. The Academy fulfils the EU requirements of aviation safety regulations and is properly certified and, thus, nationally and internationally competitive educator in the aviation field. The learning environment is well equipped and a comprehensive support system is provided, which is also meant to reduce the number of dropouts. The Academy conforms to the requirements.

2.1 Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.
A higher education institution educates students so they are nationally and internationally competitive.
The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.
The admission rules are consistent with the mission and purposes of an institution of higher education and support the formation of a motivated student body.
Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.

The educational objectives of the Academy are clear and they are defined in close connection with the aviation industry. The institution has intensively cooperated with the stakeholders and takes into account the needs of the Estonian aviation industry. The Academy states in its Development Plan that the volume of training, meeting the expectations of enterprises as well as its compliance with the Directive of the Minister of Education and Research, is the major goal of performance of the Academy.

Due to EU requirements of aviation safety, the Academy is under strong supervision of the Estonian Civil Aviation Administration (ECAA) and properly certified with national and international certificates. The education provided by the Academy is nationally and internationally competitive, as the international standards and regulations of the industry are met. The employment rate of

graduates is high and the students are valued in national aviation market. Several examples were provided during the interviews about graduates being employed abroad.

The number of student places is planned in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and the national aviation industry through Academy's Board of Councillors. The current state of economy is taken into account and statistics for aviation personnel registered in ECAA databases are analyzed and considered. The institution measures the number of dropouts and the knowledge is used as one of the inputs when it comes to calculating the number of student places. The fulfilment of the state commission is regularly surveyed and analysed.

The Academy is flexible to change the number of students admitted to different specialities according to the needs of the industry.

The Admission Rules approved by the Academy Council serve as the foundation document for the admission process. The rules are clear, stated and revised periodically. Admission requirements, documents to be submitted, and the procedure for submission are determined in the Admission Rules. As stated in the Development Plan, the formation of a motivated student body is of great importance to the Academy. The Academy has tried to improve the recruitment strategy in order to find more capable students. The importance of this aim was confirmed by the panel during interviews.

There are no regulations documented regarding the students with special needs in general. There are specific medical requirements for Air Traffic Service and Aircraft Piloting studies. In the interviews, the panel was told of some examples of students with special needs that have attended the Academy. No problems regarding this matter have been reported in the institution.

Commendations:

1. The Academy fulfils the EU requirements of aviation safety regulations and is properly certified and, thus, nationally and internationally competitive educator in the aviation field.

Recommendations:

1. The Academy should consider preparing regulations regarding the students with special needs.

2.2 Study programme development	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account the strategies of the country and expectations of the society. Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different stakeholders are involved in the development of study programmes. Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability to the requirements of the labor market of graduates are surveyed and analysed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.</i></p>								
<p>The Academy is aware of possible need for new study programmes in the rapidly changing aviation market. The need for new study programmes is periodically discussed and the industry’s feedback is considered. Up to now, as a result of these discussions, no new programmes are planned to be offered. Due to the insufficient demand for the Masters studies in the Academy, the Masters programme in the present form was closed in June 2013. Instead of that, the Academy is planning to provide a module for Master’s programme in cooperation with Tallinn University of Technology and Estonian University of Life Sciences.</p> <p>Development activities related to study programmes are systematically and regularly discussed. Different stakeholders are involved, as the Curriculum Councils consists of the Academy’s curricula managers, teaching staff members, representatives of employers, alumni and current students. Also, the influence of the students on the curricula was confirmed during the visit. Different examples of improvements made in the curricula were given during the interviews. The Academy is aware of the planned changes in curricula having to meet the mandatory international as well as national aviation requirements.</p> <p>Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability of graduates to the requirements of the labour market are surveyed and analysed. The feedback is relevant for the Academy and taken into account the development of study programmes. Alumni and employers are in tight contact with the Academy and constantly participating in the development of curricula. Different examples were provided during the interviews where the feedback from the alumni and</p>								

employers has resulted in improvements in the curricula.

Commendations:

1. The curricula are successfully developed and the qualification of the graduates is well appreciated by the employers and the alumni themselves.

2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

Student academic progress is monitored and supported.

Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.

A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.

The Academy is responding to students’ needs in many ways. It was said during the interviews that new students take part in a briefing at the beginning of their studies. They have opportunities to discuss their concerns with counsellors of departments, if needed. The Academy provides different support courses – for instance, in mathematics – to even out the differences in prior knowledge of the students. The development plan describes additional activities for reducing the number of dropouts and enhancing the learning motivation.

According to the Academy, the major objective of practical training is acquiring specialist skills and developing necessary attitudes aimed at ensuring aviation safety and high working culture. This was confirmed in the interviews held with alumni and employers. Graduation may be delayed if the students are working intensively during their studies.

The Academy has different ways of assessment. According to the surveys carried out among the first year students, the Academy has succeeded in developing the admission procedure. The students and the alumni have also been satisfied with the practical training

that takes place in aviation enterprises. Special conditions apply to pilot training and Air Traffic Control (ATC) training in accordance with national and international requirements. In the interviews, students confirmed that they were satisfied with the learning environment, in particular because special needs regarding ATC training for controllers have been taken into account.

The Academy’s students have often prior working experience or already hold a certificate from another HEI when beginning the studies in the Academy. The Academy uses the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APEL-system) in taking into account students’ prior learning and work experience. The student counsellor is helping students in this process. Students and teachers confirmed that the system is working successfully and students gave also concrete examples of their own experiences in using APEL.

Commendations:

1. The Academy considers differences in students’ prior knowledge by providing support courses.
2. The Academy has implemented the APEL-system in a very successful way and the students are satisfied with the system.

2.4 Support processes for learning	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.
A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.
A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.
Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organisation of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.

The average duration of studies is longer than nominal period of study. The interviews revealed that the students are often working during their studies. The study period is often also delayed due to students taking part in mobility programmes. The Academy has

emphasised the selection of students, who are capable and well informed of the studies. There is a supporting system for the students including academic and career counselling, student feedback system, support studies, modern ICT resources and scholarships (EAVA Fund). The interviews confirmed that the chair of student council is representing the students if problems emerge. The chair also takes part in curriculum development group and shares all the necessary information with the other students.

All five curricula of the Academy have been positively accredited. Student involvement is organized in a way which promotes study processes. Twice a year the student counsellor is discussing with students how they have succeeded in their studies. The student tutor system is also supporting students. In the surveys one can see that the number of interrupters and the drop-out rate have reduced in recent years. The students and teachers confirmed this also in the interviews.

The students have difficulties with taking part in student mobility programmes, because the curricula of partner universities differ significantly from those of the Academy and the studies can be taken into account only as elective subjects, which prolongs the period of studies in EAVA. The Academy provides professional higher education whereas many partners provide studies on vocational level. These problems make the possibility of learning agreements limited in the Academy. Because for these reasons the number of students who have studied abroad is low in the Academy at the moment, even though the percentage is higher than in other comparable Estonian PHEIs.

As written in the Self-Evaluation Report, EAVA has signed cooperation agreements with 18 foreign higher education institutions. The number of foreign visiting students has grown in last years, but it is still rather low. The panel also met some foreign teachers during the visit.

The Academy has specified its mobility goals in the development plan. These goals are giving a perspective to the future; however, the process is still in the beginning.

The learning environment is modern and very well equipped. According to the statistics and interviews, the students are very satisfied with the learning environment, which motivates the students in their learning process. The satisfaction of the teachers with the educational technology and the learning environment was confirmed in the interviews. In addition to a wide variety of special materials and technology of the aviation field, the Academy has a library, ATC simulators, and a laboratory. Furthermore, students

have been satisfied with their training periods in the aviation enterprises.

The atmosphere in the Academy is very open and the students and the alumni told that communication between students and personnel is informal and close. It is also easy to give informal feedback about the studies. The students gave examples of positive actions after the feedback they had given. In the interview with the alumni it was confirmed that the Academy has supported students by giving opportunities for them to work in the aviation firms during their studies and helping the graduates with finding work places.

The students give feedback on a regular basis by answering surveys once a year. The surveys tell that the satisfaction of the students with the organisation and schedule of admission process has increased.

Commendations:

1. The panel became convinced during the visit that the modern and well-equipped learning environment satisfies the students as well as the personnel.
2. The open and informal atmosphere supports the students in their studies and the regular surveys give the personnel and the management necessary feedback to improvements of the processes.

Recommendations:

1. Due to the international nature of the aviation field, the panel recommends that the Academy evaluate actively different possibilities for upgrading the number of student mobility.

3 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)

General comments:
 With regard to research and development, the panel got enough impressions from the Self-Evaluation Report, different interviews, Academy Proceedings and graduates’ theses. R&D activities are still a challenge for the Academy. We see the Academy on a good way. It has adopted a new regulation for R&D and planned to allocate more money for these activities. The Academy is aware of the weakness in this respect but tries to improve the situation. There are a lot of things to do yet. The Academy should be more active in the field of R&D interacting with employers, motivating staff and presenting achievements in Estonia and abroad. That is why the panel considers this assessment area as “partially conforms to requirements”.

3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	x	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.
A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.

The interviews confirmed that the Academy R&D activities are based on the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act. These activities are aiming to integrate the study process with the R&D activities, implement the system supporting the development of the Academy’s staff and Estonian aviation industry and cooperate internationally to serve the society. The aims are described in the EAVA Development Plan and supported by the EAVA Procedure for Research and Development.

Currently, state financing is not provided for R&D. However, the administration plans provision of corresponding resources to comply with the requirements relying on cooperation with employers/customers. Some employers consider the Academy as a potential partner in R&D activities.

Despite the lack of money, the Academy has taken some measures towards meeting the requirements for compliance to this

assessment area. Among them are: participation in seminars and conferences, transferring the knowledge and technologies as well as publishing of Academy’s Proceedings. Some motivation tools like additional payment and workload reduction are considered by management to promote R&D faster.

Self-Evaluation Report demonstrates participation in some applied projects serving societal needs. However this important information is not properly promoted to motivate teachers and students. Since the Academy is just starting with these measures/activities, they need to be managed and presented more systematically, both internally and externally. More interactions with international R&D networks and cooperation with national universities are required to motivate teaching staff and promote applied projects.

Recommendations:

1. The Academy should be more active in the field of R&D interacting with employers, motivating staff and presenting achievements in Estonia and abroad.
2. More cooperation is required with universities and international networks.

3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	x	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.
A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.
A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.
RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.

The interviews conducted by the panel confirmed that R&D activity is a subject of different internal documents of the Academy. The documents declare teaching staff obligations to comply with corresponding state requirements. Teaching and management staff

participates in different national and international bodies and working groups. Such activities are supported by the administration and make favourable conditions for R&D.

There are no financial resources budgeted specifically for R&D activity. Academy does not have a concrete strategy to gain external money for applied projects or research. At the same time, the infrastructure and equipment (first of all ATC simulators as well as communication and navigation laboratory) can be used as a test bench to benefit some aviation entities of Estonia or transfer of knowledge and technology.

The Academy plans investments to upgrade infrastructure and equipment including potential R&D needs. Annual plan foresee some money for R&D promotion as well.

Recommendations:

1. Academy should be more active in the field of R&D interacting with employers, and presenting achievements to gain more external money for applied projects.

3.3 Student research supervision	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution includes students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.
Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates.
Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.

From the Self-Evaluation Report and interviews it became evident that subjects for students’ graduation theses are usually advised by and come from the aviation enterprises. Proportion of supervisors from the aviation industry is very beneficial for the Academy. A

good balance between teachers and industry supervisors ensures professionalism and quality of research papers, student motivation and, finally, positive graduation rates.

Students' satisfaction with the supervision is high enough and demonstrates that management and teaching staff act with the matter carefully.

Students are guided properly to recognize plagiarism and avoid from it themselves. Publication of student research papers motivates students as well as supervisors.

The panel could see several theses of graduates and got the impression that thought of research has to be stronger. It might be because R&D activities including applied projects are not developed enough in general.

Recommendations:

1. The Academy does good work in terms of supervision and selection of subjects for graduation theses. However, more attention should be paid to make research orientation stronger. There should be more analysis, calculations, and design in graduation theses. Students' works should be more original and self-dependent.

4 SERVICE TO SOCIETY
<p>General comments: Service to society is fulfilled by the institution: it popularizes its core activities, has established relations within the community and shares its resources as well as educational services in the form of in-service training. The Academy conforms to the requirements.</p>

4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities. Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in other social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.</i></p>								
<p>The higher education institution has strategic objectives and a clear action plan (Academy Communication Strategy) for popularizing the Academy’s core activities. Cooperation is the key factor for serving the society and cooperation principles with gymnasiums and the general public are established. Strategic actions are taken to enhance people’s awareness and general popularization of aviation education and the possibility of career in the field.</p> <p>The implementation of the strategy is based on the annual analysis of the most effective stepping-stone in the process: creating personal contacts with candidates, a lot of personal communication (Open Days in the Academy, excursions to the Academy, visiting the gymnasiums). The Academy annually participates in major educational fairs and events organized in different counties of Estonia. In popularizing aviation education, the Academy cooperates with major enterprises in the field: Estonian Air Force, Estonian Air Navigation Services, Estonian Aviation Museum, Estonian Air, other aviation companies and organizations.</p>								

<p>Participation of employees in the activities of professional associations is evidenced in the Self-Evaluation Report. The Academy's staff members are involved in national and international associations, for example the International Society for Engineering Education and the programme committees of EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7).</p>							
<p>4.2 In-service training and other educational activities for the general public</p>	<p>conforms to requirements</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>partially conforms to requirements</p>		<p>does not conform to requirements</p>		<p>worthy of recognition</p>
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution has defined the objectives regarding in-service training and measures their implementation. In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups as well as with the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education. Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.</i></p>							
<p>The higher education institution intensifies the systematic development of in-service training and retraining of specialists. Vocational and in-service training is seen as one of the opportunities for raising the revenue from economic activities in addition to the secure but limited state funding. The volume of in-service training is increasing. The annual growth of 20-25 % has been set as the objective for the coming years. The possibilities for entering the international markets are discussed. The panel recommends a stronger orientation to these opportunities.</p> <p>In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of aviation industry and organisations. The highest number of advanced training courses is provided by departments of professional training of the Academy, which are, according to the aviation standards, certified as training organisations: the Air Traffic Service Training Organization, the Flight Training Organisation and the Maintenance Training Organisation. The institution is ready to offer other courses in the field. Surveys of aviation enterprises about their training needs are carried out and taken into further consideration.</p> <p>In-service training meets the requirements of national and international aviation standards and recommended practices. As the size of the national aviation market is limited, meeting the requirements of international standards provides the possibility to explore</p>							

international markets.							
4.3 Other public-oriented activities	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements: <i>Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.</i> <i>A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or by organising concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.</i></p>							
<p>The public-oriented activities are developed pursuant to the Development Plan and the Communication Strategy of the Academy. They are oriented, in particular, on searching new and better students and enhancing the welfare of the community. The public services are analysed and presented in the annual reports of the Academy.</p> <p>The Academy is open to share its resources for the enhancement of community’s welfare. The facilities of the Academy, for instance the library and conference hall, are opened for the needs of society. The public demand for the Academy’s facilities is limited as the Academy is located outside of the town and centre of the area.</p> <p>Commendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The facilities of the Academy are opened for societal needs. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To take advantage of the Academy’s possibilities in the international aviation market. 							