

Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Legislative background

The Universities Act (ÜKS), the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) and the Private Schools Act (EraKS) empower the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency (hereinafter 'EKKA') to establish and disclose the conditions and procedure for institutional accreditation, and based thereon, to organize and implement institutional accreditation in educational institutions providing higher education.

Submitted materials

1. Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation with an Annex

Annex: Assessment Criteria and Indicators

2. Explanatory Memorandum with three Annexes:

Annex 1: Requirements for Institutional Accreditation with Reference to Legislation, Strategies and International Agreements

Annex 2: Examples of "Worthy of Recognition" Practice

Annex 3: Discussion Round Feedback

Overview of the development process of the document

In September 2010, in order to develop the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation, EKKA formed a working group including representatives of parties interested in external evaluation of higher education—the state, market and higher education institutions (a generally accepted division in theoretical sources of external evaluation of higher education¹). The working group included representatives delegated by the Ministry of Education and Research (Andres Koppel, Heli Aru), the Estonian Rectors' Conference (Jakob Kübarsepp, Annika Tina), the Rectors Council of Applied Universities, RCAU, (Vallo Nuust, Krista Tuulik), *Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit*, EÜL [a federation of Estonian student unions] (Eimar Veldre, Hanna-Stella Haaristo) and the Estonian Employers Confederation (Tarmo Kriis). In addition, we invited the following to join the working group: the chairman of Estonian Council of Scientific Competence (Volli Kalm), the chairman of EKKA's Quality Assessment Council (Mati Heidmets), two employers' representatives who had participated in a transitional evaluation (Ants Sild, Aavo Kokk) and a representative of private universities (Ruth Alas). The material for the large working group was prepared by the so-called small working group comprising Maiki Udam (EKKA's Development Manager, a working group leader), Aune Valk (Ministry of

¹ Burke, J. & Ass (Eds) (2005). *Achieving Accountability in Higher Education: Balancing Public, Academic, and Market Demands*. Jossey-Bas.

Clark, B. R. (1983). *The Higher Education System: Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective*. Berkley: The University of California Press.

Dill, D. D. & Beerkens, M. (Eds) (2010). *Higher Education Dynamics 30. Public Policy for Academic Quality: Analyses of Innovative Policy Instruments*. Springer.

Education and Research), Birgit Vilgats (Tallinn University) and Lagle Zobel (EKKA's lawyer). We chose the members of the small working group based on their prior research and work experience related to external evaluation and/or development of strategic documents of higher education. The task of the small working group included the performance of background analysis, development of principles and the preparation of a draft document. In the course of developing the document, we took into account, among other things, written proposals by Anneli Lorenz (Primus), RCAU, RCAU Quality Working Group, vice rectors for academic affairs and heads of offices of academic affairs of public universities, the Estonian Rectors' Conference and EÜL; as well as oral proposals received at meetings with administrations of the Estonian University of Life Sciences and University of Tartu (the list of proposals is in the order of their arrival). At its meeting of 17th February, the EKKA Quality Assessment Council decided to send the draft to a wider discussion pool consisting of higher education institutions, ministries, Riigikogu Cultural Affairs Committee, representative organizations of employers, students and pupils, and other partners. A summary table of feedback gathered from the discussion round is presented in Annex 3 to the Explanatory Memorandum.

In parallel to developing the Conditions and Procedures for Institutional Accreditation, we have prepared the piloting of institutional accreditation as well: the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (EASS) should be the first higher education institution to undergo institutional accreditation at the end of November or beginning of December this year. The deadline for the submission of a self-evaluation report has been set as 1st October, and EASS has already started an internal evaluation process according to the present draft of the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation. We can take into account the first evaluation lessons immediately, and if necessary, introduce changes to the final conditions and procedure.

Fundamentals and principles

The working group based the development of the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation on the following: the legislation of the Republic of Estonia which regulates higher education, the Estonian Higher Education Strategy, the Strategy for the Internationalization of Estonian Higher Education, the developments in the European Higher Education Area, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and recognized models of external institutional evaluation (institutional audits in UK and Australia, quality audit in Finland, institutional accreditations by Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC; USA) and Middle States Commission of Higher Education, evaluations by European University Association, the EFQM Excellence Model).

In the course of the process, 13 focus group interviews were conducted with representatives of the state (ministries), market (employers, students of upper secondary schools as future university students) and higher education institutions (executives of higher education institutions, teaching staffs, students) to learn what different parties consider to be the characteristics (quality indicators) of a "good" institution of higher education and the purpose of institutional accreditation.

As a result of that analysis, the **purpose** of international accreditation was formulated as follows:

./.../ to support the development of strategic management and culture of quality in higher education institutions, inform interest groups of outcomes of the main activities thereof, and enhance the reliability and competitiveness of Estonian higher education (clause 2).

The development of requirements for institutional accreditation was based on the following principles:

- to ensure compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Estonia, strategies and international agreements (in particular, with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance);
- to focus on the core processes of higher education institutions (teaching and learning; research, development and/or other creative activity (hereinafter 'RDC'); service to society) and their organizational management²;
- to take account of the context of higher education institutions both in Estonia and internationally; differences among higher education institutions (universities, higher education institutions specializing in creative fields, professional higher education institutions) are taken into account especially in RDC evaluation;
- to formulate the requirements and indicators in a way that allows measuring the input, processes, and output, and guides higher education institutions to collect data and analyze the results by segments (for each structural unit, field, etc., separately);
- to be based on best practice of external evaluation according to which the planning of processes, their implementation, measurement of results and coherence are assessed;
- to encourage higher education institutions to compare their key results (e.g., indicators related to graduates and RDC results: the number of degree defences, period of study, number of research publications and citations, etc.; indicators related to the internationalization: the proportion of international students and teaching staff, mobility; indicators related to the academic staff: qualifications, age, etc.) to other educational institutions of the similar profile at their choice in Estonia and/or elsewhere in the world.

Other external evaluations concerning higher education institutions are taken into account (assessments of the quality of studies, which form the basis for granting the right to conduct studies in a new study programme group; field-related and (proposed) targeted evaluations of research activities; quality assessments of study programme groups):

1. An assessment of the quality of studies is undertaken when a higher education institution wishes to start providing instruction in a new study programme group. When a higher education institution applies for the right to provide instruction, pursuant to subsection 22³ (4) of the Universities Act, the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency is included in assessing the quality of studies (in conducting the expert analysis). A transitional evaluation represented essentially the same procedure as above; the primary difference being that study programme groups, in which student instruction was actually provided, were evaluated. In the process of quality assessment, it is evaluated whether the requirements for faculty qualifications established by a higher education institution and qualifications of the teaching staff included in teaching of a new study programme group, are sufficient; whether the resources needed for providing instruction are sufficient; whether the described learning outcomes are achieved by the study programme and are consistent with the requirements for providing instruction at a higher education level. Results of the assessment of the quality of studies are communicated to the Minister of Education and Research, and the decision to grant a higher education institution with the right to conduct studies is made by the Government of the Republic of Estonia.
2. According to subsection 2 (3¹) of the Universities Act, the assessment of the quality of a study programme group is an external evaluation to determine the

² Evaluation of organizational management includes management at all levels of an organization

compliance of study programmes, as well as academic activities and educational development activities based thereon, with legislation, national and international standards and trends, the purpose of which is to give recommendations for improving the quality of studies. Higher education institutions must undergo the quality assessment of a study programme group at least every seven years. The starting point of calculation for a particular study programme group is the date a higher education institution is granted the right to conduct studies (the date on which the regulation by the Government of the Republic enters into force). Thus, the higher education institutions that were granted the right to conduct studies in a study programme group at the end of 2009 should undergo the assessment of the quality of the same study programme group no later than by the end of 2016. As it arises from the definition, the assessment of the quality of study programme groups focuses on the content of studies and the concrete educational development activity within the study programme group. Those aspects are not evaluated in the course of institutional accreditation.

3. Evaluation of research focuses on the question of whether the quality and quantity of research in a particular field is sufficient. Institutional accreditation focuses on the management of a field of research, development and/or other creative activity. The relevance of RDC objectives set by a higher education institution, the effectiveness of activities planned for achieving them, regularity and application of the analysis of results (including their comparison) are being evaluated. A higher education institution should primarily present and analyze the RDC results that are priorities in its development plan. The results of both the research evaluation and the assessment of the quality of study programme groups are taken into account.

Institutional accreditation has four assessment areas:

- organizational management and performance
- teaching and learning
- research, development and/or other creative activity
- service to society

Each assessment area has been divided into three or four sub-areas under which concrete requirements are listed. The definitions of assessment areas, sub-areas and requirements have arisen from the need to include all aspects described in the definition of institutional accreditation in clause 2 3) of the Universities Act and subsection 21 (1) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act: the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment of higher education institutions. The final decision of institutional accreditation is a comprehensive evaluation on the compliance of the aspects above with the requirements.

Appendix 1 to the Explanatory Memorandum lists the references to legislation, strategies and international agreements on which the requirement is based.

The Appendix to the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation lists next to the requirements the **assessment criteria and indicators** that form the basis for evaluating whether the requirements are met. Higher education institutions should present the trends of quantitative indicators for at least three years, and preferably for five.

Organization of institutional accreditation

Higher education institutions have the responsibility to ensure that EKKA, or a competent quality assessment agency of a foreign country acting in concert with EKKA, carries out institutional accreditation at least once in seven years. However, higher education institutions have the right to apply for an institutional accreditation if they have the right to conduct studies in at least one study programme group. Accordingly, the so-called starting point of a seven-year period can be considered to be the moment when the Government granted a higher education institution the relevant right in the course of transitional evaluation. Most Estonian higher education institutions received their initial rights to conduct studies in 2010; therefore they could have applied for institutional accreditation already in 2010. Taking into consideration the time spent on a self-evaluation and the preparations for evaluation (c. 1.5 years), the first evaluation could take place at the end of 2011. The first period of accreditations is thus the period 2011–2017. In spring 2011, EKKA coordinated a tentative schedule for that period with higher education institutions.

An assessment committee consists of four to six members and must include: a person with management experience at a higher education institution of a similar profile, a person with experience from outside of higher education institutions (preferably as an employer with management experience) and a student representative. At least two committee members are from outside Estonia, which mandates the use of English as a working language; higher education institutions must also submit their self-evaluation reports in English. At the same time, it does not mean that higher education institutions need to translate all their documentation into English. The development plan, statutes, field-related action plans (if separate from the development plan) and other basic documents regulating the activities of a higher education institution that are referred to in a self-evaluation report should be available in English.

An assessment coordinator, who is an EKKA employee and does not have the right to vote (i.e., is not a member of the committee), helps to organize the committee's work.

An assessment committee provides separate assessments (so-called component assessments) for each assessment area. The EKKA Quality Assessment Council provides the final assessment. Component assessments by an assessment committee conclude: "conforms with requirements", "conditionally conforms with requirements", or "does not conform with requirements".

The final decision on the institutional accreditation is made by the EKKA Quality Assessment Council. Based on the self-evaluation report of the higher education institution, component assessments by the committee, the comments by the higher education institution and additional materials submitted at the request of the Quality Assessment Council, the Quality Assessment Council provides an assessment whether the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment, are consistent with the requirements; and makes a well-considered and reasoned decision on accreditation.

In its assessment report, an assessment committee may recognize an exceptionally outstanding practice in process management or development activity in one or several assessment areas with an additional note of "worthy of recognition". The latter does not affect the formation of the final decision for or against accreditation, but allows the committee to recognize and highlight innovative initiatives/approaches, thereby supporting the development of the organization. **Appendix 2 to the Explanatory Memorandum** lists some examples of so-called best practices that could be considered worthy of recognition in the case of higher education institutions. The list is neither exhaustive nor binding, neither on assessors nor higher education institutions.

Assessment reports are public and available on EKKA's website. Self-evaluation reports are available on EKKA's website, disclosed to the extent that the relevant higher education institution considers necessary and possible.

In addition to the description of the accreditation process conducted by EKKA, the document provides the conditions and procedure for requesting accreditation service from foreign competent authorities.

The cost of institutional accreditation

The cost of institutional accreditation is calculated on the basis of the costs related to an evaluation process of a higher education institution by an assessment committee composed of five foreign experts; the remuneration of a member of an assessment committee is calculated on the basis of eight workdays; and the hourly pay is calculated on the basis of the hourly rate of €50 (in the case of a chairperson, €55):

Costs related to an assessment committee	€16,200
incl. wages of the members of a committee	€9,200
Transportation and accommodation costs	€7,000
Management costs (Preparation, training, review of a self-assessment report, organization of a visit, coordination of an assessment report, preparation and conducting of a session of the Quality Assessment Council)	€4,000
Total	€20,200

The first round of institutional accreditations is planned to take place from 2012 to 2016, and piloting started in the autumn of 2011. Approximate cost accounting by year (to be confirmed after the coordination of the schedule with higher education institutions) is as follows:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total IA
The number of institutions of higher education	1	3	6	7	8	6	31
Cost of IA	20,200	60,600	121,200	141,400	161,600	121,200	626,200

Explanatory Memorandum, the authors:

Maiki Udam

Heli Mattisen

18/03/2011

APPENDIX 1 TO EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM: Requirements for Institutional Accreditation with Reference to Legislation, Strategies and International Agreements

Requirements	References to legislation, strategies and international agreements (the list reflects the current status and is not exhaustive)
1. ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE	
1.1. General management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An institution of higher education 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 involves the members and different interest groups. • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 5 (1) 1) of the Republic of Estonia Education Act (EVHaS) • Estonian Higher Education Strategy, 2006–2015 (hereinafter 'Higher Education Strategy'): Objective 2 • National strategies consistent with lines of action of a higher education institution • Subsections 4 (2) and (3) of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • Subsection 2 (4) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • § 14; subsection 15 (1); § 16; § 19; § 20 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • § 6; §§ 9–10¹ of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • Subsection 19 (1); §§ 20–21¹ of the Private Schools Act (EraKS) • Points 1.1 and 1.7 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality

Assurance in the European Higher Education Area	
1.2. Personnel management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented. • Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities. • Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc. • Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Education Strategy: Objective 1; Activity 5 of Line of action 3 • Subsections 34 (2) to (6); 35 (2) to (4); §§ 36–40 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • Subsections 23 (2) to (15); § 23¹ of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • §§ 14–21 of the Standard of Higher Education (KHS) • §§ 8–9¹ of the Organisation of Research and Development Act (TAKS) • Points 1.4 and 1.7 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area • Chapter II of the Strategy for the Internationalization of Estonian Higher Education, 2006–2015 (hereinafter 'Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education')
1.3. Management of financial resources and infrastructure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution, and 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsections 44 (1) to (3); § 45; §§ 49–51 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • § 26; § 27²; §§ 28–29 of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • Clauses 6 (7) 4) to 7) of the Standard of Higher Education (KHS)

<p>management and the coherent performance of core processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National strategies consistent with lines of action of a higher education institution Points 1.5 and 1.6 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	
2.1. Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation. A higher education institution creates the prerequisites to ensure its graduates national and international competitiveness. 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 the motivated student body. Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsections 4 (2) to (3); subsection 13² (1); clause 14 (3) 6); § 21 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) Subsection 2 (4); § 11; § 27⁴ of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) Higher Education Strategy: Activity 5 of Line of action 1 National strategies consistent with lines of action of a higher education institution
2.2. Study programme development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and considers the strategies of the country and expectations of the society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsections 4 (2) to (3) of the Universities Act (ÜKS) Subsection 2 (4) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different interest groups are involved in the development of study programmes. • Graduate satisfaction with the quality of studies and employer satisfaction with the quality of graduates are surveyed and analyzed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point 1.2 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area • National strategies consistent with lines of action of a higher education institution
<p>2.3. Student academic progress and student assessment</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation No. 71 of Minister of Education and Research of 27 October 2009, entered into force 1 September 2010. A Uniform Grading System at the Level of Higher Education, with Conditions for Granting Diploma with Honours (<i>cum laude</i>) • Clause 14 (3) 11) of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • Clause 9 (4) 5¹) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education (RakKKS) • Clause 6 (1) 15) of the Private Schools Act (ErakS) • §§ 11–13 of the Standard of Higher Education (KHS) • Point 1.3 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
<p>2.4. Support processes for learning</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the nominal period. • A higher education institution provides counselling related to studies and career. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsection 22 (3); § 42 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • § 24 of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • Clauses 6 (7) 4) to 6) of the Standard of Higher Education

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher education institution supports student international mobility. • Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organize educational activities. • Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organization of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities. 	<p>(KHS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter II of the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education • Points 1.5 and 1.6 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
3. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)	
3.1. RDC effectiveness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher education institution has defined the RDC objectives and measures their implementation. • A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning RDC activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsections 4 (2) and (3) of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • Subsection 2 (4) of the Institutions of Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • Estonian Research and Development and Innovation Strategy, 2007–2013 “Knowledge-based Estonia” • Quality Agreement Between Estonian Public Universities on Curricula, Academic Positions and Academic Degrees
3.2. RDC resources and support processes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clauses 6 (7) 4) to 7) of the Standard of Higher Education (KHS) • Higher Education Strategy: Objective 2; Activity 6 of Line of action 3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively. 	
<p>3.3. Student research supervision and doctoral studies</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher education institution involves students of all study levels 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. Conditions have been created for admission of international doctoral students and for studies abroad for all doctoral students. A higher education institution involves recognized foreign scientists in the provision of doctoral study and the supervision of doctoral theses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clause 6 (7) 1) of the Standard of Higher Education (KHS) Chapter II of the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Higher Education Strategy: Objective 2; Activities 5–7 of Line of action 3 Point 1.1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
<p>4. SERVICE TO SOCIETY</p>	
<p>4.1. RDC popularization and the involvement of an institution of higher education in social development</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher education institution has a system for popularizing RDC. Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsections 4 (2) and (3) of the Universities Act (ÜKS) Subsection 2 (4) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) Higher Education Strategy: Activities 1 and 4 of Line of action 1
<p>4.2. In-service training and other educational activities for the general public</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A higher education institution has strategic objectives and a clear action plan in the field of lifelong learning. The implementation of the action plan is periodically evaluated and improved as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsections 4 (2) and (3); § 32 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • Subsection 2 (4) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS) • Higher Education Strategy: Activity 3 of Line of action 1 • Development Plan for Estonian Adult Education, 2009–2013
<p>4.3. Other public-oriented activities</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations. • A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare, sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or organizing concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsections 4 (2) and (3); § 32 of the Universities Act (ÜKS) • Subsection 2 (4) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (RakKKS)

APPENDIX 2: Examples of “Worthy of Recognition” Practice

1. ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE	
“Conforms with requirements”	“Worthy of recognition” (in addition to “conforms with requirements”)
1.1. General management	
<p>The higher education institution has defined its role in Estonian society; its mission and vision take into account the operational environment and expectations of interest groups.</p> <p>Action plans of the higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes built on its mission, vision and core values, that consider the country’s priorities and society’s expectations; and also from the principle that the higher education institution has an important role in shaping the students into responsible citizens of initiative. The leadership of the higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans, and involves the members (including students, whose participation in the management of the institution of higher education it supports) and different interest groups. Key results of the higher education institution have been defined, including target values (numerical indicators describing key results, i.e., the objectives to be reached) and output indicators (numerical indicators describing current situations and trends). The development plan and policies are periodically reviewed; the key results are measured and analyzed, and if necessary, development and action plans are amended; the development planning is evidence-based (reasoned).</p> <p>The management, academic and administrative (support)</p>	<p>The higher education institution has, at least at the Estonian level, developed a centre/centres of excellence in at least one field of its activities. The preparation of development and action plans is preceded by risk assessment, and the results thereof are taken into account. When developing and implementing its purposes and activities, the higher education institution has proceeded from the principles of clean environment, the enhancement of civil society and sustainability that takes into account, among other things, social and economic aspects. The core processes of the higher education institution are functioning coherently. In its development plan or other documents, the higher education institution has outlined priority specialties or fields of activity, and has prepared action plans to develop them. Reference institutions of higher education have been defined, their choice is clearly justified, and all key operational and performance indicators have been compared. The contribution by members and interest groups to development and action plans is noticeable. Alumni and other interest groups contribute to the development of the higher education institution considerably (e.g., donations to a scholarship fund, marketing of the higher education institution, organization of events, etc.).</p> <p>In the higher education institution, an effective process and performance management is present. The compliance of management, academic (teaching and learning) and administrative (support) processes and structure with institutional purposes, priorities and</p>

<p>structure of the higher education institution supports the achievement of purposes. Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the coherent performance of core processes.</p> <p>Employees and students of the higher education institution are aware of institutional purposes and their role in achieving them.</p> <p>Both the internal and external communications of the higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are managed: they are based on institutional purposes, their functioning is periodically reviewed, and the necessary amendments are made.</p>	<p>policies has been analyzed and justified. The leadership of the higher education institution values teamwork as well as internal and external cooperation; there are measures to encourage cooperation.</p> <p>Interest groups from outside of the higher education institution have been involved in the strategic management of the higher education institution (the council, etc.). Liability of the executives of main units (faculties, institutes) has been clearly defined, and in general, they are engaged in management as their main job. All members, including the representatives of the administrative (support) structure, are involved in the management of the higher education institution. The higher education institution is purposefully and effectively engaged in image building activities.</p> <p>The higher education institution has voluntarily participated in external evaluations; the results of external evaluations are used in institutional development.</p>
<p>1.2. Personnel management</p>	
<p>There are clear rules and procedures for employee recruitment and development that arise from objectives of the development plan of the higher education institution. Trends in academic and support staff related to their qualifications, age distribution and competition for positions indicate sustainability. The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined and available to all employees. They are consistent with trends and potentials of the higher education institution, and indicate the institution's sustainability in terms of recruiting qualified staff. Levels of employee satisfaction and dedication are regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities. Workload distribution for members of the academic staff is clearly fixed among teaching, research and development activities and other activities, including management.</p>	<p>Procedures for ensuring successors at all levels—for executive, academic and administrative positions—have been introduced (e.g., the rotation of positions, job shadowing system, mentorship). The higher education institution is purposefully and effectively engaged in recruiting and keeping top members of teaching staff and research staff, including those from foreign countries; the corresponding trends in competition for positions are increasing. At least 3% of full-time academic staff is of foreign origin (<i>an extract from the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education</i>). A system of transparent remuneration (e.g., performance-related pay), recognition, or other employee motivation has been applied, which, among other things, supports creativity and innovation.</p> <p>Academic and support staff participation in the international mobility is of a growing trend (if already outpacing the European average, the</p>

<p>When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities, including research, development of teaching techniques, student feedback, etc., are taken into account in a balanced way. Employees (both academic and administrative/support staff) participate in international mobility programmes and are active in self-development.</p> <p>Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics; there are, among other things, clear rules for the conduct of proceedings in plagiarism cases.</p>	<p>trend can also be stable); the leading members of teaching staff have used the long-term opportunity of taking further training at foreign institutions of higher education.</p> <p>The higher education institution has defined the competence requirements for a "good executive" and a "good faculty member", and assesses the executives and teaching staff accordingly.</p> <p>The most important staff indicators have been compared to reference institutions of higher education and the results have been analyzed.</p>
<p>1.3. Management of financial resources and infrastructure</p>	
<p>The allocation of financial resources of the higher education institution, and the administration and development of infrastructure, are economically feasible; and are based on the objectives of the development plan of the higher education institution and national priorities (except private institutions). Budget funds come from different sources, which helps to manage risks.</p> <p>The higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of core processes.</p> <p>Both 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 the institution of higher education and expectations of target groups. Students have been provided with opportunities for independent and teamwork at the higher education institution.</p> <p>The higher education institution supports the student council (student body) and other student associations in shaping student life.</p>	<p>The analysis of the costs of student places has been implemented and used as a basis for establishing the rate of reimbursement of study costs/tuition fees and defining the number of student places. A financial forecast for at least three years consistent with the objectives of the development plan and the action plan is in place. The most important financial indicators have been compared to reference institutions of higher education.</p> <p>Staff satisfaction with working conditions and student satisfaction with learning and RDC conditions, as well as with leisure and accommodation opportunities, is growing. The physical environment of the higher education institution supports development and innovation.</p> <p>The higher education institution has ensured the student council (student body) and other student associations' financial capacity.</p>
<p>Examples of additional indicators related to "worthy of recognition" in the first assessment area: Comparison of key results to partners and competitors; results of external evaluations (including the place in institutional rankings); the proportion of student</p>	

The higher education institution analyzes the use of its assets and considers the results in improvement activities.	non-academic activity support from the budget for academic activity.
--	--

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING	
“Conforms with requirements”	“Worthy of recognition” (in addition to “conforms with requirements”)
2.1. Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	
<p>The higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.</p> <p>The higher education institution has developed a system for analyzing and evaluating competencies and international competitiveness of its graduates; the results are systematically used in the development of study programmes, teaching and learning.</p> <p>The organization of work practice is clearly regulated, including the requirements for supervisors.</p> <p>The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need, the provision of state-commissioned education (RKT), and the potentials and purposes of the higher education institution. The fulfilment of plans (including RKT) is analyzed and the plans are modified according to the results of the analyses.</p> <p>The admission rules are transparent, consistent with the mission and purposes of the higher education institution, and support the</p>	<p>Labour market feedback on the quality of graduates is effective. Compared with other schools teaching similar specialities, the demand for graduates of a given higher education institution is higher in the labour market.</p> <p>The number of graduates who have created a job for themselves is growing.</p> <p>The higher education institution has established a support system for ensuring diversity of the student body (international students, students of age of 30 and older, etc.) and admitting students of different preparation levels (e.g., Estonian language courses for students speaking other languages, preparation courses, etc.); a regular analysis of participation in support programmes is implemented, on the basis of which the existing programmes are improved and the participation opportunities are increased.</p>

<p>formation of the motivated student body; the rules are periodically reviewed, and the results are applied to development activities.</p> <p>Students are provided with opportunities to study at the institution of higher education regardless of any special needs (e.g., special admission conditions, physical environment takes into account special needs, special grants, etc.).</p>	
<p>2.2. Study programme development</p>	
<p>Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different interest groups (including students, graduates, employers, professional associations) are involved in the development of study programmes. Graduate and labour market feedback on the quality of graduates and their compliance with labour market requirements are examined and analyzed, and the results used in improvement activities.</p> <p>The higher education institution starts new study programmes (including joint study programmes) taking into account the current and developmental needs of the labour market, and including the best national and/or international practices.</p> <p>Results of the external evaluation of study programmes, teaching and learning, are analyzed and taken into account in development activities.</p>	<p>Development needs, revealed as a result of the external evaluation of a study programme, are addressed; the relevant activities are periodically reviewed. Institutional duplication is avoided (except in justified cases). The higher education institution provides interdisciplinary study programmes (including among academic units) and/or joint study programmes with other higher education institutions.</p>
<p>2.3. Student academic progress and student assessment</p>	
<p>The progress and study results of students are monitored and supported (including activities for talented students and students at risk of dropout, bridging courses). The establishment of student status (calculating full-time and part-time study,</p>	<p>The study results and progress of students are monitored and supported; the relevant activities are periodically reviewed (including the analysis of the relationship between admission conditions and student progress), and based thereon, the activities, existing rules and</p>

<p>defining minimum study load, etc.) follows clear rules that ensure fair treatment to all students. The assessment takes place according to a procedure determined by the higher education institution and supports learning, is consistent with learning outcomes, and considers the particular nature of a student contingent; the procedure for assessment is regularly reviewed and improved: the assessment measures the achievement of expected learning outcomes and objectives of a study programme, contains clear and publicized assessment criteria, considers clear regulations in case of student absence, illness or other mitigating circumstances. The procedure for assessment (including examination and thesis defence procedures, the time and form of notification of grades) is transparent and ensures fair treatment of students. There is an effective system for challenging assessment results; challenges are analyzed and the assessment system is improved.</p> <p>The higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience, and it is regularly evaluated and improved.</p>	<p>procedures are improved. Talented students are provided with additional studies; students are provided with an opportunity to participate in research, development and creative projects; students participate in professional associations, etc. Students at risk of dropout get regular counselling and are provided with bridging courses. There is a regular support for students with special needs.</p> <p>In assessment of students, reliance on the decision of a single examiner is avoided. The higher education institution provides the opportunity to take professional qualification examinations in disciplines where appropriate.</p>
<p>2.4. Support processes for learning</p>	
<p>The organization of studies ensures students an opportunity to complete their studies within the nominal period. The principles for preparing timetables support the appropriate use of time of students and academic staff.</p> <p>Student international mobility is supported, including studies in</p>	<p>The counselling system is periodically reviewed and, based thereon, is improved. In addition to academic and career advice, psychological counselling is also made available to students. In organizing educational activities, innovative ICT tools are used (live and recorded video lectures, etc.). Students are able (both financially and administratively) to take extracurricular subjects.</p>

<p>foreign institutions of higher education. The recognition of studies in foreign institutions is based on the Lisbon Convention. Systems have been created to support foreign (guest) students.</p> <p>The higher education institution provides counselling related to studies and career, including for student candidates. Students are periodically asked for feedback on organization of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.; it is analyzed, and the results taken into account in improvement activities. The academic staff are asked for feedback on the organization of studies and support services; it is analyzed, and the results used in improvement activities.</p> <p>Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organize educational activities.</p>	<p>Examples of additional indicators related to “worthy of recognition” in the second assessment area: Admission results, including, e.g., the proportion of participants in the international Olympiads of those admitted; student demographic profile (age, sex, geographic distribution); student participation in professional associations; the number of live and recorded video lectures out of the total lectures available; the proportion of interdisciplinary and joint curricula of the total number of study programmes.</p>
--	--

3. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)	
“Conforms with requirements”	“Worthy of recognition” (in addition to “conforms with requirements”)
3.1. RDC effectiveness	
<p>The university has defined the RDC objectives and measures their implementation.</p> <p>RDC objectives and activities of the university take into account, among other things, the current and developmental needs of society and the labour market. The university has developed a</p>	<p>The university: RDC funding from contracts is in a rising trend. RDC results are compared with reference universities.</p> <p>All the fields of research of the university have been granted a positive evaluation, comments made in the process of evaluation have been taken into account. The number and prestige (citation) of research</p>

<p>system for identifying those needs.</p> <p>The university has taken into account the comments made in the course of research evaluation.</p> <p>The institution of professional higher education has defined the RDC objectives and measures their implementation. The professional higher education institution has developed a system for identifying the current and developmental needs of segments of the labour market that relate to its RDC activities, and for starting the relevant research.</p>	<p>publications by the ordinary teaching staff of the university (1.1., 1.2., 2.1., 3.1., monographs, etc.) by member of the academic staff are in a rising trend and/or exceeds the average European indicators of prestige in most fields of research. The number of researchers who are among 1% of the most cited scientists is in a rising trend.</p> <p>In the field of arts: the number of public concerts and/or exhibitions organized by the university or by its co-participation is in a rising trend. The number of awards or other forms of recognition won in creative competitions by the teaching staff and students of the university is in a rising trend.</p> <p>The professional higher education institution: RDC funding from contracts is in a rising trend. RDC results are compared with reference institutions of professional higher education.</p> <p>RDC results of the ordinary teaching staff per member of the ordinary teaching staff (calculated in full-time positions) are in a rising trend.</p> <p>The number of awards or other forms of recognition won in creative competitions by the teaching staff and students of the professional higher education institution is in a rising trend.</p>
<p>3.2. RDC resources and support processes</p>	
<p>The university has an effective RDC support system (e.g., counselling related to intellectual property, support for publishing publications, referral to doctoral study, motivating the cooperation with employers). Financial resources needed for RDC exist, along with a strategy that supports their acquisition. The university participates in different RDC networks.</p> <p>RDC infrastructure of the university is continuously being updated and used effectively.</p>	<p>The university: The university's participation in international RDC networks is visible. The university has long-term cooperation contracts with enterprises to conduct (applied) research.</p> <p>In the field of arts: the university takes on international creative cooperation projects; the number and effectiveness of creative cooperation projects concluded with non-university partners are growing.</p>

<p>The institution of professional higher education has an effective RDC support system (e.g., counselling related to intellectual property, support for publishing publications, referral to doctoral study, motivating the cooperation with employers). Financial resources needed for RDC exist, along with a strategy that supports their acquisition. The professional higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.</p>	<p>The professional higher education institution: The professional higher education institution's participation in international RDC networks is visible. The professional higher education institution has long-term cooperation contracts with enterprises and employers to conduct applied research.</p>
<p>3.3. Student research supervision and doctoral studies</p>	
<p>The university has involved students at all study levels in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys their satisfaction with supervision. The results of feedback are taken into account in improvement activities. Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and a positive (university) graduation rate.</p> <p>The effectiveness of doctoral study at universities (the period of studies, fulfilment of RKT, the percentage of graduates compared to the number entering studies four years prior) is stable or improving. The quality of doctoral theses (publishing, opponents) meets a required standard. Supervisors of doctoral theses publish at least on the level of doctoral theses and qualify for research grants and research themes of targeted financing. The proportion of international doctoral students and doctoral students who have studied abroad for at least one semester is stable or increasing.</p> <p>Improvement activities take account of feedback from doctoral students and graduates of doctoral study. Recognized foreign</p>	<p>The university: The university organizes RDC competitions for students and recognizes the best students.</p> <p>Supervisors (including non-university supervisors) are provided with supervision training.</p> <p>The effectiveness of doctoral studies (the period of studies, the percentage of graduates compared to the number entering studies four years prior, fulfilment of RKT) at the university is in a rising trend. The university works purposefully to attract international doctoral students.</p> <p>The professional higher education institution: The professional higher education institution organizes RDC competitions for students and recognizes the best students. Supervisors and co-supervisors from outside of the higher education institution, who have expert knowledge in the field, are employed to supervise student research. Supervisors (including supervisors from outside of the higher education institution) are provided with supervision training.</p>

<p>scientists are involved in the provision of doctoral study and the supervision of doctoral theses.</p> <p>The institution of professional higher education has involved students of all study levels in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys their satisfaction with supervision. The results of feedback are taken into account in improvement activities. Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and a positive graduation rate (of the institution of higher education).</p> <p>Research topics of students at the professional higher education institution are related to needs of interest groups from outside of higher education institutions.</p> <p>Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.</p>	<p>Examples of additional indicators related to “worthy of recognition” in the third assessment area:</p> <p>The university: The number of concerts and exhibitions, the proportion thereof to the number of the teaching staff calculated in full-time positions; the number/proportion of the teaching staff and students who have participated/won in RDC competitions; the number/proportion of international doctoral students and post-doctoral students of the total number of doctoral students; comparisons with other higher education institutions</p> <p>The professional higher education institution: The number/proportion of the teaching staff and students who have participated/won in RDC competitions; comparisons have been made with other higher education institutions.</p>
<p>4. SERVICE TO SOCIETY</p>	
<p>“Conforms with requirements”</p>	<p>“Worthy of recognition” (in addition to “conforms with requirements”)</p>
<p>4.1. RDC popularization and the involvement of an institution of higher education in social development</p>	
<p>The higher education institution has a system for popularizing RDC; events for students of basic and upper secondary schools, and vocational educational institutions take place and the number of participants is stable or increasing. In media, employees of the institution of higher education publish articles of popular science, introducing specialities and scientific research.</p> <p>Employees of the higher education institution participate in the</p>	<p>In popularizing science and creative activity, cooperation with different institutions is practiced. The higher education institution evaluates the performance (including the effectiveness) of its activity and improves it continuously.</p> <p>The employee and student participation in a public debate (including national, regional and international venues) is visible, including through public media.</p>

<p>activities of professional associations, and as experts, in social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.</p>	<p>Within the framework of the learning process (work practice, final papers), students contribute to social development. The higher education institution participates in shaping national and/or regional strategies.</p>
<p>4.2. In-service training and other educational activities for the general public</p>	
<p>The higher education institution has strategic objectives and a clear action plan in the field of lifelong learning. The success of activities is periodically evaluated and improved as necessary. The system of development, implementation and evaluation of continuing education ensures its quality, including the quality of documents issued. The number of participants in continuing education and the money earned by providing continuing education are stable or increasing.</p>	<p>Continuing education is provided in all study programme groups (fields of competence). The satisfaction with continuing education is growing; the results of satisfaction surveys are analyzed and used in development activities. The higher education institution actively participates in international cooperation and development related to continuing education. The higher education institution provides opportunities for free learning in the form of public lectures, open workshops, etc.</p>
<p>4.3. Other public-oriented activities</p>	
<p>Public-oriented activities are defined in the development plan of the higher education institution; the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements introduced based on those evaluations.</p>	<p>Regional and field-related development plans, evaluation documents, etc., assert/certify the higher education institution's important role in and impact on the welfare development in the region.</p>
<p>The higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of regional welfare, sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or organizing concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.</p>	<p>Examples of additional indicators related to "worthy of recognition" in the fourth assessment area:</p> <p>Feedback on continuing education from cooperation partners/customers (enterprises, institutions), participants; comparisons have been made with other higher education institutions/competitors.</p>