

## Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Business and Administration Study Programme Group Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences

**12/06/2017**

**The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Business and Administration study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences in seven years, with a secondary condition**

On the basis of subsection 21<sup>1</sup> (2) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and points 41.1 and 42 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', authorised in point 3.7.1 of the above-mentioned EKKA Statutes; the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of EKKA (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') affirms the following:

1. On 22.03.2016 the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (EUAS) and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct the quality assessment of the study programme group.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 3.04.2017, approved the following membership of the quality assessment committee for the Business and Administration study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

<b>Roger Levy</b>	Chair of the Committee, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
<b>Anne Perkiö</b>	Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
<b>Markus Breuer</b>	Professor, SRH University Heidelberg, Germany
<b>Tambet Hook</b>	MPS Eesti, Estonia
<b>Veronica Zäro</b>	Student, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

3. The Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences submitted the following study programmes for evaluation under the Business and Administration study programme group:

**Business Management (Prof HE; in Estonian)**  
**Business Management (Prof HE; in Russian)**  
**Quality Management (Prof HE; in Estonian)**  
**Start-up Entrepreneurship (Prof HE; in English)**  
**Creativity and Business Innovation (Prof HE; in English)**  
**Management of Enterprise (Master's studies; in Estonian)**  
**Management of Enterprise (Master's studies; in Russian)**

4. The Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 9.03.2017 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 10.03.2017.
5. An assessment visit was made to the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences during 26–27.04.2017.
6. The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 13.05.2017, EKKA forwarded it to the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences for its comments on 19.05.2017, and the University delivered its response on 29.05.2017.
7. The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 1.06.2017. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
8. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the Committee's final assessment report along with the University's self-evaluation report to the Council members on 2.06.2017.
9. The Council with 10 members present discussed these received documents in its session during 11–12.06.2017 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding the Business and Administration study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences.

#### Strengths

- 1) Strengths of the study programmes include their practical orientation and popularity. Graduate employment rates are high.
- 2) Teaching staff are qualified, dedicated and caring.
- 3) Employer support for study programmes is strong. Employers (e.g. ABB) are extensively involved in the process of study programme development and teaching.
- 4) Students are motivated and very satisfied with their studies and lecturers.
- 5) The process of study programme development is systematic and flexible. An annual study programme development conference is held for each study programme. Study programmes are also further developed by means of discussions among the teaching staff.
- 6) When selecting lecturers, the candidates' practical experience is most important. Also, students are involved in joint projects with employers.
- 7) Both students and employers highly appreciate the flexible organisation of studies and the possibility to study and work in parallel.
- 8) Students highly appreciate the opportunity to study in different languages.
- 9) Lecturers teaching the Start-up Entrepreneurship or the Creativity and Business Innovation study programmes have very high-quality practical experience.
- 10) An annual increase in the number of foreign students makes it possible to significantly increase revenues.
- 11) The physical facilities are well suited for learning, including for group work. The learning environment also allows for an increase in the number of students.
- 12) The ratio of teaching staff to students is very good.

- 13) The Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning offers various trainings for both full-time and guest lecturers.
- 14) The University's Study Information System (SIS) allows the University to monitor students' progress very well, identify problems early on and prevent students from dropping out.
- 15) Recognition of prior learning and work experience (VÕTA) is widely used and supported by student advisors and VÕTA consultants.
- 16) Various active learning techniques are widely used in the teaching.
- 17) Lecturers have an 'open door' policy. Lecturers and students have close relationships, the students receive direct feedback on their problems. Students, alumni and lecturers alike feel they have a unified community.
- 18) The student dropout rates are quite low.

#### Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) It is necessary to develop strategies to address an existing demographic situation and a related decline in potential student numbers.
- 2) Pedagogical development of the teaching staff must be strengthened in order to implement outcome-based learning in practice.
- 3) Entrepreneurship-related topics should be reflected more widely in the module descriptions.
- 4) The study programmes are excessively focused on Estonia, more international topics should be considered. It is necessary to expand an international outreach of study programmes, learning materials and lecturers in order to prepare students for the global labour market. Given the University's plans for wider internationalisation, detailed study programme descriptions should be available in English on the University's website.
- 5) The Start-up Entrepreneurship study programme is strongly focused on the participants' own start-up companies. At the same time 90% of start-up companies fail and the goal should be the employability of the graduates of the programme in the long term. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on 'traditional' fields of business administration.
- 6) Since the graduates of the Start-up Entrepreneurship and the Creativity and Business Innovation programmes can continue their studies in a master's programme, students should also learn about theoretical aspects and how to use them in their own research. It is therefore desirable to combine traditional economic theory and the scientific literature with the topics of start-up companies.
- 7) According to the Start-up Entrepreneurship study programme, practical training counts for 32 ECTS credits completed in the student's own company. It is unclear how this practical training is supervised or what happens if the student's start-up fails in an early stage. The University should clearly formalise the rules for achieving the learning outcomes in practical training. The University should also put in place conditions under which practical training can be completed in other companies.
- 8) The main focus of the Management of Enterprise study programmes is upon the application of practical knowledge, but research and its methodology are underrepresented.
- 9) Within the framework of the Management of Enterprise study programmes, a large number of cooperation projects with companies are carried out. To strengthen the academic profile of the University, the results of those projects should be published in peer reviewed journals.
- 10) The University's own library is very small and it mainly relies on the libraries of public universities. This area needs to be invested in, especially considering the planned increase in student numbers.
- 11) Assessment of students' assignments and final theses requires further attention. According to alumni and students, the level of difficulty of their works is not sufficiently taken into account and marking ranges are too narrow.

- 12) As student mobility is hampered by a number of problems, it is necessary to involve more international lecturers for longer terms, recruit more international students, increase the number of subjects taught in English and use more MOOCs in teaching and learning.
  - 13) Although the University has a practical orientation, the number of lecturers with PhDs is too small. Teaching staff should be supported while completing their PhDs and higher standards for the staff should be established, for example, with regard to publishing in peer reviewed journals. At present, some members of the teaching staff have no publications at all.
  - 14) The number of international lecturers is too small and staff mobility is low. International cooperation must be strengthened and clear goals in this area set. As the number of (international) students increases, new lecturers with international profiles should be recruited.
  - 15) While planning further expansion, the University should consider that along with the increase in student numbers some aspects that students currently like may disappear – flexibility, personal approach, etc.
- 10.** Point 41 of the document, ‘Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education’, establishes that the Quality Assessment Council shall approve an assessment report within three months after receipt of the report. The Council shall weigh the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations pointed out in the assessment report, and then shall decide whether to conduct the next quality assessment of that study programme group in seven, five or three years.
- 11.** The Council weighed the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations referred to in point 9 of this document and found that the study programmes, the teaching conducted under these programmes, and development activities regarding teaching and learning conform to the requirements if the University eliminates the following shortcoming:
- According to clause 6 (7) 1) of the Standard of Higher Education, *the conduct of studies conforms to the requirements if the teaching is performed by ordinary teaching and research staff who meet the qualification requirements established in legal instruments and whose number, based on their responsibilities, loads of conducted studies and research, and numbers of students supervised, is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.* Although the University has a practical orientation, the number of lecturers with doctorates is too small, especially for conducting master degree studies. Teaching staff should be supported while completing their PhDs, and higher standards for the staff should be established, for example, with regard to publishing in peer reviewed journals. At present, some members of the teaching staff have no publications at all.
  - According to subsection 6 (3) of the Standard of Higher Education *the objectives and learning outcomes of a study programme shall be equal and comparable with the learning outcomes of the cycles of higher education level described in Annex 1 to the Standard of Higher Education.* According to point 3.1 of Annex 1 to the Standard of Higher, in order to be awarded a Master’s degree, students shall, inter alia, *have systematic overview and broad knowledge of concepts, theories and research methods of the field of study; know the theoretical development trends, current problems and potential applications in that field of study; and be able to independently and creatively identify and formulate problems and/or research questions related to their fields of study and be able to solve them with appropriate measures within given timeframes and with limited information, using knowledge from other fields as necessary.* The main focus of the Management of Enterprise study programmes is upon the application of practical knowledge, but research and its methodology are underrepresented. The graduates of the Start-up Entrepreneurship and the Creativity and Business Innovation programmes can continue their studies in a master’s programme, students should therefore also learn about theoretical aspects and how to use them in their own research.



12. According to clause 53 (1) 2) of the Administrative Procedure Act, *a secondary condition of an administrative act is an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act* and, according to clause 53 (1) 3), it is also *a supplementary condition for the creation of a right arising from the principal regulation of the administrative act*. Clauses 53 (2) 2) and 3) of the Administrative Procedure Act establish that *a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition, or if issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of an administrative right of discretion*. The Council found that, without a secondary condition, the next quality assessment of the study programme group should be conducted in less than seven years, and therefore, on the basis of points 41.1 and 42 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', the Council

#### **DECIDED**

**to approve the assessment report and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Business and Administration study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences in seven years with the following secondary condition:**

No later than 12.06.2019, the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences shall submit a progress report in English to the Council on eliminating the shortcomings referred to in point 11 of this document. Members of the assessment committee shall be involved in the assessment of compliance with the secondary condition.

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

13. In case the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences does not comply with the secondary condition by the due date, the Council will repeal this assessment decision and set a new date for a quality assessment of the study programme group, or establish a new secondary condition.
14. The Council proposes that the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences will submit an action plan to EKKA with regard to other areas for improvement and recommendations pointed out in the report no later than 12.06.2019.
15. A person who finds that his or her rights are violated or his or her freedoms are restricted by this decision may file a challenge with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding. A judicial challenge to the decision may be submitted within 30 days after its delivery, filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

**Tõnu Meidla**  
**Chair of the Council**

**Hillar Bauman**  
**Secretary of the Council**