ЕККА

ESTONIAN QUALITY AGENCY
FOR EDUCATION

Report for Institutional Accreditation

Pallas University of Applied Sciences

2023

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Introduction

Institutional accreditation

'**Institutional accreditation**' is the process of external evaluation which assesses the conformity of a Higher Education Institution`s management, work procedures, study and research activities and environment to both legislation and the goals and development plan of the higher education institution itself. This is feedback-based evaluation in which an international assessment panel analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the institution of higher education based on the self-assessment report of the institution and on information obtained during the assessment visit, providing recommendations for improvement and ways of implementing them.

The goal of institutional accreditation is to support the development of strategic management and quality culture that values learning-centeredness, creativity and innovation in the higher education institutions (**HEIs**), as well as to increase the societal impact of education, research and development delivered by the HEIs.

HEIs are assessed according to twelve standards of institutional accreditation. Assessment focuses on the core processes of the HEI – learning and teaching, research, development and creative activities, and service to society – as well as on strategic management of the organisation and resource management. The learning and teaching process is examined in more detail under five standards (study programme, teaching staff, learning and teaching, student assessment, and learning support processes). Throughout the assessment process, there is a focus on academic ethics, quality culture and internationalisation.

The Institutional Accreditation Report consists of two parts: (1) evaluation of twelve institutional accreditation standards, and (2) a report on quality assessment of a sample of study programmes.

For every standard the panel presents an analyses and outlines **strengths, areas of concern and recommendations, as well as opportunities for further improvement**. Achievements that exceed the level of the standard (not compliance with the standard) are presented as strengths. Areas of concern and recommendations point to shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the institutional accreditation standard and affect the formation of the final decision of the Council. Opportunities for further improvement are proposals for improvement that do not contain a reference to noncompliance with the standard and the inclusion or exclusion of which is at the discretion of the institution of higher education. Proposals for further developments will not affect the final decision of the Council.

Educational institution must undergo institutional accreditation at least once every seven years based on the regulation *Guidelines for Institutional Accreditation* approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education as of 7.01.2022.

The institutional accreditation of Pallas University of Applied Sciences took place in October 2022. The Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA) composed an international expert panel, which was approved by the higher education institution. The composition of the panel was thereafter approved by the order of HAKA director.

The composition of the expert panel was as follows:

Eva Werner	Chair of the Panel, Professor and former Rector, IMC University of Applied Sciences Krems (Austria); Vice-President AQ Austria
Silke Lange	Secretary of the Panel, Vice-Dean, University of the Arts London (UK)
Anett Pook	Student, Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia)
Annie Doona	Emeritus President IADT, Institute of Art Design and Technology (Ireland)
Alistair James Payne	Professor, Head of the Kingston School of Art (UK)
Maarit Salolainen	Professor, Aalto University (Finland)
Ieva Skauronė	Rector, Vilnius Academy of Arts (Lithuania)
Liina Siib	Professor, Estonian Academy of Arts (Estonia)

Assessment process

The assessment process was coordinated by HAKA staff – Hillar Bauman and Tiia Bach.

The Panel held two preparatory meetings, the first on 12.09.2022 when the schedule, background and approach to the visit were discussed and agreed, and the second on 03.10.2022, when the Panel agreed the questions and the handling of the meetings. Meetings were held with staff, students, and external stakeholders of the Pallas University of Applied Sciences from 19 to 21 October.

In finalizing the assessment report, the panel took into consideration comments made by the institution. The panel submitted the final report to HAKA on January 9th, 2023.

The current report is a public document and made available on HAKA website after HAKA Council has made an accreditation decision.

Information about Pallas University of Applied Sciences

Pallas University of Applied Sciences in Tartu has gone through many changes in its time, including changes of its name. It was founded by the Pallas Art Society in 1919 as an arts school in a private educational institution. In 1924, this art school became an institution of higher arts education called the Pallas Art School. After the Second World War, the art school operated initially under the name of the Tartu State Art Institute, and then as the Tartu Department of the State Art Institute of the ESSR until 1954. The school, which was created during reorganisation, operated under the name of Tartu School of Fine Arts from 1951, and became Tartu Art School in 1960.

Tartu Art College (TAC), an institution providing higher arts education, was reopened in Tartu in 2000. Since August 2018 it operates once again under the name of Pallas University of Applied Sciences. The university carries forward the values of Pallas, which opened its doors in 1924 and laid the foundations for the professional art scene in Estonia, including openness and modernity, and fulfils its mission to provide the best in contemporary applied higher arts education [SER 1.1.1.].

The structure of Pallas consists of the academic and research structure, the support and administrative structure and the supporting Management Office. The academic and research structure consists of seven specialty departments: Photography, Painting, Media Design, Furniture, Leather Design, Sculpture and Textile, and the Centre of General Subjects. The activities of the academic and research structure are supported by units of the support and administrative structure.

The management consists of the Rector and two Vice Rectors. In the academic and research structure, the heads of the specialty departments act as managers; in the support and administrative structure, the managers are staff members who manage the activities of their areas within the scope of their areas of responsibility.

The Council is the highest collegial decision-making body at Pallas making strategic decisions concerning Pallas as an institution. Representatives of the management, academic staff and student body are represented on the Council. The competence of the Council is determined in the statutes of Pallas. The work of the Council is governed by its rules of procedure.

The Advisory Board is an advisory body linking Pallas and the society, bringing together representatives of the professional and trade associations, local authorities, and employers important to Pallas. The Advisory Board follows the Higher Education Act and the Pallas Statute in its activities. The members of the Advisory Board and its rules of procedure are approved by the Minister of Education and Research, to whom the Advisory Board may also make proposals on the development of Pallas and its curricula. The Advisory Board meets twice a year.

In addition to the Rectorate and the Council, Pallas has committees, panels and working groups involving staff and students. Students are involved in all activities important to Pallas, starting with the preparation of the Development Plan, and are involved in governance through their representatives in the Council [SER 1.1.2.].

During COVID-19 Pallas Council predicted an increase in the student drop-out rate, resulting in increasing overall admission numbers. This has led to an increase in the total number of students in the last five years (2017/18 - 2021/22) by 12.8%. The highest student drop-out happened in 2019, with the Department of Photography being the most impacted at 20% and the Department of Media Design the least impacted at 3.2% [SER 1.3.].

At the end of 2021, Pallas had 86 employees, 64% of whom were academic staff (mostly part-time) and 36% support staff (including management). 160 visiting lecturers also worked at Pallas in 2021. This high number of visiting lecturers is explained by 'alongside the academic staff committed to the development of curricula and the achievement of Pallas' objectives, acclaimed theorists and practitioners in the field share their knowledge as visiting lecturers.' 35% of the visiting lecturers were alumni of Pallas. Comparing the staff data from 2017 and 2021, it is noticeable that the average age of staff has increased by three years and the percentage of men among academic staff has increased by 4,1 % [SER 1.4.].

In Spring 2020, the posts of regular lecturers were aligned with the Higher Education Act that was introduced in September 2019. On 30 April 2020, the Pallas Council approved the qualification requirements for academic staff and the conditions and procedures for assessing compliance with them. According to this, the positions of regular staff at Pallas are professor, associate professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, and teacher. The requirements for full-time academic staff and visiting

lecturers are established by the Pallas Council based on the principles provided in the Standard of Higher Education. As Pallas is a creative higher education institution, internationally recognised criteria have been developed to assess the qualifications of internationally recognised creatives. Criteria include, for example, presentations in foreign galleries and museums; participation and recognition in domestic and international specialty competitions, and festivals; participation in international conferences, symposiums, etc.; and membership of international panels or juries [SER 3.6.1.].

To organise higher education, the state provides public universities and state universities of applied sciences with operating grants, which consist of a basic component and a variable component based on performance indicators. This is the basis of the Pallas budget. The total budget for the reporting period was €2–2.4 million, including the state operating grants (82% on average), own revenue (7% on average) and support for projects and programmes (11% on average). The operating grant received from the state has remained at the same level for the last three years. This is not enough to raise salaries and modernise infrastructure, nor to develop the technical base needed to teach new technology.

The goal set in the development plan for 2025 is to bring the share of additional funding (own resources and government grants) to 17% of the annual budget to ensure the continuation of activities essential to support formal education, including research, development, and creation (RDC). In 2021, Pallas managed to increase the share of extra funding to almost 14% [SER 3.2.2.].

Statistical data of Pallas

Aggregate data on students (number of students, admitted, graduates) for the academic years 2017/2018–2021/2022*

Specialty department		2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Photography	Number of students	39	40	40	49	51
	Admission	10	11	11	17	11
	Number of graduates	9	3	4	8	5
Painting and Restoration	Number of students	46 (1)	48 (1)	48 (2)	51 (4)	51 (3)
	Admission	11	12	14	14	12
	Number of graduates	7	7	8	7	9
Media and Advertisement Design	Number of students	57 (1)	60 (1)	62 (1)	60 (2)	66 (2)
	Admission	13	11	15	16	13
	Number of graduates	9	13	14	4	13

Furniture Design and Restoration	Number of students	51	57	51	52	53
	Admission	12	13	13	14	12
	Number of graduates	3	10	7	6	9
Leather Design and Restoration	Number of students	34	34	30	37	34
	Admission	8	9	7	13	8
	Number of graduates	4	7	4	8	6
Sculpture	Number of students	32	30	30	34	35 (1)
	Admission	8	9	6	9	11
	Number of graduates	9	2	4	6	7
Textile	Number of students	38 (1)	43 (1)	42 (1)	47 (2)	45 (2)
	Admission	8	10	10	12	10
	Number of graduates	5	8	4	6	12
Total	Number of students	**297**	**312**	**303**	**330**	**335**
	Admission	**70**	**75**	**76**	**95**	**77**
	Number of graduates	**46**	**50**	**45**	**45**	**61**

* In brackets are the numbers of foreign students enrolled to full-time studies.
Source: Self-Evaluation Report of Pallas

Share of dropouts in specialty departments by calendar year 2017–2021 (%)

Specialty department	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Photography	17.9	7.5	20.0	6.1	3.9
Painting and Restoration	0	8.3	10.4	5.9	9.8
Media and Advertisement Design	8.8	5.0	3.2	8.3	3.0
Furniture Design and Restoration	0	1.8	19.6	11.5	11.3
Leather Design and Restoration	11.8	0	10.0	5.4	8.8
Sculpture	15.6	10.0	13.3	8.8	8.6
Textile	7.9	9.3	9.5	4.3	13.3
Total share of dropouts	**7.7**	**5.1**	**11.9**	**8.3**	**8.2**

Source: Self-Evaluation Report of Pallas

Aggregate data on employees for the academic years 2017/2018–2021/2022 as of 31 December

	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Number of academic and research structure staff	**61**	**61**	**56**	**53**	**55**
Number of teaching staff members with PhD	4	4	3	3	4
Number of teaching staff members with MA	39	37	32	33	33
Average age of academic and research structure staff	50.21	50.29	51.65	53.04	53.58
Sex distribution of academic and research structure staff:					
men, %	54.1	55.7	57.1	58.5	58.2
women, %	45.9	44.3	42.9	41.5	41.8
Number of support and administrative staff	**28**	**28**	**30**	**31**	**31**
Average age of support and administrative staff	50.3	52.2	52.7	54.8	52.5
Support and administrative staff holding a Master's degree	12	13	12	14	14
Total number of staff	**89**	**89**	**86**	**84**	**86**
Total number of visiting lecturers for each academic year	**186**	**171**	**143**	**155**	**160**

Source: Self-Evaluation Report of Pallas

Main impressions of the self-evaluation report and the visit

In preparation for accreditation, Pallas produced a self-evaluation report (SER) and numerous Annexes providing further information and detail to the narrative presented in the SER. The SER was provided to the Panel in August 2022.

The SER was written in English and clearly laid out. It addressed the Standards appropriately, each section ending with a summary of the University's perception of its strengths, areas for improvement and planned developments for that Standard. Access to supporting documents was provided by numerous hyperlinks, all of which worked well. In addition to the SER, the panel had access to 44 annexes providing information on: Pallas' development plans; study regulation; curriculum statutes; tasks and rules of the procedure of the curriculum council; rules for student admissions; guidelines for final projects; guidelines for organisation of practical training; conditions and procedures for attestations of the faculty; conditions and procedures for sabbaticals for faculty; motivation rules; procedures for collection and consideration of feedback; internationalisation principles; examples of applied research; a selection of projects (2017-2021); list of exhibitions in gallery Pallas (2017-2021); tables describing module content and selection principles; projects for the development of the practice system; list of beneficiaries of the free semester; examples of improvement activities; membership of academic staff in professional associations and organisations; foreign experts and

visiting teaching staff; overview of study environment of speciality department 2021/22; examples of partners in Estonia and abroad offering practice in work environment; selection of Estonian art prizes; diagram describing the link between module curricula; and programme curriculum from speciality departments selected for this accreditation (Photography, Painting and Restoration, and Textile).

Overall, the SER was a helpful guide for the Panel in describing the organisation and planned operation of Pallas. It could have provided more detailed information and evidence about how its processes work in practice, for example samples of monitoring reports and notes of meetings. Following this request in October, the panel received further documentation, as well as an explanation of how these processes are embedded in the existing annexes.

The visit was conducted in a hybrid fashion, with seven members of the panel on site and one member remote on Zoom. HAKA was represented by two coordinators. The onsite interviews were conducted in rooms equipped for videoconferencing for the remote panel members and for some Pallas participants (such as visiting lecturers) in interviews. The interviews were conducted in English, but all were supported by translators to ensure that those being interviewed had understood the question and had answered it as they intended. The Panel members on site took part in tours of the campus to look at facilities such as workshops, studios, and the library. Most panel members also joined a special visit to the gallery Pallas. Overall, the hybrid format worked smoothly, with no technical problems, and the meetings proceeded in a friendly and constructive manner.

Main changes based on the recommendations of the previous institutional accreditation

The Tartu College of Art passed an institutional accreditation in 2015, leading to a decision to accredit the institution for seven years – hence the present review in 2022. The SER for the present review sets out in some detail the changes made in responding to the recommendations from the previous review. These cover reforms to the staff evaluation system, to the strategic development of learning and teaching, better clarity on performance indicators, and to building and promoting its national reputation within and beyond the arts world. The work was initiated and carried forward by the previous Rector and is being further pursued under the current Rector, who took office in February 2022 [SER 2].

The reform of the staff evaluation system was underpinned by the implementation of The Higher Education Act in 2019. This Act changed the positions and requirements of academic staff, resulting in Pallas evaluating all members of the teaching staff based on an evaluation plan and procedure. In addition to performance appraisals (see sub-chapter 3.2.2), the development of members of the teaching staff is reviewed at the meetings of the academic and research structure, the area meetings, and the workload committees.

Clarity of performance indicators was achieved through a clear formulation of qualitative and quantitative targets in the Development Plan for 2016–2020. The implementation of these performance indicators is monitored through annual action plans and annual progress reports. The implementation of this principle will continue in the current Development Plan period.

To build and promote Pallas' national reputation within and beyond the arts world one of the objectives of the Development Plan for 2016–2020 was to foster a creative society and to strengthen the image of the university in a notable and meaningful way, building on historical continuity (Annex 2). These objectives were linked to the restoration of the Pallas name (2018), in the context of which

the overall visual identity and image of Pallas were renewed. At the beginning of 2020, the website was updated with the aim of moving towards greater openness and visibility. Attention is given to these activities again in the Development Plan for 2021–2025 (Annex 3): making Pallas visible, contributing to advertising and marketing aimed at stakeholders and strengthening and consolidating the identity and image of Pallas are listed under 'Activities'.

In response to the feedback from the Evaluation Committee of the Curriculum Group of the Arts in 2017, meetings have been held between Pallas and the Estonian Academy of Arts to discuss curriculum development, the structure of the organisations and opportunities for cooperation, as well as the qualification requirements, duties and remuneration of teaching staff. The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs of Pallas, in cooperation with the Estonian Artists' Association, has initiated a round table on art education, which develops cooperation between the levels of art education. [SER 2.2]

This development is ongoing to ensure that curricula are kept up to date and in line with developments in society. An important part of this is the comparison of curricula with other similar curricula in Estonia and abroad. Subjects are compared with those of other higher education institutions, among others, every time a Pallas student goes to study at a foreign higher education institution with the support of the Erasmus+ programme or when a foreign student comes to Pallas. [SER 2.2.]

Overall, Pallas responded appropriately across the range of recommendations from the previous review, with generally positive results.

Summary of the institutional accreditation findings

Strengths and commendations

Pallas has a dedicated management team with a clear vision of where to take the institution in the next years and thus achieve the purposefully set strategic objectives. Committed and passionate staff and students support the endeavours of the management team of well-targeted planning and evaluation.

External communication is well-targeted, and Pallas has a functioning system to popularise its core activities. The areas of 'Communications' and 'Service to Society' are exceptionally well aligned.

Pallas has developed a wide range of formats (information sessions, guidelines for written papers, rules for final projects, compulsory subjects, etc.) how to repeatedly disseminate the principles of Academic ethics among its students.

Students and staff formally share their experiences gained abroad to disseminate good practice and learning with others in Pallas and encourage colleagues to also opt for international exposure.

Pallas' teaching staff is dedicated strongly to educating creative minds and skilled graduates and is particularly supportive of competence development.

The strong and explicit practice orientation of Pallas curricula assures that students feel well prepared for the world of work and their future career.

Students are given feedback by the teachers in one-one tutorials, focusing on their strengths, weaknesses and learning journey to help them learn more effectively and encourage them in their development. This kind of feedback is rare but encouraging and motivating and shows how the smallness of the institution can be used for the benefit of students' learning experience.

A continually active and highly committed Student Council cooperates well with the management, contributing to the supportive learning environment at Pallas.

Pallas has a strong commitment to contribute to society through research as outlined in the vision, but also evidenced through the gallery and projects undertaken by staff, and methods of dissemination of creative activities.

Pallas' teaching staff is to be commended for its strong dedication to educating creative minds and skilled graduates. Such approach is particularly supportive of students' competence development.

Pallas is also to be commended for its collegiate relationship with students which helps to encourage and motivate students for further development and supporting them on their learning journey. Pallas demonstrates how the smallness of the institution can be used for the benefit of students' learning experience.

✦ Worthy of Recognition:

Pallas is worthy of recognition for its Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning management and implementation which is clearly targeted, well planned, systematic and corresponds to the needs of a changing society.

Recommendations:

As Pallas' approach to staff appraisal and evaluation procedures lacks consistency throughout the institution, the panel recommends standardising and structuring staff evaluation procedures throughout the institution and implement a consistent documentation and monitoring system.

Furthermore, the panel recommends that competence development needs are being discussed in individual meetings, captured systematically, and an institutional competence training plan set up accordingly. This practice is of particular importance as new challenges might emerge (e.g., Covid and digital teaching).

To ensure a common and overall understanding of quality of teaching, research, and service to society, and firmly anchor this understanding within the institution, the panel recommends that Pallas develops shared definitions and principles of quality and assure dissemination among all Pallas staff and stakeholders.

The panel recommends the compilation of *one* document on ethics that would provide a description of its principles and is applied to all activities in the Pallas community. This document should include a reference to the 'Academic Integrity' document. The panel also recommends widening the spectrum of ethics, including principles of equity, fairness, and non-discriminatory practices and defining a systematic approach with clear attribution of responsibilities for handling academic as well as non-academic complaints and ethical issues.

As there is little evidence of how internationalisation of the curriculum is understood across all academic areas and how embedding internationalisation in the curriculum is being addressed, the panel recommends developing a better documented and strategic approach to the embedding of internationalism in and across all curricula.

The approach to staff development and development activities is overly reliant on an ad hoc and informal approach with staff identifying possibilities for their own development. The panel recommends the implementation of a more systematic approach. Any staff development opportunities should be informed by strategic priorities to ensure the inclusion of pedagogical skills and innovative approaches to learning and research, including digital skills for all teaching staff.

The current curriculum design is characterised by fragmentation and small credit allocation per semester, which is followed by a high number of assignments and tasks. As this prevents students from engaging in deeper learning and critical reflection of subjects and content, the panel recommends reviewing all curricula and designing larger units thus reducing the number of courses and assignments and consequently enhancing students' learning experience and skills' development.

As the level of innovation in teaching methods varies across the institution the panel recommends creating a learning environment for staff that enables teaching staff to learn from each other, make good practice visible and further develop teaching skills.

The panel also recommends offering regular training for teachers on designing learning outcomes and assessment criteria to assure consistent alignment of content, teaching methods, and assessment formats.

To foster further progress in research, development, and creative activities at Pallas, the panel recommends building a strong narrative around research, including the development of a clear and consistent approach to research via a cross-institutional strategic research plan. This should include institutional principles of research, as well as research priorities that connect to staff development activities to enable staff to plan, prepare and systematically integrate their academic research into the curriculum and teaching.

The panel encourages Pallas to further strengthen the systematic planning of in-service trainings for external stakeholders and CPD opportunities, and more explicitly showcase it as a recurring activity and visible contribution to society.

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Strategic management	☒	☐	☐	☐
Resources	☐	☒	☐	☐
Quality culture	☐	☒	☐	☐
Academic ethics	☒	☐	☐	☐
Internationalisation	☒	☐	☐	☐
Teaching staff	☒	☐	☐	☐
Study programme	☐	☒	☐	☐
Learning and teaching	☒	☐	☐	☐
Student assessment	☒	☐	☐	☐
Learning support systems	☒	☐	☐	☐
Research, development and/or other creative activity	☐	☒	☐	☐
Service to society	☒	☐	☐	☒

E: interviews with employers and other external stakeholders

M: interviews with management staff

S: interviews with students

A: interviews with alumni

T: interviews with teaching staff

R: inspection of resources (e.g., library, laboratories)

SER: Self-Evaluation Report

1.1.   Strategic management

Standard:

Development planning at the higher education institution is purposeful and systematic, involving various stakeholders.
The higher education institution regularly evaluates the achievement of its stated objectives and the impact of its activities.

Guidelines:
The HEI has formulated the objectives and key results for its core activities – learning and teaching; research, development and creative activities, and service to society – taking into account national priorities and the needs of society, focusing on its strengths and reducing unnecessary duplication both within the HEI and throughout higher education in Estonia.
The HEI is managed in accordance with its mission, vision and core values, as well as objectives set out on the basis of those principles. Responsibility for implementation of the goals and action plans of the development plan are clearly specified. Achievement of the objectives and effects of the activities are evaluated regularly. Creativity and innovation are supported and given value in both core and support activities.
Membership of the HEI (including students), as well as external stakeholders, is involved in developing and implementing the HEI's development plan and action plans. The HEI members share the core values that serve as a basis for the institution's development plan.

Indicators:
• The rate of achieving the objectives set in the development/action plan (key results)
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

In its vision, documented in the Development Plan, in the SER, as well as published on the institution's website, Pallas University of Applied Sciences (former: Tartu Art College) stipulates to be *a recognised centre of art education, initiating changes in the creative sector, valuing traditions and leading*

innovation in the fields of art, design, conservation and restoration in cooperation with its partners. Thus, its mission and purpose are teaching arts, conducting both applied and academic research in its core areas, and creating an environment where creativity and a sense of responsibility can develop (webpage and SER). Cooperation with the community as well as other national and international educational institutions and establishments is key for Pallas to support the development of a creative, innovative, and sustainable society and lifelong learning (Webpage, SER, M).

Based on these core principles, Pallas management has elaborated its current Development Plan 2021 – 2025 in a participatory process, which involved internal staff, students, alumni representatives as well as the professional field, society and labour market represented through the Advisory Board, what was confirmed in the interviews during the on-site visit (M, T). The Development Plan comprises a clear vision and mission statement and stipulates three strategic goals for the period until 2025 related to education, research, service to society and development and creative activities. These goals clearly mirror the institution's vision, mission, and core values, which are *Courage, Creativity, Openness, Liability and Freedom.* The institutional goals are broken down into three key objectives and underpinned by specific activities (SER). For each of the key objectives – *Internationally competitive higher education in the arts, Open and developing Pallas, Building a creative society (SER)* – Pallas has developed actions and activities as well as activity indicators with clear target values. These indicators are used to analyse the achievements and outcomes of actions and activities and provide a good overview of the performance of the institution (M). Furthermore, the institution's core values – *Courage, Creativity, Openness, Liability and Freedom* – underpin Pallas development activities with one core value getting specific attention during one year from the current development plan for 2021 – 2025 (SER, M).

The focus of Pallas' current development plan is on the education of creative and innovative people with strong practical skills and a solid theoretical knowledge, as the institution considers education as its main strength and objective (SER, T, M, E). As the panel could learn in the interviews with the management team, students as well as staff and Advisory Board members, skills' development as the essential toolbox for students' future professional life (T, S, E) characterises all educational programmes at Pallas and stimulates creativity and innovative use of also traditional techniques. Thus, both Estonian traditions in arts as well as new developments and the needs of the labour market and society are responsibly taken into consideration, an approach which students and employers highly value as the panel heard in the interviews. The overall responsibility for the implementation of the Development Plan lies with the Rector, implementation, preparation, monitoring and updating the annual plans with the Vice rectors.

The detailed annual action plans stipulate sub-objectives, activities, intended results, deadlines and responsible persons, the latter being Rector and Vice-rectors, department heads as well as administrative staff. Even though a procedural document states responsibilities for implementation and evaluation of the set objectives, it remained a bit unclear how communication between the persons in charge is secured systematically and overlapping avoided. The panel learned in the interviews, that department heads have an important saying in setting up the annual action plan and the departmental evaluation of achievement analysis but could not gain final clarity on the distribution of decision-taking levels and/or persons apart from the Council of Pallas as the final decision-taking body.

The various surveys and feedback procedures gathering input from students, employees, external stakeholders, and participants in continuing education support the assessment of the intended and achieved objectives. The responsibility for conducting feedback surveys and analyses lies with academic department, the Development Centre and/or the speciality department as stipulated in the respective regulations document (Procedure for Collection and Consideration of Feedback). The results of the annual evaluation and analyses are compiled, agreed upon in the annual evaluation meeting and then presented to the Pallas Council for comment and approval. This annual evaluation as well as the recommendations from the Advisory Board constitute the basis for the following year's plan, as was unanimously confirmed in the interviews. Improvement actions are communicated within the institution through workshops and discussion rounds, thus all internal stakeholders are well informed, as the panel heard in the interviews. Even though Pallas has a clear and well-established management structure, the panel gained the impression that as far as a structured and systematic documentation of the decision-taking procedures at different levels is concerned, a consistent approach throughout the institution still has to be further developed, streamlined, and clearly communicated.

The annual cycle of defining sub-objectives derived from the strategic objectives of the institutional Development Plan, the planning of activities, fixing intended results and deadlines, the implementation, evaluation and taking the results as starting point for the following year constitute a purposeful and systematic planning scheme (according to the Deming cycle) at institutional level, with the clear goal to live up to the institution's mission and vision. The delegation of decision-taking rights at other levels than the management level is, as already mentioned, somehow blurred, the systematic approach of cross-departmental study planning to strengthen cross-departmental collaboration still needs further encouragement and strengthening.

Pallas has set up various activity indicators that help monitoring the achievement of the intended objectives; these indicators are clear and fit for the purpose.

Core values - *Courage, Creativity, Openness, Liability and Freedom* – are among the guiding principles of Pallas and receive a special focus in the current Development Plan. The panel could hear in the interviews several convincing examples for how these core values underpin Pallas' daily work and are made sustainable as shaping characteristics of Pallas even after the specific focus years.

Pallas is the only University of Applied Sciences for arts in Estonia and considers its special focus on the development of skills as its distinctive feature (M, T, S and E) and strength, what is particularly valued by students and employers as the panel was confirmed. Skills enhancement nurtures creativity and courage as was underlined in the interviews by staff, alumni and employers. Cooperation with national and international universities and HEI for arts education serve as driver for the attainment of Pallas strategic objectives and as partners for Pallas as a learning organisation (SER, M, T) as current cross-border projects demonstrate (T, M).

Conclusion

Based on the written documentation provided and the information given and gained in the various interview rounds during the on-site-visit, the panel concludes that Pallas has purposefully set up its current development plan and key objectives based on its vision and mission and involvement of all

groups of internal and external stakeholders. A visionary management team - in office only since a few months - with a sound sense of their responsibility as to the achievement of the set strategic objectives and an open mind for the needs of a future-oriented arts education monitors planning and evaluation in cooperation with the respective institutional bodies and staff. Students have a strong voice at Pallas, their input is taken up and valued. Pallas has developed a purposeful set of activity indicators that support evaluation and monitoring of the strategic objectives and related actions set out in the institution's development plan.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 1.

Strengths

- Pallas has a dedicated management team with a clear vision of where to take the institution in the next years and thus achieve the purposefully set strategic objectives. Committed and passionate staff and students support the endeavours of the management team of well-targeted planning and evaluation.
- Students at Pallas have a strong voice, their input is valued and taken up, stakeholders are well involved in planning the institution's development.

Opportunity for further improvement

- The panel recognises the benefits of being a small institution with smooth and short ways for communication and decision making. However, it also sees the risks that this informal approach might bring, particularly with regards to clarity, and the binding nature of processes and guidelines. Therefore, to ensure consistency across all departments and units, a systematic approach to planning and decision making is implemented and responsibilities clearly communicated, understood, and respected. The panel recommends Pallas to formalise and document its strategic management and decision-making structures and related processes at all levels of the institution and thus strengthen clarity and the binding nature of processes and procedures.

1.2.   Resources

Standard:
The higher education institution develops its staff and manages its physical and financial resources in a purposeful, systematic and sustainable manner.
Internal and external communications of the higher education institution (including marketing and image-building) are targeted and managed.

Guidelines:
The HEI has an efficient staff development system in terms of both academic and support staff. The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development are based on the objectives of the HEI's development plan and are fair and transparent. The principles for employees' remuneration and motivation are defined, available to all employees, and followed. Allocation of the HEI's financial resources is based on the objectives of its development plan. The management and development of its infrastructure (buildings, laboratories, classrooms, IT systems, etc.) are economically feasible. Sufficient resources are available for updating the infrastructure for education and research, and/or a strategy exists enabling the HEI to acquire them.
The HEI has a functioning system for internal and external communications, relevant to the target audiences. The information made public about HEI's activities (including study programmes) and the findings of external evaluations is correct, up to date, easily accessible and understandable. The HEI has a system to popularise its core activities and academic career opportunities. The HEI members are informed of the decisions relevant to them in a timely manner.
Employee satisfaction with management, working conditions, information flow, etc., at the HEI is surveyed regularly and the survey results are used in quality improvement activities.

Indicators:
•	Distribution of revenues and costs
•	The results of the staff satisfaction survey
•	Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

According to the institution's SER the long-term strategic objectives for personnel management are outlined in the Pallas Development Plan and the activities needed to achieve them are planned in annual action plans. These planned activities are based on the feedback from staff and department head as the panel heard in the interviews where department heads confirmed their contribution to the plan. According to the Motivation Rules of Pallas, the heads of structural units organise development interviews with their staff at least once every three years, and the Vice-Rectors and the Rector with the structural units at least once every two years (SER). However, as heard during the discussions at the site visit, the staff development system for both academic and support staff is not standardised and structured across the school (T, M). Some department heads conduct regular evaluation meetings and track the records, but some do not (T, M) or do them in an informal way.

To capture development needs and assess staff performance in teaching and research performance appraisals with members of the teaching staff are to be held annually. The panel learned, however,

that these are not consistently executed throughout the institution nor uniformly documented: in some cases, they are held annually, in some cases every three years, or even only very sporadically and informally (M, T). The panel sees problems with this approach as the information from these development discussions and meetings can only partially be taken forward in a binding and development-oriented way. Even though Pallas formally evaluates all members of the teaching staff according to the evaluation plan and procedure, the unsystematic approach to performance appraisals does not support the development of members of the teaching staff in a structured way nor does it allow a consistent reviewing and assessment of the academic and research structure, and allocation of workload.

Pallas staff training is based, among others, on staff feedback surveys and the need for improvement identified through evaluations (SER). According to the surveys which are done regularly with a three-year interval, the general employee satisfaction rate is relatively high: according to the 2019 employee satisfaction survey, 82% of the respondents found that working in Pallas offers excellent opportunities for self-development. The so-called "free semester" for gaining international experience was seen as an important opportunity for staff development (T). The principles for motivating staff are set out in the Motivation Rules and are appreciated by staff.

Vacancies are generally filled by open competition. The recruitment of staff for the academic and research positions, as well as for the support and administrative structure, takes into consideration the applicant's qualifications, professional experience and motivation to contribute to the organisation. Recruitment procedures and requirements are based on the Pallas development plan, its objectives and Pallas internal guidelines. They are transparently documented and follow the principles of fairness. In relation to the amendment of the employment contracts of academic staff to make them valid for an unspecified term, and the implementation of the related assessment system, there are, however, fewer competitions for academic posts, and they usually occur when an employee leaves Pallas (SER). Succession can pose a risk to teaching in case staff leaves or retires (M, T) particularly as Pallas does not have a staff succession or drop-out plan as the panel heard in the interviews (M, T). This can be somehow smoothed out by the learning positions, which are offered to five to eight learners in formal education among the staff, for Master and Doctoral studies (SER), but does not constitute a solid "back-up" for unexpected or even foreseen decline in staff numbers.

Remuneration is based on the pay grades described in the salary regulations and its annex (SER). The panel learned from written documentation (SER), and the interviews during the site-visit, remuneration poses a risk particularly to the recruitment of qualified teaching staff (M, T). According to the SER, while updating the salary scale, the salaries, duties, responsibilities, and other criteria of positions were analysed comparatively in 2018 and have to be judged as rather low with regards to the average salary of teaching staff in Estonia. The panel recognises the risk and the limitations related to the low-level salaries. The panel acknowledges that the institution's budget has not allowed to maintain an adequate salary level and that consequently, it has become increasingly challenging to attract and involve recognised experts in teaching. The panel learned that these circumstances have led to a relatively high amount of part-time faculty, with faculty working for other Estonian HEI's in addition to professional work at Pallas.

The budgeting principles are clear and conservative, and financial reporting is accurate (SER, M). The SER identifies a clear plan to maintain and possibly increase the current level of operating support by

paying attention to performance indicators, such as graduation within the standard period of study, international student exchange, own income generation and alumni employment.

Financial resources are provided by the state, and they are sufficient for only maintaining and continuing the infrastructure for education; for research, no national funds are being allocated to institutions of professional higher education. (SER, M, T). Yet, the panel heard that even though the funds allocated to the management and development of the Pallas infrastructure are limited (SER, M, T), equipment has been renewed and was particularly welcome by students and teachers (S, T). In the interviews, staff pointed out the identified need to be active in discussions on Estonia's Higher Education funding system raising the points of concern and in shaping this in the future. The panel acknowledges this need and encourages Pallas to become active in this respect. In the interviews the panel heard from students that they would appreciate a more trans-departmental cooperation and that this could also alleviate the situation of scarcity of space, as a more condensed teaching of some cross-disciplinary courses would save space and time needed.

Internal and external communications have been improved since the previous Institutional Accreditation with impressive initiatives and clear targets having resulted in a clearly better performance (SER, M, S). The panel confirms that Pallas' internal and external communication systems are functioning, well-managed and targeted particularly with regards to external communication. Marketing and image building are well organised and development plans for further improvements are clearly set. For internal communications Pallas has set up a system which functions well in many respects: thus, communication between the institution and students is kept timely and transparent (M, S), staff are systematically kept informed through the accessibility of documents and newsletters, but at some points the communication between departments and management staggers due to a blurred line of responsibilities as the panel also heard in the interviews.

There exist clear goals for further development of the new Pallas website; the panel supports this endeavour, as currently the external communication via the institution's webpage is limited. External communication also involves social media platforms, which has a positive impact on enrolling more motivated students to Pallas (M, S). External communication is well-targeted, and Pallas has a functioning system to popularise its core activities (M, S, T). The areas of "Communications" and "Service to Society" are exceptionally well aligned. The information related to Pallas' activities is public, most can be found from their official website.

Employee satisfaction with management, working conditions, information flow, etc., at the HEI is surveyed regularly and the survey results are used in quality improvement activities. According to the surveys, staff satisfaction with working conditions and management is high, for internal communication there is some room for improvement (see above) and the salary issues is a topic of worry and concern.

Conclusions

The planning of long-term strategic objectives for personnel management and personnel development outlined in the Pallas Development Plan as well as the activities needed to achieve them as mentioned in the annual action plans was only partially confirmed in the on-site interviews. The development of Pallas staff and managing its physical and financial recourses does not happen in a consistent structured and systematic way throughout the institution, and thus lacks sustainability and targeted competence development. There is no consolidated institutional competence development plan for

academic and administrative staff. Pallas staff is highly committed to its tasks, nevertheless low salary levels constitute a risk to filling vacancies and further full-time engagement with Pallas. As space and financial resources are limited, cross-departmental cooperation for interdisciplinary courses needs reflection and encouragement. External communication is professionally managed and targeted and uses various channels and sources. Internal communication is based on a well-developed system with only minor weaknesses due to blurred attribution of responsibilities. Marketing and image building are well organised and enhanced by a highly committed staff member. The development plans for further improvements are clearly set.

The panel concludes that Pallas partially conforms to Standard 2.

Strengths

- The communication between the institute and students is kept timely, transparent and collegial, staff is kept informed and up to date through various information channels.
- External communication is well-targeted, and Pallas has a functioning system to popularize its core activities. The areas of "Communications" and "Service to Society" are exceptionally well aligned.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Based on the Higher Education Act implemented in 2019, evaluating the teaching staff member should be done based on an evaluation plan and procedure. A systematic structure for this evaluation work needs to be in place to ensure the development of the teachers and enable reviewing of the curriculum, academic and research structure, taught subjects and workload. As the Pallas approach to execute appraisal and evaluation procedures lacks consistency throughout the institution, the panel recommends standardising and structuring staff evaluation procedures and their execution throughout the institution and implement a consistent documentation and follow-up system.
- The partially informal and unstructured approach to development and appraisal meetings risks missing essential information in relation to the development needs of staff. The panel therefore recommends that competence development needs raised by individual staff or in response to new challenges (e.g., Covid and digital teaching) are captured systematically and an institutional competence training plan is developed accordingly.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Both students and alumni strongly expressed the wish to learn more in an interdisciplinary context with peers from other programmes. Thus, the panel recommends rethinking the allocation of space and rooms and the opportunities that may arise from cross-departmental and interdisciplinary teaching for students of more than one programme.
- Staff is the institution's capital for teaching and research, yet recruitment of qualified staff is getting more and more difficult. In preparation for staff leaving the institution, the panel recommends setting up a succession plan and capture potential risks in a simple risk management plan.

1.3.   Quality Culture

Standard:
The higher education institution has defined the quality of its core and support processes, and the principles of quality assurance.
In the higher education institution, internal evaluation supports strategic management and is conducted regularly at different levels (institution, units, study programmes).
The findings of internal and external evaluations are analysed, and quality improvement activities implemented.

Guidelines:
Members of the HEI have agreed upon definitions for the quality of their core and support processes and are guided by them in their daily work. The HEI has established its policies and procedures for internal quality assurance (internal evaluation). The regular internal quality assurance both at the institutional and study programme level takes into account, inter alia, the standards set out in these Guidelines. All members of the HEI, including students and external stakeholders, participate in internal evaluations.
Internal evaluation of study programmes results in feedback from experts within the HEI and/or from outside it. Regular reviews and enhancements of study programmes ensure their relevance, including their compliance with international trends. In the course of internal evaluations, peer learning, comparisons with other HEIs regarding their results and means for achievement, as well as a sharing of best practices take place, among other things.
Internal evaluation is based on the following key questions in quality management: What do you want to achieve, and why? How do you want to do it? How do you know that the activities are effective and will have the desired impact? How do you manage the quality improvement activities?

Indicators:
•   Improvement activities implemented based on the analyses of internal evaluations in the HEI's core and support processes (examples from different areas)
•   Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

According to the institution's SER, quality and quality understanding at Pallas are embedded in the management of Pallas as well as in its core and support processes and daily work, as was confirmed in the on-site interviews (M, T). The interpretation of what quality means in daily work ranges from attitude, skills' development to cooperation and the use of research networks (T) according to the respective range of activities and tasks.

Quality requirements for curricula as set out in the Curriculum Statutes refer to the programme's contribution to fulfil Pallas' mission and to achieving the institution's stipulated goals; furthermore, the needs of the labour market as well as of the target groups (learners) shall be taken into consideration. Quality characteristics for programmes are described as professionally active faculty, high quality of graduates and success of alumni (SER). These features were underpinned by examples given in the interviews (M, A, E).

References to quality issues are integrated into Internal documents such as e.g., Curriculum Statutes, Procedure for Collection and Consideration of Feedback. Furthermore, Pallas is guided by national

regulations (HAKA) and European Standards (ESG). (SER, M). Even though quality as guiding principle is embedded (M, T) in all activities of Pallas and its staff, and the panel could sense an implicit common understanding of quality and quality culture, the interpretation of its meaning as well as binding quality principles are not consistently formulated and documented and thus not stringently applied.

The implicitly underlying quality principles at Pallas are derived from the institution's aims to maintain art education in specialties that are important traditionally and in the context of Estonian culture and history and strive for a balanced development of all curricula offered (SER). Fostering applied and practice-based skills within an academic framework and thus successfully prepare students for careers in the creative industries, is another quality principle just as promoting the development of a creative society. Curricula are based on the needs of society and the labour market and ensure the competitiveness of graduates on the labour market, in their creative activities and in continuing education as the panel was confirmed in the interviews (A, T, E). These principles shape teaching as well as research and activities directed to the regional, national, and international environment.

Quality management at Pallas follows the Deming cycle at all institutional levels, thus forming mostly closed cycles of planning, doing, checking (Pallas prefers to use studying) and acting. **Planning** takes into account all institutional issues such as resources (human and material), finances and budgeting, and starts at management level with setting up the five-year development plan as well as the annual action plans; both are based on the analyses of the results of the preceding period and year as well as on discussions and meetings with internal and external stakeholders. **Doing** focuses the implementation at institutional and departmental level as well as the related actions necessary to achieve implementation; at departmental level implementation and actions lie within the responsibility of the line managers; **Checking** focuses on monitoring and assessing action results at different levels and capturing feedback from various sources and groups. **Acting** comprises deriving measures and improvements from the analyses and results obtained. A set of key indicators help monitoring the achievement and signal well the performance in terms of quality requirements. This management cycle is regularly executed and constitutes a solid basis for the quality development of the institution. In the interviews the Panel could hear many examples of how this participatory approach works and is applied; students' feedback is well considered, and so is the feedback from employers, alumni and Advisory Board members. Yet even though there are defined formal meetings and discussion rounds, the informal approach is often chosen, obviously because Pallas is a small institution where everyone knows everybody (T, M) and informality tends to prevail.

Pallas QMS (Quality management system) is rooted in a system of internal evaluations, surveys and assessments which determine what shall be achieved and what for (results), the activity linked to a specific assessment (how do you want to do it?), the use of the results as well as the frequency and deadlines of assessments. All this is laid down comprehensively in the" Procedure for Collection and Consideration of Feedback at Pallas University of Applied Sciences" document which describes the type of survey, the purpose and objectives, the responsibilities as well as the frequency of the specific survey. Internal assessment types also comprise analyses, reports, discussions and workshops, performance appraisals, inventories as well as the results of audits. Students, staff, and external stakeholders are involved according to the objective of the survey or assessment. Quantitative indicators are in place (SER) and are used for monitoring and evaluation. Stakeholders involved are learners (all types of students), employees, practice supervisors, alumni, employers as well as participants in continuing education. According to the SER, the regular assessment of the activities of faculty members – the so-called attestation procedure and performance appraisals – is based on

transparent guidelines and designed to constitute an important feature of Pallas QMS as it can support both recognition of performance as well as personal development. Activities of faculty members are to be assessed in three fields of performance: - academic activities, including continuing education - research, development, and creative work (RDC), professional development and improvement of organisation, assessing the faculty members' personal development and their contribution to the improvement of the organisation. Staff appraisal interviews shall also focus the development of staff. External evaluations and audits complement the internal assessment scheme. A set of guidelines and regulations for various issues regarding students, staff or operations, form a sound and solid basis for Pallas QMS.

During the interviews the panel learned that particularly in the field of staff development the informal and partially inconsistent approach prevails, and that consistent documentation as basis for further enhancement has not yet been uniformly implemented; thus, closing the loop of the PDCA cycle still needs a more stringent approach.

The responsibility for the quality of study programmes lies with the curriculum council which comprises representatives of the academic staff, representatives of the respective professional field and at least one student member. The further development of the quality of teaching and learning, and thus of the curricula, as a core process is based on a regular and systematic analysis of learning activities, on feedback from students and external stakeholders. Student feedback refers to organisational aspects (1st year and 3rd year), on subjects (once a semester), as well as on practical training units (end of a study year). Alumni surveys are organised every three years, employers' feedback is collected on various occasions such as meetings, events, in meetings of the final projects' committees. An overall review of each programme is done on a regular basis, national and international trends, labour market requirements as well as feedback and survey results feed into the review process. Comparison with programmes of other institutions either based in Estonia or abroad also support the further development of the quality of study programmes. All these activities reflect the institution's vision to be a recognized centre of art education for creative minds and the development of a creative and sustainable society.

Pallas has defined a set of activity indicators which help monitoring the achievement of its strategic objectives but also allow measuring improvements in the quality of education, organisational structures, and outreach to society in various forms over certain time periods.

Pallas considers itself as a learning organisation and learning from each other happens through collaboration of staff members in subject teaching and project execution, in meetings, discussions, working groups, through information systems and direct feedback. However, a consistent and clear quality policy as to cooperation and institutional learning still needs to be developed. Implemented improvement actions are documented.

Conclusions

Pallas has set up and implemented a purposeful Quality Management System which supports the overall management of the institution as well as its core processes. Quality management tools and procedures are described in various documents available in the intranet of the institution. These tools comprise surveys, feedback questionnaires as well as discussion rounds and meetings and involve internal and external stakeholders. A set of indicators support the analyses and evaluation of improvement results particularly with regards to the core process of education. Quality culture and

quality thinking are obviously inherently embedded in Pallas management and its core processes, quality and review processes for study programme development are implemented. However, documented common guiding principles and Quality assurance policies need to be developed to create a consistent approach to quality issues throughout the entire institution and all programmes. Monitoring cycles of how departments attend to quality processes should be included in the QMS to reduce if not eliminate on overly informal approach. Furthermore, a common definition of quality referring to the core processes of Pallas as well as assessment principles need to be developed and formally agreed upon.

The panel concludes that Pallas partially conforms to Standard 3.

Strengths

- Pallas has developed a purposeful set of evaluations and surveys, that comprehensively capture the feedback from internal and external stakeholders. International cooperations also contribute to the enhancement of the quality of Pallas curricula.
- Quality culture is inherently anchored in Pallas approach to education, teaching is shaped by the outcomes of regular and systematic analysis of learning activities as well as feedback from students and external stakeholders.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- To ensure a common and overall understanding of quality of teaching, research, and service to society, and firmly anchor this understanding within the institution, the panel recommends that Pallas develops common definitions and principles for quality and assure dissemination among all Pallas staff and stakeholders; furthermore, this common understanding needs to be firmly rooted in all the programmes to provide equal and quality-driven learning experiences for all students.
- The panel furthermore recommends Pallas that it collates, centralizes, and documents its approach to quality assurance including policies, quality procedures, models and indicators articulating the place of quality assurance, quality compliance, and quality enhancement within the institution's approach. Furthermore, the panel recommends analysing risks to quality, and using that risk analysis for quality development.

Opportunities for further improvement

- A Quality Handbook usually comprises consistently and comprehensively all quality issues, so that both internal and external stakeholders can share the common principles, tools, surveys, and questionnaires. The panel recommends Pallas create such a document and locate it transparently at the disposal of all students and staff.

1.4 Academic ethics

Standard:
The higher education institution has defined its principles for academic ethics, has a system for disseminating them among its members, and has a code of conduct including guidelines for any cases of non-compliance with these principles.
The higher education institution has a functioning system for handling complaints.

Guidelines:
The HEI values its members and ensures that all its employees and students are treated according to the principle of equal treatment.
Employees and students of the HEI are guided by the agreed principles of academic ethics in all their activities.
The HEI respects fundamental values and policies of research set out in the document, 'Research Integrity', issued jointly by Estonian research institutions, the Estonian Academy of Sciences, the Estonian Research Council and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

The HEI supports its students and teaching staff in their understanding and responding to ethical issues. Teaching staff and students do not tolerate academic fraud, including cheating and plagiarism, and they will act immediately upon any such occurrence.

Management of complaints from HEI members (including discrimination cases) is transparent and objective, ensuring fair treatment of all parties.

Indicators:

•   The percentage of student papers checked by plagiarism detection systems and the percentage of detected plagiarisms

•   Other indicators depending on the HEI, for example statistics about complaints (total number, the proportion of decisions taken in favour of the applicant)

Evidence and analysis

According to the SER and interviews on-site, students and employees of Pallas are guided by the principles of academic ethics defined in the Pallas Internal Rules of Procedure, the Study Regulations, and the Guidelines for Final Projects. In its activities and organisational culture Pallas' community follows the core values described in the Development Plan 2021-2025 (*Courage, Creativity, Openness, Liability and Freedom*), as well as values of the good research practice (freedom, responsibility, honesty and objectivity, respect and concern, fairness, openness, and cooperation) which are followed

in RDC. In the interviews with staff and management, the panel was reassured that Pallas respects fundamental values and policies of research as set out in the Research Integrity Document.

The SER and interviews provided evidence that Pallas has a system for disseminating academic principles among its internal members – both students and teaching staff. Dissemination is done both in a formal (e.g., during lectures) and informal way (e.g., during individual feedback) and aims at fostering understanding academic ethics and responding to ethical issues. The processes to introduce students to the principles of Academic ethics (prevention of plagiarism and intellectual property) have been put into place and kept up to date through information sessions, guidelines for written papers, rules for final projects, compulsory subjects 'Protection of Intellectual Property' and 'Written and Oral Communication in Estonian'. All written parts of final student projects at Pallas are subject to a plagiarism check using the plagiarism checker URKUND. Results so far have demonstrated the serious approach of students towards this issue, with a very few exceptions as mentioned below.
Employees are bound to Academic ethic principles by applying the Pallas Internal Rules of Procedure with which they are familiarised already upon recruitment. Fair treatment of students is dealt with in the admission and study rules and regulations. Only quite recently, Pallas has signed the *Estonian Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* document issued jointly by Estonian research institutions, and, according to the interviews, will consequently apply the respective rules.

Pallas has a functioning system for handling complaints with regards to academic fraud or breach of principles of fair treatment, described in the SER and confirmed in on-site interviews: the person who discovers a violation of academic ethics or suspects improper behaviour notifies the head of the specialty department, who in turn files a report to the Rector (SER, M, T). The Rector will set up a committee to investigate the circumstances and, if the violation is proven, the committee will propose to the Rector, that the student be reprimanded or expelled (SER, T).

There have been five letters of reprimand for errors related to creative work from 2017-2021, three of which were for student misconduct in the form of plagiarism and two for breaches of academic ethics (SER). In the interviews the panel was assured that Pallas does not tolerate academic fraud, including cheating and plagiarism, and that actions are taken immediately upon any such occurrence or incidence. In case of suspicion of breaching academic ethics rules or in the event of complaints, an Ethics Committee will be set up to investigate the issue more closely and decide on any consequences. Even though this procedure seems to work well, the panel thinks that by setting up a new committee each time and not having a continuing working committee of academic ethics representing students, teachers and external stakeholders, to be directly addressed (not through the head of the department and later Rector), ensuring transparency, objective management of complains and fair treatment of all parties may be put at stake. Furthermore, common principles of equity, fairness and non-discriminatory practices should be included in the respective Rules and Guidelines.

Conclusions

Students and employees of Pallas are guided by the principles of academic ethics defined in the Pallas Internal Rules of Procedure, the Study Regulations, and the Guidelines for Final Projects. Pallas respects fundamental values and policies of research set out in the document 'Estonian Code of Conduct for

Research Integrity'. Processes to keep students introduced to the principles of Academic ethics (prevention of plagiarism and intellectual property) have been put in place and up to date.

The SER and interviews on-site provided evidence, that Pallas staff and students do not tolerate academic fraud, including cheating and plagiarism, and that they act immediately upon any such occurrence.

Although Pallas has a functioning system for handling complaints the panel is of the opinion that this system could be improved to better implement a transparent and objective management of complaints ensuring fair treatment of all parties.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 4.

Strength

- Pallas has developed a wide range of formats (information sessions, guidelines for written papers, rules for final projects, compulsory subjects, etc.) of how to repeatedly disseminate the principles of Academic ethics among its students.

Areas of Concern and Recommendations

- The Pallas Committee of Academic Ethics is set up only when a case arises. To ensure continuity and transparency in case of critical incidents the panel recommends setting up a permanent working committee of Academic Ethics, which should consist of members representing teachers, students, and external stakeholders. Furthermore, all members of the Pallas community should be able to address this committee directly in cases of academic ethics violation.
- The panel also recommends the compilation of one document on ethics that would provide a description of its principles applied by the Pallas community to all activities, including a reference to the 'Academic Integrity' document as a binding document. Furthermore, the panel recommends widening the spectrum of ethics and include principles for equity, fairness and non-discriminatory practices and define a systematic approach with clear attribution of responsibilities for handling academic as well as non-academic complaints and ethical issues.

1.5 Internationalisation

> *Standard:*
> **The higher education institution has set objectives for internationalisation and assesses the attainment of these objectives regularly.**
> **The higher education institution has created an environment that encourages international mobility of students and teaching staff, supporting the development of learning, teaching and RDC activities, as well as the cultural openness of its members and Estonian society in general.**

Guidelines:
The HEI creates opportunities for international student exchanges by offering study programmes and/or modules taught in English. The learning environment at the HEI supports internationalisation and cultural openness.
Recognition of qualifications and recognition of prior learning and work experiences for student admission and programme completion are in accordance with the quality requirements set by the HEI, are systemic and consistent with the expected learning outcomes and support international student mobility. The organisation of studies at the HEI facilitates student participation in international mobility (e.g., study programmes enable mobility windows). The HEI has agreements with foreign higher education institutions and, through international exchange, sends its students abroad to study and undertake internship, providing comprehensive support for this. Members of the teaching staff encourage students to participate in international mobility.
International lecturers participate in the process of teaching, including supervision of doctoral theses.
The HEI supports and recognises the participation of its teaching staff in international teaching, research or creative projects, as well as their teaching, research or creative work and personal development which are performed at HEIs abroad.

Indicators:
- Teaching staff mobility (in-out)
- Student mobility (in-out)
- Other indicators depending on the HEI, for example:
  - Number of English-taught study programmes by main units and levels of study
  - Percentage of foreign students (by study programmes, levels of study, in total in the HEI)
  - Percentage of study programmes that include English-taught subjects (of at least 15 ECTS)
  - Number of ECTS acquired through external mobility

Evidence and analysis

Internationalisation impacts across several functions of a higher education institution linking education, partnerships, mobility, research, service to society, and staff development and programmes.

Pallas has set objectives for internationalisation with opportunities occurring throughout the college for staff and students both in terms of inward and outward mobility and partner engagement internationally. The Development Plan 2021 to 2025 references internationalisation through a set of key strategic objective for Pallas, these include the development of graduates who will have acquired a high-quality education and international experience and curricula that are in line with international developments in the field. Internationalisation as laid down in the document Internationalisation Principles of Pallas University of Applied Sciences. The attainment of objectives is assessed by the International Manager as part of her annual review of progress on international work.

The SER and the above-mentioned document outline a range of activities across Pallas that are described as international activities, including staff and student mobility and international partnerships. The institution through the international manager encourages mobility opportunities for staff and students. In the meeting on internationalisation the International Manager told the panel

that returning students and staff make presentations on their visits as a way of encouraging mobility and also as a way of disseminating good practice.

Although it is widely referenced in the documentation it was not clear what Pallas means by internationalisation across all areas and what the overall strategy for internationalisation and the vision is. In the meetings with the Rector and Vice Rectors they articulated a clear intention to develop Pallas as an international institution. During the session on internationalisation the panel met the international manager who was clear and articulate on her role and on the development of internationalisation across the college, she reports to the rector and vice rector and has responsibility for all aspects of internationalisation management.

In the interview session on internationalisation the panel was given examples of international activities which included partnerships, exchanges, and international projects. In meetings with management and teaching staff the panel asked what internationalisation of the curriculum means for Pallas. There was less clarity around internationalisation within the curriculum and no clear plan for developing this area in a strategic and systematic fashion although some individual staff did give good examples of how they incorporated global ideas and trends in their subjects.

On an institutional level there is a stated intention to internationalise the Pallas curricula, and objectives for this are set out in the Development Plan 2021 to 2025. Yet a clearer and more systematic plan for internationalisation of the curriculum is needed in line with the objectives set in the development plan, as is not clear what form internationalising the curricula will take and how staff will be supported in this. Internationalism needs to be in the curriculum via learning outcomes according to the internationalisation manager, and the panel agree that this is an area in need of further development. The panel heard in the international meeting and in the meeting with academic staff and students of foreign lectures which were delivered as online sessions during Covid which had proven to be very popular and that this may be an area for further development supported by the panel.

International admissions are clear in that it is stated that "international students apply on equal terms with Estonian students;" it is also stated that a year of English study and a year of Estonian study is available for those who need it prior to joining Pallas (SER). International students' arrival and induction processes are referenced. The principles document states that Pallas develops the tutoring and counselling system for foreign visiting students (P). The integration of foreign (visiting) students into local life involves the Pallas Student Council and the organisations that support foreign students. The panel heard from the librarian and other staff members that they support international students as does the international manager, and that a joint approach is taken by the college and the Student Union.

The website has a dedicated section for international students focusing on health welfare and residency issues which contains some useful information.

There is good statistical evidence provided on international mobility (SER). Teaching staff mobility is recorded as is student international mobility, and the proportion of foreign students (SER). The SER lists foreign experts and vising teaching staff. The main objective of staff mobility is cited as to enhance

the professional, linguistic, and cultural competences and horizons of staff. The SER states that the knowledge, skills, and experience gained from visits to higher education institutions, organisations and companies abroad are shared with colleagues and students. In the meeting with alumni and employers the panel met students who had been on exchanges to Portugal and to Austria and who reported a positive experience. The panel also heard in this meeting that students who have been abroad give presentations on their experience to staff and students in the group, it was also reported that this happens with staff too, and this was confirmed in both meetings with teaching staff and academic management.

Several partnership arrangements are in place. There are staff mobility opportunities to attend conferences and to engage in partnerships, as well as in common research. In the meeting with academic staff and management the panel were given examples of international visits and events that staff had attended. The panel was also assured that staff is encouraged to participate in international mobility as a means of learning and competence development.

Cumulus and Nordplus network membership are in place with good examples given of activities associated with the projects, in the meetings with teaching staff confirming the importance of being in these kinds of networks and the benefits they had brough e.g., sharing good practice, opportunities for joint projects.

Erasmus mobility for students is in place with good range of partners although these are mostly outgoing students. Exchanges are not balanced with students coming in, this imbalance of students was recognized and commented on by the international manager and recognised as an area for improvement. The panel heard in the internationalisation meeting of some good practice in this area, e.g., a buddy system is in place for incoming students that is working well.

Pallas states that international students can choose courses from all curricula (SER). In 2020, An English-language set of three subjects was also created, which includes 'Art, Design and Cultural Heritage in Estonia' (3 ECTS), 'Meeting with an Artist in Residence' (2 ECTS) and 'Exhibition Project' (3 ECTS). The SER does state however that the numbers on these are low, and states that the creation of English modules was not sufficiently justified.

The panel queried the plans for more incoming international students and whether the consideration of more programmes or modules in English might help (M, T). The principles of internationalisation document states that here are plans to teach more in English which is one way to attract more international staff and students' (T, M). The panel heard in the interviews that the management is convinced that offering subjects in English will not only help transforming Pallas into a more attractive choice for foreign (visiting) students and academics but thereby also contribute to the formation of an international study environment for all Pallas students.

English language teaching for incoming students is dealt with on an individual basis (SER). The panel queried how this works in practice with academic staff and management and were informed that a small number of individual staff members can teach in other languages, the examples given were German and English, and that visiting students can be catered for in this fashion (T, M). This seems to

the panel to be an ad hoc approach to the development of teaching in English and to encouraging staff development in English.

The principles document states that Pallas motivates its employees to learn foreign languages. Yet, the information the panel received in the internationalisation meeting and in meetings with teaching staff confirmed that the development of the English skills of staff is not done in a very structured way.

Attracting more incoming international students means that a higher education institution is faced with students from a range of cultures and backgrounds. Intercultural and diversity training / cultural awareness training was not referenced in the documentation nor is information on dealing with the issues of Equality Diversity and Inclusion (SER).

 In the meeting on internationalisation the panel was told that the international manager had been on cultural awareness and other training herself but that this did not seem to be widely promoted to staff. In the meetings with teaching staff the panel did not hear of any staff who had been on this type of training. This should be better developed as part of staff development across the college.

Conclusions

Pallas has a plan in place to develop as an international higher education institution including growing inward and outward mobility. Progress has been made in terms of partnership development, outward mobility and development and membership of international organisations. Pallas needs to revisit its development plan for internationalisation to consider more fully internationalisation at home with particular reference to internationalisation of the curriculum and staff development including English language development and cultural awareness training.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 5.

Strengths

- A good buddying system is in place for incoming international students.
- Students and staff formally share their experiences abroad to disseminate good practice and learning to others in Pallas and encourage colleagues to opt for international exposure as well.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Although Pallas has made some good progress in its internationalisation work there is little evidence of how internationalisation of the curriculum is understood across all academic areas and how embedding internationalisation in the curriculum is being addressed. The strategies for the development of foreign language learning for staff and for teaching in English are not well developed and implemented. The panel recommend the development of a more documented and strategic approach to the embedding of internationalism in and across the curriculum.
- Pallas makes several references to wanting to become an internationally recognised institution and to attracting more visiting foreign students. There did not appear to be any focus on cultural awareness or diversity training for staff to enable them to fulfil this ambition and to develop a greater understanding of other cultures. The panel recommend the development of a more formal and cross college approach to cultural awareness training for staff.

1.6 Teaching staff

Standard:
Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of learners and value their own continuous self-development.

Guidelines:
Distribution of teaching staff by age and the percentage of young members of the teaching staff ensure the sustainability of studies. The career model of academic staff motivates capable young people to start an academic career and creates opportunities for their advancement.
The HEI supports systematically the development of its teaching staff. Members of the teaching staff engage in development of their professional and teaching skills, improve their supervision competence, and share best practices with one another.
Teaching staff's participation in research, development and/or creative activities supports the teaching process and ensures competence for the supervision of students' theses (including doctoral theses).
Members of the teaching staff collaborate in fields of teaching, research and/or creative work within the HEI and with partners outside the HEI, e.g. with field practitioners, public sector organisations, companies, other research and development institutions, and lecturers from other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions. Qualified visiting lecturers and practitioners participate in the teaching process.
When assessing the work of teaching staff (including their periodical evaluations), the effectiveness of their teaching as well as their research, development and creative work is taken into account, including student feedback, the effectiveness of their student supervision, development of their teaching and supervisory skills, their international mobility, and their entrepreneurial experience or other work experience in their fields of speciality outside the HEI.

Indicators:
• Competition for elected academic positions
• Number of students per teaching staff member in full-time equivalent (FTE)
• Percentage of teaching staff holding a PhD degree
• The results of the students' feedback about the teaching staff
• Teaching staff participating in continuing training or other forms of teaching skills development
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

The Pallas documentation (SER) contains detailed statistical information on staff including age profiles and gender profiles. As of 31 December 2021, Pallas had 86 employees, 64% of whom were academic staff, most of them part-time, and 36% support staff (including management). 160 visiting lecturers also worked at Pallas in 2021 (SER). A table shows the age distribution, the average age of permanent staff has increased slightly since 2017 but the average age of visiting lecturers has decreased. 35% of the visiting lecturers were alumni of Pallas (SER). The percentage of men among academic staff has also increased to a small extent. In the meetings with academic management and with teaching staff

the panel asked how part time visiting staff are kept informed about and involved in the development of Pallas e.g., around induction, quality developments, policy changes, changes to curricula. The response was mixed with some staff saying they found things out because Pallas is small and informal conversations can take place with other reporting that they would like more formal communications.

The theme of small and informal was a recurrent one. The panel was told many times, in meetings with staff, students, management and alumni for example, that Pallas was like a family, that everyone knew each other. The panel was told that this made communications easy as there was always someone to ask. Teaching staff said that they were happy and liked the friendly collegial approach and the openness of managers to talk, there was an open-door approach. The panel acknowledges the size and scale of Pallas and accepts that in a small organisation much communication takes place informally. The panel however is concerned that this overly informal approach has its drawbacks.

A case in point is the system of staff review and appraisal. Staff development takes place through formal procedures, such as 'development interviews' that take place on a regular basis every year, and through formal 'evaluations' (assessments) that are organised every three years. The principles of these assessments of academics are outlined in Annex 11 of the SER. During the formal attestation process records of the attestation committee are drawn up regarding the qualification awarded to the accredited lecturer. These records are registered in the document management system. However, in the meetings with management and with teaching staff the panel found that there is too much reliance on an ad hoc approach to the development review process. The panel was shown the formal review forms in place by the Rector, but the panel was also informed that often these reviews are held informally, some staff described coffee meetings or even meetings in corridors. In the meeting with senior management the panel were told there is no agreement to formally record the outcome of these reviews. The Rector would like to see a more formal approach to this aspect of the colleges work with staff. The panel supports this aspiration in the interest of transparency and equity and to ensure that year on year comparisons can occur.

Regular meetings also take place between staff at different seniority levels (SER) teaching staff confined this although again many of these appeared to take place on informal level. Academic staff move up the career ladder through assessment or competition. In addition, there is the possibility of a horizontal career within the post, through the variation of tasks, the completion of secondary and tertiary higher education and/or retraining (SER).

When assessing the work of teaching staff (including their periodical evaluations), the effectiveness of their teaching as well as their research, development and creative work is considered, including student feedback, the effectiveness of their student supervision, development of their teaching and supervisory skills, their international mobility, and their entrepreneurial experience or other work experience in their fields of speciality outside the HEI (SER). Yet, the panel could not see how this could happen in cases where no record of any review was kept as it learned that reviews very often happen in a very informal way and no records are kept in these cases.

In the interviews, students expressed their satisfaction with and high appreciation for teachers and highlighted the support they get in their skills' development and motivation for creativity. Students also brought forward examples of this.

The long-term strategic objectives for personnel management are outlined in the Pallas Development Plan and the activities needed to achieve them are outlined in annual action plans (SER). A personnel manager is in post who has responsibility for recruitment and selection and for employment matters (SER). Vacancies are filled by open competition. Academic appointments are governed by the rules for the selection of teaching staff (SER). In April 2020, the Pallas Council approved the qualification requirements for academic staff and the conditions and procedures for assessing compliance with them (Annex 10 of SER).

Pallas states that the recruitment of staff for the academic and research structure as well as for the support and administrative structure takes into consideration the applicant's qualifications, professional experience, and motivation to contribute to the organisation (SER). They are also interested in the artistic and creative practices of lecturers; a high percentage of their current staff are practising artists (SER). This was viewed positively by the panel. The SER outlines Pallas intention to use visiting lecturers as a way of involving practitioners in the field. Students were generally happy with the skills and qualifications of their lecturers and the support staff.

The percentage of staff with PhDs is comparatively low at 5.45% with a small increase from 5% in 2017 (SER). Many of Pallas staff are practising artists and have good track records of exhibitions, publications of works, however a more systematic approach to the growth of PhD bearing staff could be helpful in the development of Pallas and in achieving the stated desire to be recognised internationally (SER).

Annex 23 of the SER outlines the staff membership of professional associations and organisations which looks healthy and contains examples from staff across most disciplines. It is important for Pallas that, alongside the academic staff committed to the development of curricula and the achievement of Pallas' objectives, acclaimed theorists and practitioners in the field share their knowledge as visiting lecturers, thus enhancing the development of students' skills and competences. Staff-student ratios are good with 9.09 students per teaching staff member in 2021 (SER). The SER states that lecturers of creative subjects keep themselves informed of contemporary trends in art and design. The panel asked staff how they keep informed of contemporary trends; staff in the meeting said they attend conferences, read current material and some had international visits and experience. Students and alumni, the panel met were satisfied that their lecturers were professional, and highly regarded in their artistic field.

There is an induction system in place for new staff, staff are introduced to the work organisation and a range of documentation is introduced to the new employee and, if necessary, internal training is provided on the use of internal systems i.e., SIS/Tahvel, Webdesktop and other information systems (SER).

The continuous motivation of the professional development of the employees, support for their research, development and creative activities and training are based on individual needs related to assessment results and career interviews (SER). Staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is based on the identification of individual need but a systematic approach to strategic priorities around staff development is missing. The SER identifies CPD of staff and involving more staff in this as an issue. This was confirmed in the meetings the panel had with staff where the college approach to CPD

particularly pedagogical staff development is individual and ad hoc rather than strategic. A decision to support individual staff development rests with the manager. For example, the SER identifies the development of staff digital capabilities as an area for development, but the panel were not informed of a strategy to achieve this. Staff however were happy with the support and development they received during Covid.

Staff are encouraged to undertake international mobility and to see benefits of this to their own professional development. The SER outlines the mobility of staff. There is a good system in place of staff being able to take a semester off to pursue their artistic practices and a good spread of staff availing of this opportunity (SER). There is little or no reference to staff diversity and cultural awareness training and equality of opportunity. The only members of staff the panel met who had undergone this training was the international manager. In the context strategic objectives to increase the percentage of foreign visiting staff and students, this needs to be considered.

The Development plan 2021 to 2026 states that in 2019 62% of all employees were satisfied with the internal communications from Pallas, the target for 2025 is 75%.

Conclusions

Teaching at Pallas is conducted by a sufficient number of well qualified staff, and many are practitioners in their field who support students' learning and competence development in a motivating way. There are effective processes in place to recruit staff. Staff are highly regarded by the students. Staff development is in place but there are shortcomings in the strategic approach to this. Too many of the processes involving staff is informal, e.g., the development review and this is a major issue for Pallas particularly if they aspire to grow and to be recognised internationally.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 6.

Strengths

- Pallas has a significant percentage of visiting staff and part time lecturers based in industry or being current practitioners in their field who ensure that students are hearing what happens in the field and which developments the working field is facing.
- Pallas' teaching staff is strongly dedicated to educating creative minds and skilled graduates and is particularly supportive in competence development.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The downside for Pallas of having part time industry-based staff is that maintaining appropriate and meaningful communications with these staff who are not based on campus may be problematic. The panel recommends that better attention is given to integrating part time and guest lecturers into the institutional context and ensuring they are fully integrated into Pallas quality systems and processes including quality developments, policy changes or changes to curricula.
- Pallas has in place support for staff undertaking staff development activities. This is overly reliant on an ad hoc and informal approach with staff identifying possibilities for their own development and seeking support from their line manager. This may mean that specific areas

of development that are useful for all teaching staff or for departments are not systematically realised. The panel recommend that a more systematic approach is taken to strategic priorities around staff development to ensure the inclusion of pedagogical skills and innovative approaches to learning and research including digital skills for all teaching staff members.

- There is varying practise in how staff performance appraisal is conducted, and whether it takes place formally or informally and whether it is recorded. The over reliance on an informal approach to annual reviews is not helpful for staff in recording their progress and identifying development needs and for management in getting an overview of staff performance and progress. The panel recommend that Pallas review, standardise and formalise its performance appraisal systems for staff, particularly the annual development reviews to ensure that there is consistency across all departments and to ensure that appraisals are documented to ensure equity of process and to enable year on year review to take place. (See also standard 2).

1.7 Study programme

Standard:
Study programmes are designed and developed while taking into account the expectations of stakeholders, higher education and professional standards, and trends in the relevant fields.
The objectives of study programmes, modules and courses and their planned learning outcomes are specific and coherent.
The study programmes support creativity, entrepreneurship and development of other general competencies.

Guidelines:
In planning and developing study programmes (incl. programmes conducted in a foreign language), the HEI is guided by its objectives, its competence areas and the needs of the labour market and takes into account national strategies and the expectations of society. The study programmes are based on up-to-date sectoral know-how and research.
The planned learning outcomes are in accord with the requirements for the corresponding level of the Estonian Qualifications Framework, and in planning them the HEI has taken into account the future needs, among other things. In developing study programmes, the HEI has conducted a comparative analysis of similar programmes in leading foreign higher education institutions.
The objectives of the study programme and its modules, the planned learning outcomes, theoretical and practical learning, the proportion of independent work and internship, and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes form a coherent whole.
The development of general competences (incl. creativity and entrepreneurship) and support for the development of a self-directed learner is a natural part of the study programme, and these are integrated with speciality studies.
Expected student workloads defined in the study programmes are realistic and consistent with the calculation that, on average, 1 ECTS credit equals 26 student learning hours. The study programme offers sufficient challenge for learners with different levels of knowledge and skills.

Indicators:
- Number of students per study programme
- Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

The SER clearly states that Pallas' educational provision is based on the professional higher education curricula, which correspond to the Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Standard established with a regulation of the Government. All study programmes are conducted in Estonian. The curriculum group of the arts comprises seven programmes: (1) Photography; (2) Painting and Restoration; (3) Media and Advertisement Design; (4) Furniture Design and Restoration; (5) Leather design and restoration (6) Sculpture and (7) Textile. The curricula are aligned to the general requirements of level 6 of the Estonian Qualification Framework. Any curricula amendments, developments and modifications are approved by the Pallas Council.

In response to the feedback from the Evaluation Committee of the Curriculum Group of the Arts in 2017, meetings have been held between Pallas and the Estonian Academy of Arts to discuss curriculum development, the structure of the organisations and opportunities for cooperation, as well as the qualification requirements, duties and remuneration of teaching staff. The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs of Pallas, in cooperation with the Estonian Artists' Association, has initiated a round table on art education, which develops cooperation between the levels of art education (SER).

This development is ongoing to ensure that curricula are kept up to date and in line with developments in society. An important part of this is the comparison of curricula with other similar curricula in Estonia and abroad. Subjects are compared with those of other higher education institutions, among others, every time a Pallas student goes to study at a foreign higher education institution with the support of the Erasmus+ programme or when a foreign student comes to Pallas (SER).

Prior to visiting Pallas, the panel was provided with various documents, attempting to explain the process and procedure of the development of study programmes, including overall responsibility and final sign off. The documents left the panel with further queries which were addressed during the interviews with the Heads of three Departments. Following this, the panel was assured that all responsibilities relating to curriculum design, as well as forming productive staff / student relationships lies with the Heads of Departments. Each emphasising the importance of student feedback in any of their amendments, iterations, and developments during the annual review cycle. It was confirmed that the general structure of all Pallas curricula follows this design: specialisation module (forms largest part), general module, practice module split into various specialised parts, elective and optional courses, and final project (M).

When asked about the coordination of cross-institutional study opportunities for students, for example, in the form of collaboration and interdisciplinary working, the panel learned that this was done on a project-by-project basis, with consultation of the entire curriculum council and the advisory board. The examples described, i.e., Photography+ bookbinding with leather design, seem to maintain the focus on each subject as opposed to teaching across subjects and through this enabling each student to develop an interdisciplinary approach to their practice (M). The latter is clearly desired by students as the panel heard during interviews with various student groups, including the meeting with representatives of the student council. Considering the notion of 'community' being recognised as an overall strength across Pallas, the study programmes themselves mostly miss the opportunity of

working together as a community to support each other in enhancing their subject areas and therefore students' learning and the graduate profile. The lack of evidence for interdisciplinary opportunities for students contradicts one of the strengths stated by Pallas in the SER: the implementation of interdisciplinary creative projects promotes interdisciplinarity and cooperation. The benefits are clearly realised by the institution yet remain to be translated into practice.

The same applies to the integration of practice and theory, which was described as successful by some teaching staff who explained their approach as "project-based learning informed by critical study and research." However, despite being highlighted as another strength in the SER: 'There is a balance between theory and practice in curricula and they form a cohesive whole', the panel was not able to identify such approach or balance in each of the study programmes. The panel studied examples of the curricula and was able to ask students from the respective programmes about this issue. Based on this evidence, the view of the panel remains that the focus in Pallas programmes is clearly on the practice of each discipline and not so much on cultural, contextual, or critical study that might inform this practice and support the students in becoming critical thinkers who consider the impact of their artwork on the wider society.

This observation relates to the panel's investigation across the three selected programmes (Photography, painting and restoration, and textile) which demonstrated that too many subjects are attempted to be covered (S, T), leading to a high number of assessments and therefore a difficult to manage workload for students. This approach to curriculum design does not provide opportunities for students to explore any area of study in detail or engage in deeper, critical learning of the subject.

In response to the question of opportunities for students within their study programme to develop general competencies, especially in relation to entrepreneurship, some students stated that they are provided with an eclectic group of things they can choose from, such as marketing and teaching. Students commented that the teaching of these areas needed to be developed, they wanted to learn more about how they can promote themselves on social media and gain a better understanding about the economic side of their subject. Such view was echoed during the interview with alumni and employers, during which it was confirmed that Pallas provides base knowledge, but for many issues such as how to run your own business students have to ask for help. During the same interview it was confirmed that Pallas currently does not have a systematic approach to working with employers and the wider industry. The development of a framework and operational platform for setting up and maintaining work placements and internships for students with employers was suggested. Current practice is to set up these engagements in an ad hoc manner, without assurance of achieving parity across the student experience.

Conclusions

The Panel was impressed by the developments and improvements Pallas has made across the Study Programmes since the last accreditation to which a collegial approach has clearly contributed. The Panel found, however, that there was room for improvement in the curriculum design, particularly in the allocation of small credit units and related assessment practices. This finding is reflected in the assessment of the programme curriculum from speciality departments selected for this accreditation (Photography, Painting and Restoration, and Textile). There is also room for Pallas to improve the relationship between courses and teaching across subject areas and thus promote interdisciplinary

learning and meaningful collaboration to enhance students' opportunities to develop their global citizenship and critical thinking. It was clear that the objective to instil a spirit of independence and entrepreneurship is succeeding, via flexible study modes, internships, and work placement opportunities. There are opportunities to strengthen the relationships between employers and Pallas by developing a more systematic approach, and through this achieving parity in student experience.

The panel concludes that Pallas partially conforms to Standard 7.

Strength

- The strong and explicit practice orientation of Pallas curricula assure that students feel well prepared for the world of work and their future career.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The current curriculum design is characterized by fragmentation and small credit allocation per semester, so that students do not have the opportunity to engage in deeper learning of their subject. The panel therefore recommends that the Curriculum Council conducts a review of the number of small credit subjects across the study programmes and reflects on designing larger units that allow more in-depth learning for students.
- Related to the above, the students' workload created by too many small credit subjects/courses per semester and the aligned assessments is rather high and prevents critical reflection of subject matter and content. The panel recommends reducing the number of courses and consequently assessments to enhance the students' learning experience and skills' development.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The panel heard about effective approaches to project-based learning informed by critical study and research. A staff development event with focus on this approach could provide a great platform for sharing experiences across subject areas.
- Developing minors (15-20 ECTS) which the programmes can offer to students from other programmes, would give students opportunities for cross-disciplinary understanding, fosters thinking across borders, and enables creating flexible study paths.
- To foster thinking across borders with students the panel recommends forming stronger relationships between courses and teaching across subject areas and thus promote interdisciplinary learning and meaningful collaboration and enable students to develop their global citizenship.

1.8 Learning and teaching

Standard:
Admission requirements and procedure ensure fair access to higher education and the formation of a motivated student body.
The higher education institution systemically implements a student-centred approach that guides students to take responsibility for their studies and career planning and supports creativity and innovation.
Graduates of the higher education institution, with their professional knowledge and social skills, are competitive both nationally and internationally.

Guidelines:
Admission requirements and procedure are fair and impartial. In the admission process, student's ability for academic progress on the chosen programme is assessed.
The academic recognition of foreign qualifications is based on international conventions, agreements between countries, and the Estonian legislation.
Learning and teaching process takes into account students' individual abilities and needs and supports their development. Learning offers sufficient challenge for students at different levels.
Students participate in planning and implementation of the learning process. Organisation of independent work and face-to-face teaching motivates students to take responsibility for their studies.
Teaching methods and learning aids used in the learning and teaching process are modern, appropriate and effective and support the development of digital culture, contributing – among other things – towards the development of a self-directed learner, creativity, innovation and the development of other general competencies.
The internship is integrated with speciality studies, the requirements for the internship are defined and the student's supervision ensured.
Students are motivated to learn and contribute to improving the quality of their studies by providing meaningful feedback on both the learning and teaching process and the organisation of studies.
Doctoral students plan their studies, as well as their research and development activities, in collaboration with their supervisor(s), setting specific objectives for each year and assuming responsibility for achieving those objectives.

Indicators:
• Student satisfaction with the content and organisation of studies
• Alumni satisfaction with the quality of studies
• Employer satisfaction with the preparation of the graduates
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

Pallas has developed a fair and rigorous admission process with transparent and impartial student-admission criteria to attract and select the most motivated and dedicated students to its programmes (SER). The process is clearly outlined and guided by the Pallas Admission Rules and considers the Lisbon Convention in its application. Low dropout rates across the institution confirm the effectiveness of the process. The panel met a group of students during the institutional visit, all of whom spoke very complementary about the admission process. Students expressed their appreciation of the atmosphere and the warm welcome by the institution and valued the emphasis on mindset and

motivation rather than on an extensive portfolio. The latter is required from applicants for the Media and Advertisement programme and is one of the admission tasks for Painting and Restoration (S).

As outlined in the development plan the objective for 2020 was to ensure that Pallas receives at least two applications per student place on average during the admission period. The figure in 2021 was 4.27 applications per place. This places Pallas in a strong position. The move of admissions to the virtual space during the Covid-19 pandemic might have contributed to this increase, as the virtual format is more accessible for candidates, as well as providing additional flexibility to the institution.

Students are satisfied with the balance of practice and theory in their curriculum and support the emphasis on practical subject skills in their learning. In their view, this is the most important part of studying a creative subject in the arts. When asked about their development of general competencies (including creativity, entrepreneurship, and digital competency) they valued the choice offered to them, namely marketing, contemporary art and teaching, yet suggested that the list of electives and optional courses should be developed, especially the marketing part. They identified the following topics as currently missing: How to promote yourself, especially using social media; How to sell yourself / develop a business; and understanding the economic side of creative practice. Students acknowledged that some direct help with applying for funding is offered by the Head of Department, and some of these skills are taught during work placements and internships integrated in their speciality studies but felt this could be expanded upon. This sentiment was echoed during the interview with employers and alumni, in which it was suggested that Pallas could work more closely with employers to develop a framework or system that supports work placements and internship schemes to ensure these engagements meet the student needs and prepare graduates for future employment.

Students generally comment positively about the teaching offered by the institution, whether this is provided through individual tutoring to aid students' development as creative practitioners, through workshops and seminars related to their specialty subject, or their development of subject specific practical skills. One of the photography students described the skills she learned by working in the studio environment, how she was able to translate this into freelance work and has already earned money through this practical application. This is a good example of the effectiveness of teaching and learning at Pallas.

The learning of practical skills is most valued by students, alumni, as well as employers, and this was one thing that was particularly challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic as students had little or no access to the facilities. The panel learned during the interviews with students that students were provided with additional time to access facilities following lockdowns to enable them to make up for what had been missed. They all appreciated the effort made by the institution to support their studies during this time. The process of how to access any international and/or Erasmus opportunities was very clear to the students the panel met.

The panel also heard that students feel very supported by the institution in times of struggle. Whilst there is no helpline for mental health issues, students know that they can go straight to their Head of Department and receive guidance and advice on the matter. During interviews with teaching staff, the panel learned about an ongoing pilot project on mental health support for students led in the sculpture department. According to the tutor leading the pilot, initial findings are promising, and the project already shows potential to be useful for other areas within the institution.

When asked about opportunities to collaborate with other disciplines throughout their studies, students provided some good examples such as photographing the graduate show. There was a mutual agreement amongst the students that collaboration and joining philosophies across their subjects could be explored further, especially through collaboration that goes beyond single activities by engaging with each other's disciplines at a deeper level. The example of working more closely with the Media Department was highlighted as having the greatest potential for collaborative practices.

Students expressed mixed feelings about the feedback they received during evaluation sessions of their creative work. According to them, the quality of this feedback varied immensely between tutors: ranging from clearly demonstrated interest in student work and offering constructive feedback to treating feedback as something that had to be done.

Varying approaches to teaching and their level of successfulness emerged also during the interviews with teaching staff. The panel learned about innovative teaching practices in one of the programmes where the programme team has successfully combined analogue and digital teaching methods, preparing students for a changing working environment after graduation. At the same time, feedback from students captured in the SER highlights that only 56% of this group are satisfied with the use of contemporary teaching methods. This indicates that there is room for improvement in this area and that it is important to create staff development opportunities to address this issue and raise the level of student satisfaction.

Through representation in institutional bodies, as well as regularly captured feedback on lectures students have opportunities to contribute to the planning and improvement of their learning path and learning process. The panel were presented with convincing examples that students at Pallas have a strong voice and that this is heard and appreciated.

Conclusions

Pallas' admission, learning and teaching approaches conform to the requirements. The admission process is fair and rigorous, guided by transparent and impartial criteria. Students are generally satisfied with their education at Pallas. They particularly value the practical skills they learn and how these prepare them for future employment. Students receive comprehensive support ranging from advice on their creative development, study and pastoral support. The level of innovation in teaching methods varies across the institution and would benefit from the development of a productive approach to sharing practice amongst the teaching staff and systematic teaching competence development offers.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 8.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The panel heard about disparity in the student experience especially in relation to the evaluation of students' work and receiving constructive feedback. The panel recommends the development of guidance for tutors to ensure equity in this process and to support all students to develop their potential.
- The level of innovation in teaching methods varies across the institution. The panel saw some outstanding practice and heard about not so good practice too. The panel recommends

creating a learning environment for staff that enables teaching staff to learn from each other, make good practice visible and further develop teaching skills.

Opportunity for further improvement

- The panel recommends taking up students' suggestion to build upon the already existing sense of community and thus creating a learning environment that fosters collaboration across the disciplines.

1.9 Student assessment

Standard:
Assessments of students, including recognition of their prior learning and work experiences, support the process of learning and are consistent with expected learning outcomes.
The objectivity and reliability of student assessments are ensured.

Guidelines:
The assessment criteria are understandable to students and students are informed about them in a timely manner. Members of the teaching staff cooperate in defining assessment criteria and apply similar approaches.
Assessment methods are versatile and relevant, assess the degree of achievement of learning outcomes (including general competencies), and support the development of a self-directed learner.
If possible, more than one staff member is involved in the development of assessment tasks and student assessments. Along with assessments, students receive feedback that supports their individual development.
The HEI supports the development of teachers' assessment competencies.
Evaluation of doctoral students is transparent and impartial. Its purpose is to support the development of doctoral students, to assess the effectiveness of their current work and to evaluate their ability to complete the doctoral studies on time and successfully defend their doctoral theses.
When recognising prior learning and work experience towards the completion of the study programme, results obtained through the studies and work experiences (the achieved learning outcomes) are assessed. Students are aware of their rights and obligations, including the procedures for challenges regarding assessments.

Indicators:
•   The number of credit points applied for and awarded under the accreditation of prior and experiential learning scheme (APEL)
•   Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

The general assessment criteria are described in Pallas Study Regulations. During the interviews, students confirmed that the assessment criteria of a subject are presented to them when registering to a course in their Study Info System, however, it was also mentioned that the final assessment type

is sometimes unknown to the students until a few weeks into the subject (as in what the final tangible product of the course will be, in case of practical subjects). During the interviews with students and lecturers, it was also reported that often the process of learning is assessed and not the final project or material outcome, what helps students in their skills and competence development. The Study Regulations are the common basis for all teaching staff to apply similar approaches for assessments. Most assessments are individual, as art education focuses the individual development as was mentioned in the interviews with students and staff. All course descriptions contain intended learning outcomes, yet these are not consistently formulated throughout the institution.

The assessment methods are not described in detail in the Study Regulations or in the SER (other than "The theoretical and practical studies and the knowledge acquired are assessed by tests, examinations or defence") but students and staff confirmed in the interviews that they are versatile and fit for the purpose of assessing the degree of achievement of intended learning outcomes of a subject. For practices, assessments are formative, and the grades are differential or non-differential. The grade criteria are clear and transparent, although open to some subjectivity.

As to the development of self-directed learners, teachers mentioned in the interviews that they motivate students to produce their own ideas and "try things out", yet this could be done more intensively as mentioned in the SER where "shaping learners who manage themselves" is seen as their area for improvement. The alumni brought forward in their interviews that they felt well prepared to move into the workforce and were able to start their own businesses as well, which can be seen as a result of self-managing learners.

Assessment tasks are mostly designed by the respective teacher with regards to the intended learning outcomes of a subject or module, but in the interviews the panel learned that joint development of assessment tasks is encouraged and seen as a common learning process (T, M, SER). In the interviews with lecturers and staff, it was also mentioned that Tahvel has shared assessment criteria and subject description folders, accessible for all teachers. The painting department had a 2-day outing where the curriculum was analysed in detail and the assessment criteria were designed together in the case of general subjects (T, M). In the panel's opinion this example of good practice should be shared practice throughout all the departments.

In the case of theoretical subjects, it is brought out in the SER that at least one staff member is responsible for assessments and feedback. In the case of practical subjects and projects, there is always a committee of at least 3 members (at least 2 staff members and 1 guest member). It is also mentioned that lecturers provide students with regular feedback during the study process "because creative projects and practical work rely heavily on individual instruction" (SER). During the interviews, the students admitted that feedback is being given to them in various ways, depending on the lecturer and sometimes of varied quality, which supports the following data: According to the results of the study environment and organisation of feedback survey of 2020, 59% of responding students were satisfied with the feedback they received from the teaching staff (SER). Satisfaction has increased by 10% compared to 2017, when dissatisfaction with feedback was 28%, and by 2020 it had decreased to 15%. This data shows that the students are still not fully satisfied with the feedback given by the teachers (SER). In the interviews students highlighted the opportunity of getting feedback from teachers also in an informal way as the relationship between students and staff is very good and collegiate. Nevertheless, the panel encourages Pallas staff to organize regular and well-structured

feedback sessions to increase student satisfaction with feedback on assignments and learning progress.

The final project is defended in front of an assessment committee, the composition of which is approved by a directive of the Rector. The committee is composed of seven members, five of which are experts in their field or employer representatives from outside Pallas including at least one expert representative from abroad. (SER). In the interviews, employers and alumni confirmed the mutual benefit of this process which is also used to further develop assessments and content of curricula.

In the interviews the panel learned that the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs had participated in the general subject assessments to get an overview of the practices of the assessment process and to plan the necessary improvement activities (training of teaching staff to enhance their evaluation competences, clear guidelines for the formulation of assessment criteria and their application in the assessment, etc. In the interviews with staff and teachers it was made known that staff training regarding assessment competences is not yet sufficient and needs to be improved (T, M). Pallas itself also recognizes assessment competences of faculty members as an area for improvement (SER).

The RPL is meticulously organized and smoothly running, with enough support provided to students, while also assessing their results and work experience obtained through their work (M, S). The students confirmed that applying to RPL is simple for them and any assistance and information is provided to them by the Academic Affairs Office and the Academic Affairs Manager. The students also confirmed that they are aware of their rights and obligations regarding the RPL process.

The number of RPL applications has varied from year to year, depending largely on students' previous studies and experience. In 2017, 43 applications for 316 ECTS were approved, and in 2020, 74 applications for 1041 ECTS credits were approved, which estimates in 2017 on average about 8 ECTS credits per student and in 2020, about 14. This indicates that more students are aware of and use the possibility of RPL (SER).

Conclusions

Based on the provided information (written and verbal, during the interviews), the panel concludes that the students at Pallas are correctly and competently assessed. Currently all departments are allowed the freedom to work on the assessment criteria design on their own, but the panel suggests that all departments work together to create a systematized guide for assessment criteria and/or design the criteria together, as well as work on learning outcomes of subjects that need to be formalized and consistent throughout the courses. Feedback given to students is very personal due to the size of the school, nonetheless it should also be more structured and consistent throughout the departments and subjects. The faculty are competent to assess students, however assessment training for teachers should be intensified.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 9.

Strength

- Students are given feedback very personally by the teachers, focusing on their strengths, weaknesses and learning journey to help them learn more effectively and encourage them in their development. This kind of feedback is rare but encouraging and motivating and shows

how the smallness of the institution can be used for the benefit of students' learning experience.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The information on how and when students will be assessed does not happen with equal clarity throughout the institution. To ensure that students are clear when and how they will be assessed and that there is consistency and equity of process, the panel recommends that assessment processes and practices are reviewed and formally documented across the institution.
- Furthermore, to implement the above-mentioned consistency and equity of the information process and thus assure that students are all informed in time, the panel suggests applying measurable quality control checkpoints and stricter deadlines for lecturers to provide information on assessments.
- To ensure consistency and equal quality throughout all the assessments, the panel recommends formulating all course descriptions and learning outcomes consistently throughout the institution.

Opportunity for further improvement

- The panel recommend offering regular training for teachers on designing learning outcomes and assessment criteria to assure consistent alignment of content, teaching and assessment formats.

1.10 Learning support systems

Standard:
The higher education institution ensures that all students have access to academic, career and psychological counselling.
Students' individual development and academic progress are monitored and supported.

Guidelines:
The HEI assists the student in developing an individual study programme based on the student's special needs as well as educational abilities and preferences.
The HEI advises its students (including students with special needs and international students) on finding internship places as well as jobs. Students are aware of where to get support in the case of psychological problems.
The HEI has a functioning system to support and advise international students (including psychological and career counselling) which, inter alia, helps them integrate smoothly into the membership of the HEI and Estonian society. The HEI analyses the reasons students withdraw from studies or drop out and takes steps to increase the effectiveness of the studies.
In order to carry out studies and research, development and creative activities, the availability of up-to-date study and research literature, other study materials and tools (including those for independent work) and access to research databases is ensured. Study literature, materials and other teaching aids are of equally high quality.

To support study activities, timely and relevant information and communication technology solutions have been planned, including the study information system, document management, and e-learning environment.
The HEI supports student participation in extra-curricular activities and civil society initiatives.
The HEI monitors student satisfaction with the counselling services provided and makes changes as needed.

Indicators:
• The average duration of the study by levels of study
• Dropout/withdrawal rate (during the first year and the whole study period)
• Students` satisfaction with the support services
• Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

Students at Pallas can benefit from various support mechanism for their academic progress as well as personal well-being. These support mechanisms range from receiving help with preparing a schedule for finding ways to present late work, where necessary (SER). In the interviews, some department heads and lecturers mentioned personalised approaches to helping students with their individual needs to fulfil their curricula. The interviewed students said that they are happy with this solution. Regarding physical disabilities, the student union mentioned in their interview that they had initiated some changes in the school buildings to help make the rooms more accessible, however some of the classrooms were currently not available to visit with a wheelchair for example.

Both group and individual counselling for students to find internship and job listings is provided by the specialty departments (SER). A list of internships and employers was mentioned several times during the interviews by students and staff. Initial counselling takes place in the specialty departments, from where the student is further referred if necessary (T, S, SER). It is also possible to get advice and help from the registry, the Development Centre and the library (the library does not offer psychological counselling, only technical and regarding academic writing as mentioned in an interview) (SER). The International Relations Manager advises students in the field of international study opportunities, mobility programmes and practices performed outside Estonia. The students mentioned being proactive in looking for places to go by themself and then getting confirmation from the International Relations Manager or the Department Head.

Pallas cooperates with a psychologist to whom students can turn (SER). The information distributed by the specialty departments and the Academic Affairs Office, as well as on the website, has been updated with contact details for psychological support providers and self-help facilities, which was also requested by the Student Union (S). The Student Union also initiated a mental health week, and an inclusivity workshop was also brought up in the conversation. The interviews revealed that the Sculpture department was working on a pilot project on mental health awareness and recognition, which the panel strongly supports and recommends to scale for the whole school.

The IR manager also advises international students, who are offered information sessions and integration events, and a support system has been set up with the help of tutors. Tutors help foreign

students integrate into the Pallas community and Estonian society, help with everyday problems and, if necessary, problems that arise during their studies (SER, S). The tutors are student volunteers that approach international students very personally (S, T)

Drop-out rate is analysed by reasons, and students encompassing difficulties in their learning progress can turn to their department head for advice. Drop-out rate at Pallas is lower than the Estonian national rate, nevertheless Pallas keeps a close eye on this issue.

The Pallas Library is stocked in cooperation with all specialty departments and other structural units according to the curricula, creative work and research needs. There is cooperation with UT, EKA, TLU, EKM and the National Library. The surveys of 2020 showed that 93% of the students were satisfied or very satisfied with the Pallas library as a learning support facility. A pilot project will be launched in 2022–2023 to expand the availability of research databases (SER, M, T). The collection is assembled with the input of various stakeholders, and it is possible to request new materials for the library by anyone (SER, M). In addition, the library can also borrow materials from other partner libraries all over the country to supply any needs of students and staff. The library also has a room for groupwork and a couple independent workstations with computers. The students of Pallas are introduced to the library on the first year and info lessons are provided for them to make using the library easier (SER, R, M). It was also noted during the interviews with students that painting students did not have space to work on their paintings and had to rent out spaces to complete assignments.

The interviews revealed that some Adobe-based programs are used in the computer classrooms, which have too few licences (all the students cannot use the programs at once). It was mentioned that since the licences are too expensive, Pallas can only afford a smaller number of licences than there are students. It was noted by the panel that some of the study programmes could use more software practice in their studies, for example the textile department did not use any 3D modelling programs for specifically studying textiles (S, T, M). However, Pallas claims that they have enough licences for all students to use – they don't need to be used all at once. It was also clarified by Pallas administration that if a student wishes to use a licence on their personal computer, they can buy it through the university for 25€.

Pallas uses Webdesktop as its internal communication channel and tool. Students are required to use their Pallas e-mail address, which will be used to send them information about their studies and other Pallas-related activities. Information days are organised for first-year students in the first weeks of their studies, where they are introduced to everything related to studying in Pallas, from legislation to technological support as well as the structure of the curricula, the organisation of studies and placements, etc (SER). There is an IT administrator who assists the students and teachers with technical questions and problems (T, M). The Teams environment is used for distance and blended learning, and Moodle support for courses is available. The Student Admission Information System SAIS is used upon admissions. The lower satisfaction of students with the way their studies were conducted and organised was due to the migration to the new learning information system, Tahvel, whose technical readiness did not meet the needs of students. In 2020, 72% of students were satisfied with accessibility of information related to studies and study organisation, which has improved from 65%

in 2017 (SER). Weekly bulletins are sent by email to the students and staff and info is also shared on social media – these include more informal information related to the school's activities (T, M).

Pallas supports and listens to the input of its Student Union (SU) on their monthly set meetings and any extra meetings requested by the SU, as was said during the interviews. The SU is the place for students to gather and organise larger events, which the management supports in every possible way. The SU has suggested many changes and improvements to the school's property, regarding accessibility and health, as well as changes to curriculum and proposals for larger scale events including the civil society.

Student satisfaction with counselling services was gathered in 2017 and 2020, which is every 3 years, but could be monitored more often, since more frequent feedback from students could lead to faster changes in the counselling system (SER). The feedback data reflects the challenges faced during the covid-crisis in 2020, with 66% and 65% of students being satisfied with respectively counselling services in specialty departments and Academic Affairs Office. In 2017, the data was respectively 76% and 68% satisfaction from counselling services provided from specialty departments and Academic Affairs Office (SER). Three years is quite a long time for implementing any changes and the data show decline in student satisfaction. However, a tutoring system is in place and counselling is provided by different offices and departments (S, T, M). Every now and then, staff is faced with students' health issues (mental or physical) yet is not trained to cope with these situations. The same holds good for cultural differences, diversity and inclusivity issues for which specific trainings should be offered to all staff.

Conclusions

Based on the provided information (written and verbal, during the interviews), the panel concludes that the learning support systems in Pallas are well in place, known by students and supported by the management and the Student Union. Several types of support systems are offered (library materials, databases, software programs, spaces for individual and groupwork, counselling) and valued by students. Accessibility of premises, however, is limited. Student satisfaction with support services is evaluated regularly, but evaluations could be done more frequently to enhance implementation of improvements.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 10.

Strength

- A very active and highly committed Student Union cooperating well with the management contributes to the supportive learning environment at Pallas.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- As there are classrooms that are not accessible for wheelchair users or difficult to access for students with a physical disability, the panel recommends to Pallas to check and improve on accessibility issues, both physical and mental to make education at Pallas accessible for all students regardless of their abilities.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Information on student satisfaction with counselling services could be gathered more frequently and consistently to allow changes and thus improve the overall student satisfaction.
- Monitoring the students' mental health inside the departments is an interesting initiative to help manage issues earlier, when any arise. The panel strongly recommends monitoring the students' mental health inside the departments in addition to any other monitoring and counselling systems.
- The panel recommends training sessions for the staff on how to counsel students with support and (mental) health issues as well as training on cultural awareness, equality or diversity, supporting LGBTQ+ students, to reduce risks in internal and external communication. The panel also suggests composing an inclusivity statement to help with communication.

1.11 Research, development and/or other creative activity

Standard:
The higher education institution has defined its objectives and focus in the fields of RDC based on its mission, as well as on the expectations and future needs of society, and assesses their implementation and the societal impact of its RDC activities. RDC supports the process of teaching and learning at the higher education institution. Support services for RDC are purposeful and support implementation of the objectives of the core process.

Guidelines:
The HEI places a high value on the role and responsibilities of the field of RDC in society and evaluates the results of its RDC activities, their international visibility and societal impact.
The HEI responds flexibly to the current needs of society and the labour market in terms of its research and plans its research in collaboration with enterprises, public sector institutions and organisations of the third sector.
Members of teaching staff introduce students to their research results as well as the latest scientific achievements in their areas of specialisation and involve students in their R&D projects where possible.
The organisation and management of RDC take into account the profile and the mission of the HEI.

Indicators depend on the specificities of the HEI:
- Numerical data:
    - (1) scientific publications by classifiers;
    - (2) public presentations of creative work; recognition from international competitions; reviews in professional publications, etc.;
    - (3) patent applications, patents;
    - (4) textbooks, study aids of various formats, etc.;

- (5) system development solutions; product development solutions; environmental applications solutions;
- (6) contracts concluded with enterprises;
- (7) spin-off companies, etc., in line with the profile and priorities of the HEI; etc.
- Number of scientific publications / creative works per member of academic staff and per employee with the requirement to do research (FTE, by areas)
- Number and volume of externally funded projects of RDC activities
- Proportion of projects with a positive financing decision out of the submitted project applications.
- Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

The Pallas Self Evaluation Report (SER) and additional documentation contain detailed information relating to the institutional approach to Research Development and/or other Creative Activity. Evidence was provided relating to the institutional approach to research, aligned to contribution to society, staff engaged research activities and the importance to the institution of Applied Research activities. As equally mentioned in the SER, Pallas defines contribution to society, through its primary focus upon creative activity. Service to Society (societal impact) through Research and creativity is obviously a very important focus for Pallas and this is outlined well in the SER and additional paperwork, and was confirmed in the interviews (M, T, A).

The SER also details the time allocation for research that is given to academic staff, alongside the scientific publications since 2017, as well as the importance of the PALLAS Art Gallery for disseminating work made by staff and students. The gallery space with free entry provided by the city of Tartu is a good factor for the institution to raise and further disseminate the knowledge of Pallas' activities in the community. The visit to the gallery during the site visit evidenced the approach that had been outlined in the SER and reflected the positive strength of the space, to reflect/present graduate work, staff work and the final exhibition/defence of the student work. It might be advisable for the institution to consider how it might construct a research strategy around the gallery interlinked to the research outputs of the staff. The responses from academic staff and students during the panel meetings reflected the importance of the gallery in disseminating creative work, whether research aligned to academic staff or final graduating defence exhibitions for students, and this positively reflects the institutional mission relating to service to society.

The SER outlines the institutional commitment to growing research and this is documented well, with active participation encouraged and enabled. The interviews with teaching staff and management provided good evidence relating to the staff research activities and outcomes of that research, aligned to the funding for research that is offered. The commitment of staff to research activities was unanimously supported in the interviews with staff and management.

Pallas sees its contribution to society in providing arts experience and stimulating creativity; thus, research is discipline specific, and students are involved through projects and encouraged to take part in competitions as well confirmed in the interviews with staff. Pallas provided evidence of a good number of publications and projects. The objectives around research are well outlined with alignment to the standards and details have been provided in relation to these points in the interviews with

teaching staff; there are good examples of applied research provided in the SER and evidence that staff and students actively participate in competitions was given during the meetings with staff.

The roles of staff are outlined in the SER, as well as their educational awards and levels, alongside the roles of different levels of academic staff, too.

The Advisory Board at Pallas creates strong external industry links focused upon the learning and teaching aspects of the institution, but, as the interviews with employers showed, enabling research activities with the industry as well. During the visit, in the meeting with the Advisory Board and Council, different approaches to the engagement between the Council, Board and the institution itself were outlined, including the Design Festival, links to the Estonian Arts Association and the opportunities for 'mutual collaboration,' which was positive. Nevertheless, a more consistent approach to research activities and the interlinking of the RDC with the Council and Advisory Board, respectively members of both, would be advisable, more so as members of both the Council and the Advisory Board expressed interest in supporting Pallas in this respect.

There is a strong and consistent (from an Academic Staff perspective, as discussed in this panel session) approach to the development of research across Pallas and a strategic plan in place with committee structure to support this, determined by the upper management of the institution (although during the visit with the upper management team it was made clear that the vision around research was predominantly articulated by the previous rector). The SER states that with more than five scientific publications per year in 2022 and 2021 that goal was achieved.

Internationalisation also plays an important role for RDC: Commitment to networks and international partners constitute an obvious strength in the international partnerships and collaborations, particularly with the Cumulus and Nordplus relationships. Further strategic partnerships aligned to research priorities would really benefit staff, given the success in disseminating work and sharing practice with current networks. During the meetings with Heads of Departments and with Academic Staff during the Study Programme meetings, it was clear that staff are internationally engaged in terms of their creative work, exhibitions and presenting their work across Estonia and beyond, with particular reference to partners abroad. In the interviews the panel could see that there is an obvious link between internationalisation activities to research and/or staff creative activity. During the meetings with academic staff and the senior management, the panel were informed of different conferences, exhibitions and events that had been undertaken supported by the staff mobility opportunities. In the meeting with academic staff and management the panel were given examples of international visits and events that staff had attended e.g., Cumulus and Nordic-Baltic network membership meetings. Examples of activities associated with the projects were given in the meetings with teaching staff confirming the importance of being in these networks and the benefits they had brought.

Both written documentation and interviews confirmed the institutional statement relating to artistic and or creative activities and the dissemination of these beyond the institution and aligns to the commitment of Pallas to contribution to society. Linked to the above, the panel was pleased to hear that Pallas resources *research* projects, and that there is budget and finances available to support staff in the development of their research projects. Regarding the assessment of quality of research being conducted by academic staff and how this is conducted (whether it is related to future requests for funding and how research quality was being assessed at an institutional level) the panel learned that

there is a rather inconsistent approach to this, and no clearly measurable criteria interlinked to staff development and appraisal which hinders stringent development of research skills and research activities of staff.

During the meetings with academic staff research and its embedding within the curriculum was discussed. The panel learned that there is not a consistent approach to this across the institution which also impacts students' knowledge of research and how to conduct research, that is not solely based on a library visit, but more of a method of identifying questions and problem-solving through creative practice. Student involvement into R&D projects does happen but is not consistently integrated into programme curricula.

During the meeting on the RDC and Academic Staff Development there was discussion around forms of research (this links to what is being defined as Scientific Research Publication) and whether investment should be made in considering Scientific, Applied or Artistic approaches to staff research and what levels of support are in place in order to support staff in developing a research profile as this would enable staff to produce high quality and impactful research. This discussion also touched upon the links with Tartu University, relating to undertaking a PhD, PhD supervision and the potential of interdisciplinary research growth. This ties into the advice to set a more consistent and regular approach to staff development, but should include academic research training for staff, which could be focused beyond the subject level disciplines. The panel were informed of the three 'pillars' of creative activity within Pallas: Arts, Design and Restoration areas of activity, but it remained unclear as to how these disciplines interact across the institution, either at a curricular level or for academic staff research in general. Given the relationship with Tartu University, it would be advisable for the RDC to further these links to consider how more constructive interdisciplinary research could be undertaken. The panel was given one fantastic example of constructive interdisciplinary research by Design staff highlighting a project working alongside health at the University. This was an example of excellent practice of advanced, quality assessable and impactful research. There was also a discussion around the use of Design Thinking methodologies as an approach to advancing research within the University and embedding this approach through research as this would open opportunities for academic staff to engage in research beyond their discipline. The SER details that few staff have PhD's but that there is support for academic colleagues to undertake PhD research as the panel learned during the site-visit.

Conclusions

The institution places a high value on research and the role and responsibilities of RDC, although a consistent approach to these activities is missing, and the role of the RDC, remained somehow unclear. Staff are active in their fields and regularly present their work to students, which was very positively highlighted by both current students and graduates, but consistent integration of R&D projects into the curricula has not yet become the rule. The approach to applied research is a strength given the institutional commitment to contribution to society, although further definition and consideration of the research priorities would help to enhance this. The organisation and management of RDC does consider the profile and the mission of Pallas. The use of the international networks to support research/creative activity is also a strength of the institution. However, there are several areas that can be improved, for example, building an institutional approach to research, and what it is, differently from creative activity, (although can be interwoven), as well as considering how to embed research

further and consistently into the teaching curriculum. The panel appreciates the existence of an RDC Council and the institutional Rules of Applied and Scientific research, however heard from interviewees that institutional research priorities are not clearly defined, and research is not yet assessed systematically; thus, the panel recommends building a strong narrative around research and research assessment to further develop RDC and research activities.

The Panel concludes that Pallas partially conforms to standard 11.

Strengths

- There is a strong staff commitment to undertaking research, enabling students to see their work and to engage with colleagues from outside the institution to develop and disseminate new ideas.
- The institutional commitment to contribute to society through research as outlined in the vision, but also evidenced through the gallery and projects undertaken by staff and students, and methods of dissemination of creative activities.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Although Pallas has made some good progress in its research, development and or other creative activities work there is room for improvement and enhancement. The panel recommends building a strong narrative around research, including the development of a clear and consistent approach to research developed through a strategic plan for research across the institution. This should outline what research quality means to Pallas, include institutional principles of research as well as research priorities and interlink into staff development activities to enable staff to plan, prepare and systematically link their academic research to the curriculum and teaching.
- Furthermore, the panel recommends including into this strategic plan an integral research measurement assessment process based on a transparent and criteria-led quality framework for Research which should also refer to the assessment of societal impact.
- Furthermore, and in line with what is mentioned above, the panel recommends aligning Research to Learning and teaching in the to-be-developed overall strategic plan, including the contribution of internationalisation to RDC and outlining the institutional focus and institutional research priorities. This will require building a strong narrative around Applied Research (consider Scientific/Artistic research as well) within the strategic institutional Research plan and then link research and the activities of RDC to the mission of the University.
- Research is no longer seen as a mono-disciplinary issue but as an interdisciplinary task. To enhance interdisciplinary research within and outside of the institution the panel recommends that Pallas increase networks for research to this end.
- At Higher Education institutions, teaching should be informed by research. Thus, the panel recommends that Pallas consider how to further embed research into the teaching curriculum and build this into future curriculum planning.
- In line with setting up a competence development plan the panel recommends considering the development of staff research activities and how this needs to be supported within Pallas (academic support services) and approach this consistently as with future staff development enhancements.

1.12 Service to society

Standard:
The higher education institution initiates and implements development activities, which enhance prosperity in the community and disseminate recent know-how in the areas of the institution's competence.
The higher education institution, as a learning-oriented organisation, promotes lifelong learning in society and creates high-quality opportunities for that.

Guidelines:
The HEI contributes to the development of the community's well-being by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.), by providing consulting and advisory services, participating in the development of non-profit sector and charitable activities, and by organising concerts, exhibitions, shows, conferences, fairs and other events.
The HEI involves alumni in activities aimed at the development of the HEI and the knowledge society.
Employees of the HEI participate in the work of professional associations and in other community councils and decision-making bodies as experts, directing society's development processes as opinion leaders. The impact academic employees have on society is taken into account when evaluating their work.
The HEI has clearly defined the objectives for in-service training, measures their implementation and plans improvement activities. The HEI plans in-service training based on the present and future needs of the labour market target groups. Evidence-based learning supports the learning and self-development of adult learners.

Indicators:
•　　　Number of people in continuing training and other privately financed open forms of study (by responsibility areas or structural units)
•　　　Other indicators depending on the HEI

Evidence and analysis

There is a clear goal of what Pallas will bring to society during the current development plan which has set indicators and a clear implementation strategy (SER, M). According to its vision Pallas initiates changes in the creative sector, valuing traditions and leading innovation in the fields of art, design, conservation, and restoration in cooperation with its partners. The activities should be based on the principle of sustainability (SER, development plans). The development plan for 2021–2025 clearly outlines the directions for work with society. These accord to the previous IA report which recommended that the university's focus on Development Plan would help building its reputation and promoting its activities in Estonian society and international art world.

Students are involved in this process through projects and exhibitions, encouraged to participate in (international) trade fairs and competitions (M, S); lists of publications and projects were provided to the panel and in the interviews the panel learned that there is cooperation with the community and other educational institutions for societal engagement. Pallas has articulated a strong vision for lifelong learning which is being implemented, it addresses the dynamics of society and the impact of international conditions. Connecting Pallas with society and enhancing the visibility of the institution

has been both, a collective and a personal effort as outlined in the interviews (M, T, E), and demonstrated by the initiatives and dedicated share of the key people for library, gallery, development, and lifelong learning who are looking for new areas and possibilities (M).

Pallas' art library is open to members of Pallas and society, it is catalogued and accessible at the Estonian Library system Ester.ee. In 2021, the library had 1093 readers and 18 623 items, mostly books on art and art history plus magazines. Since the budget for new books is limited, the purchases are carefully considered and discussed with departments. The library takes part in the annual literary festivals Prima Vista in Tartu, coordinating its art programme around Tartu. The library considers one of its functions finding a balance between printed books and online media. The popularisation of book culture happens also by the exhibitions on the most beautiful books. The head of the library participates in national and international specialist networks. The space of the library is comfortable and quiet and serves as a venue for bigger gatherings thus demonstrating Pallas outreach to society.

The Panel had an opportunity to visit Gallery Pallas to see the exhibition of two alumni in the big hall and smaller exhibitions on two floors by works made in Pallas. Gallery Pallas (former Noorus gallery) is the HEI's primary outlet for creative activity for the departments and the most obvious link to society. The gallery's annual exhibition plan is prepared by the RDC Council based on the applications received by the open call (SER). In 2017–2020 there were 22 international exhibitions, and 45 exhibitions related to studies at Pallas. Annex 18 shows that in five years 123 exhibitions had been held and 140,826 people have visited the gallery. Visitor numbers per year are one of the indicators to measure service to society: The goal of 11,000 visitors per year has been exceeded by almost three times, seeing lower numbers in 2020 - 23,319 (SER). The approx. 20 exhibitions in the Pallas gallery per year have been shared mostly between seven departments on three fields: design, conservation/restoration, and the fine arts. The annual show of graduation works offers an overall display of all directions. Joint exhibitions with foreign universities help to increase the international visibility. Social media have been used to promote an intense public programme and to reach to younger audiences.

Pallas has several collaboration partners on various levels in Estonia and abroad. The HEI's contribution to society is visible in Tartu public space through festivals like fashion show *Mood-Performance-Tants*; stencil festivals, street murals, snow town and other interventions. In addition to this, mosaics, furniture, visual identities etc were provided for various occasions in Estonia. Students had practices at several restoration projects of heritage interiors. Pallas also participates in charity activities with donation of artworks of students, alumni, and faculty members. The institution sees service to society as a collaboration – "they love giving" as was stated in the interviews (M).

In addition to changing the name of the HEI to Pallas for enhancing visibility in the society, the university's homepage was recently renewed, a large part of it now being bilingual. The website includes virtual exhibitions of graduation works and a digital archive. Information on the exhibitions

and events are published and shared on social media. The panel values all these efforts as good examples of how Pallas contributes to its visibility and shows its contribution to society.

Development work aims towards using interdisciplinary approaches (Baltic Business Festival, Intsikurmu Music Festival), Start-up festivals are seen as possibilities to work with partners. Organisations are also approaching Pallas for collaboration (M). The future plans consist of collaborating with Tartu Centre for Creative Industries and different industry companies to build a tight network of sustainability with businesses and organisations. There will be a seminar/course in Pallas on sustainable exhibition making in distance learning and on the spot (M).

Pallas is keen to exchange knowledge and present their research outcomes. Consequently, the different departments are active in organising conferences, publishing conference proceedings and books, and organising competitions for students. Both academic and non-academic staff participate as regular members, experts or leaders in various decision-making bodies and working groups. Many faculty members belong to professional and creative associations (SER, T).

In Lifelong Learning (LLL) and Continuing Education Pallas relies on state legislation on Adult Education and national strategies, complemented with their own rules. Pallas has a clear vision for LLL, and implementation plans for working in three directions. Firstly, training courses that develop digital skills necessary to work in the field of the arts for private entrepreneurs. Secondly, courses for prospective students. Thirdly, courses with emphasis on quality leisure time and hobbies. Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine Pallas offers courses for refugees who also have been working as teachers. Some courses take place as collaborations with the state and municipal institutions (Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Tartu City Reserve Fund), but there are also courses for people with special needs on offer. From 2017 to 2021, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund financed the participation of 81 people in Pallas continuing education courses. Pallas set as target 900 academic hours for 2020 in continuing education, but Covid-19 pandemic allowed only to have 398 hours compared to 1050 hours in 2017. The performance indicators for LLL and Continuing Education are the number of participants in continuing education per year (target level in 2025: 320) and the volume of continuing education (target level in 2025: 720 hours). The target groups are monitored so that Pallas can plan and create special classes for helping and supporting professional and personal development and offer flexible learning opportunities. The goal is to offer courses in the fields of seven departments. All information on courses is available on the Pallas homepage.

The LLL unit works closely with various parties in Pallas and looks for new external opportunities for subjects and collaborations including fundraising. Continuing training is provided by teaching staff, visiting lecturers and experts, specialists, practitioners and by Pallas alumni, thus maintaining mutual connections. A feedback system is in place to capture input and consequently plan improvement actions. Pallas plans to launch a micro-grade system, to create places for all who wish to continue studies, to encourage more collaborations with lecturers of all departments and widen its relationship with employers with the clear objective to expand the perspective of LLL and involve different sectors of society. Furthermore, Pallas wants to bring in more international lecturers to LLL, have more Erasmus exchange and visiting other universities (SER, M) and enhance LLL through sharing experiences and international expertise. Pallas' strategic approach and operational actions regarding

Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education is impressive with staff enthusiastic for this field as the panel could convincingly experience in the interview. A spill-over from LLL to regular study programmes should consistently be considered as this clearly demonstrates what being a learning organisation is like. Pallas' contribution to society through Lifelong Learning and Continuing education is commendable.

Conclusions

The current development plan clearly defines what Pallas will bring to society and what the institution's understanding of service to society is. The development plan outlines a clear implementation strategy as well as indicators to measure Pallas societal impact. Students are involved in this process through projects and exhibitions, encouraged to participate in (international) trade fairs and competitions. Pallas has articulated a strong vision for lifelong learning which is being implemented taking into consideration the needs and dynamics of society and the impact of international conditions. Pallas art library and Gallery Pallas are valuable resources and venues for members of Pallas and society. Visibility is enhanced through the change of HEI's name to Pallas and renewing the website. Knowledge exchange and popularisation of RDC happens through publications and conference participations. Life-long learning processes are systematic and dynamic, apt to strengthen collaboration with state and municipal organisations and responding accordingly to changes in society.

The panel concludes that Pallas fully conforms to Standard 12.

Strengths

- Continuing education and Lifelong Learning management and implementation is clearly targeted, well planned, systematic, and convincingly corresponds to the needs of a changing society. In this respect, Pallas is worthy of recognition.
- A continuous symbiosis between Pallas and Tartu through art projects in the public urban space demonstrates cooperation and societal engagement.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The panel values Pallas' initiatives on shaping the development of arts education and recommends continuing this path through regular seminars and discussions open to the public. As Pallas put a focus on sustainability, the panel encourages Pallas to set up general principles of sustainability and integrate these into all Pallas' activities.
- The panel encourages Pallas to continue systematic planning of in-service trainings for external stakeholders and CPD opportunities and more explicitly showcase it as a recurring activity and a visible contribution to society.

2. Assessment findings of the sample of the study programmes

2.1. Textile (Prof HE) - general information

The Textile Programme is small and specialised and has maintained a unique combination of textile and fashion studies. The programme has five faculty members with employment contracts and a significant number of visiting lecturers (18 in 2021) among them several Pallas alumni. Although small and defined by staffing, estate space and equipment restrictions, student admission numbers are reflected in the number of applications for the Study Programme. According to SER, the total number of admissions has been increasing with a slight increase in admission numbers. The number of graduates in 2022 was more than double of 2017. The drop-out rate varies from year to year with being slightly higher in 2021 than in the previous years.

Student feedback has led to changes in the curriculum (2020) with fashion studies now being offered as elective subjects and offering new elective courses in design and collection creation.

As a four-year undergraduate degree programme, the Study Programme offers a combination of theoretical and technical knowledge, design skills and craft skills. The curriculum aims to incorporate a symbiosis of traditional skills and innovative opportunities, of knowledge and experience in design and product development, material studies, textile technology and textile arts.

The programme aims to ensure quality professional higher education in the field of textiles and to create graduates with a responsible attitude in textiles and fashion, equipped with experience from the external world and the opportunities available to them there. The graduates' ability to work in various tasks across the textile, fashion and design industries and retail is enhanced through supporting internships in the industry and business in Estonia and abroad. The artistic path is supported by the opportunities for students to exhibit their work in the Pallas Gallery and at international trade shows, exhibitions, and competitions. This enables the graduates to be independent professional textile artists, designers, and specialists in their discipline with entrepreneurial skills, prepared to work in their chosen speciality and having the prerequisites to continue their studies at other levels of higher education.

The Study Programme has unique qualities. The balanced curriculum includes technical knowledge and specialist pathways. The programme creates a strong community of staff and students, enabling them to gain broader skill levels during their studies. The department's faculty are active and recognised textile designers and artists, with connections inside and outside Estonia, involved in developing and promoting the field of textiles more widely. Curriculum development and instructing students involve top experts from outside Pallas.

2.1.1 Planning and management of studies

- The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities is sufficient and supports the launching of the study programme(s).
- The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity and entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
- The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology support the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The documentation in the SER outlining the Study Programme for Textile was detailed and thorough. The structure of the curriculum follows the general structure of all Pallas curricula comprising specialisation module, general module, practice module, elective and optional courses and final project.

The SER provided exemplary insight into three courses with description of course-level topics, module-level teaching methods, clear assessment criteria as well as the learning outcomes and credit structure. The panel could see that the modules combine both theory and practice and foster skills development. According to the documentation provided, the Study Programme's profile and objectives refer to developing students' key competences through a strong, interlinked approach on practice – theory nexus, and fostering of skills development. The teaching content, methods and assessment criteria aim to support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies.

The textile curriculum comprises many small credit blocks and thus is highly fragmented. This fragmentation results in a high workload of students with several tasks and assessments to be done and completed. The panel believes that this fragmentation prevents students from critically reflecting their courses and widening the perspective of the course to interdisciplinarity as students brought up in the discussions. Condensing multiple small credit courses into larger credit block courses is done in the later stages of the studies but would also be a major enhancement to the students' experience in the first and second study year, and result in a more streamlined procession of subjects and topics.

The curriculum development is based on feedback from employers, alumni, and students and is linked to RDC activities of academic staff. National strategies are considered, preservation and further development of the traditions of Estonian textile art and design are fostered through applied research of faculty members and involvement of students in research projects. The active take-up of student feedback has led to changes in the recent (2020) curriculum, e.g., fashion studies being offered as

elective subjects and offering new elective courses in design and collection creation. The panel confirms that these specialised elective courses enable flexibility in studies and support personal learning paths. Moreover, recommendations from professionals have been implemented to assure coherence between working life and academic learning. Evidence for this is demonstrated in projects in cooperation with external partners, as well as including competition participation in such elective studies (T, E, S). Furthermore, suggested field trips have been planned and projects in cooperation with companies have been organised, to combine theory and practice consistently. These are supported by additional funding sought from the Cultural Endowment of Estonia.

During the visit, the panel was given a tour of the Textile Programme´s facilities, which helped to contextualise the information provided in the SER. In the pre-visit survey documentation and during the meeting (site-visit) with current students, across the different years of the Study Programme, there was positive feedback for the teaching staff and their commitment to the programme, their positive attitude to students and quick response to feedback as well as their knowledge and skills in the field. As an example, the timing of the Portfolio Design subject in the curriculum was changed to enable students to apply the acquired skills when they most need them; in applying for internships and scholarships (S, T). Recent organisational changes based on feedback and subject reviews include changing the subjects' location and textile studio projects' division to combine theory and practice better. Sustainability studies have been introduced and workload-issues flexibly resolved (S).

The students gave positive feedback on lecturers consulting students and often preparing the subject according to the wishes and needs of the students. The panel notes that this type of sporadic changes during a course might lead to overlapping and repeated topics, an issue which the students repeatedly brought up. There is a need to streamline the curriculum and the procedure of the subjects and topics within them as the textile curriculum is very compact and varied. Emphasis is placed on many different topics and parts of the discipline. In almost every subject, there is a possibility to orientate according to your personal interest. This is a strength, but as noted above, also a challenge.

The study programme supports the development of skills, creativity, and entrepreneurship. However, the students and employers expressed the need to add courses to the curriculum that better reflect the textile and fashion field of today and tomorrow, especially linked to the quest for more sustainable solutions (S, E). In parallel with the teaching of traditional work methods, the students expect a deeper insight into forward-looking solutions, such as new approaches to novel textile applications (e.g., e-textiles) and a course on digital fashion design. As an example, CLO3D, a digital design tool essential in the contemporary fashion industry, enabling sustainable and streamlined sampling, is now missing in the curriculum.

According to SER, learning environment has been steadily developed by setting up work life similar environments thus preparing students for practical experiences; internships and setting up their own studios. Each year, one area gets a special focus and thus equipment and materials are upgraded and further developed. Good evidence of this is the hand-tufting equipment, and its upgrading, enabling students' successful internships in carpet companies. However, the programme's budget for investments is restricted and co-funding is needed from the Pallas budget.

The panel saw that the students within the department share studios collectively, yet the spaces are small and filled with equipment, thus leaving no studio space for the students' experimentations. The current practice of the printing studio being used as both lecture room and workspace is not feasible.

From both flexible working-point and safety point of view this is questionable, as hazardous chemicals are used in printing. The panel recognizes the wish expressed by students for a separate room for experimental work and printing.

Strengths

- The individual approach and collegiate relationship between students and teachers further individual skills' development.
- The combination of textiles and fashion with the textile approach as a driver, and the practice-orientated curriculum is unique and prepares the students well for work in the field of textiles and fashion.
- For textile studies, the combination of theory, technological understanding, and practice is a necessity, and in the way it is executed at Pallas is a strong characteristic of the Pallas programme.
- The strong relation with alumni and other external stakeholders contributes to the further development of the Study Programme.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The current curriculum design is characterized by fragmentation, small credit allocation per course, and related assessment practices, prohibiting the student's engagement in deeper learning of the subject and critical reflection of subject matter and content. The panel recommends reducing the number of courses and consequently assessments to allow for a more streamlined learning experience and skills development.
- The above-mentioned fragmentation of the curriculum also leads to unnecessary repetition of topics within the curriculum. Therefore, the panel recommends reviewing the curriculum and compiling smaller subjects into larger courses each managed by a responsible teacher; this helps to streamline the topics within courses and coordinate content of visiting experts and lecturers.
- To keep the textile curriculum up to date and familiarize students with current and upcoming developments and trends, the panel strongly recommends adding courses to the curriculum, that better reflect the textile and fashion field of today and tomorrow and foster critical thinking, especially content linked to sustainability, novel materials and processes as well as an even deeper interest in modern and forward-looking solutions on the part of the higher education institution.

Opportunities for further improvement

- As textiles is a highly multidisciplinary field, cooperation between different programmes for the curriculum and effective approaches to project-based learning informed by critical study and research should be the base for finding new ways of learning. The panel therefore encourages thinking across borders and recommends forming stronger relationships between other programmes and courses. Teaching across subject areas promotes interdisciplinary learning and meaningful collaboration and enables students to have the skills needed in today's professional textile world.
- Creating a Textile Minor module, open for students in the other Programmes, would be a wonderful opportunity for the textile field in Pallas, as this would enhance the development

of the textile field both inside the academia and outside, and bring value to other programmes by sharing knowledge and thinking across disciplines.

2.1.2 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.
- A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and career and supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.
- Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.
- The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.
- Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.
- Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

Admission to the textile programme is granted upon competition and supervised and executed by an admission committee thus equal and fair conditions for all applicants can be assured. All information on the admission procedure, organisation and specialities is disseminated prior to admission exams to assure that all applicants are well informed when going in for the admission exam. Admission numbers are small but stable (10 – 12) as in all programmes of Pallas, the number of graduates is moderate in relation to admission (4 – 12) but has considerably risen in 2021 (12) in comparison to the previous year. The total number of admissions has risen over the years. The level of applicants is good (M, T), the range of candidates sufficient as was confirmed in the interviews.

The admission procedure comprises a speciality examination (weighted ¾ of the exam) which assesses the candidate's creativity and contextual ability (referring to curriculum), as well as a motivation test (weighted ¼ of the exam) which includes an interview and possible additional exercises. The panel agrees with the SER, that this type of examination suits well to the objectives set for the admission exam. The admission exam has not been held on the department premises. However, the programme has held virtual open days and exhibition tours to help the applicants experience the department's environment and working atmosphere. The panel recommends continuing such endeavours to assure applicants' quality and motivation level.

The programme has a strong practical focus and aims at preparing students for a successful and smooth entry into the labour market. Apart from theoretical subjects, the curriculum also includes textile practices across the main textile construction techniques and processes. The curriculum allows

students to choose their own path with optional subjects to be taken during their studies, varying learning tasks, deciding on a specific field for their placements and selecting a topic for the final project, which allows them to navigate their study progress and study direction in a responsible and self-directed way.

The Study Programme's mission is to preserve and develop Estonian textile art and design traditions. This has lately been demonstrated in research around wool and the Estonian sheep breed. Practice orientation enables students to understand and excel in their craft through practice-led and embodied learning. However, as noted previously by the panel, it is essential to develop a more modern and forward-looking mindset, in the Study Programme offering. The panel acknowledges that there is room for a more active dialogue with the existing Estonian textile industry. Adding knowledge and understanding of industrial techniques and processes (including those used in mass production) to the learning content, as well as a stronger focus on future materials is a possibility for the Programme, now left mostly unused (E). The panel recommends cooperation with the industry, including lectures on technical textiles, in addition to the present craft-oriented focus; integrating technical subjects (e.g., textile material studies) and topics into collaborative projects with the industry is a good way of learning and teaching. During the interviews and in the pre-visit survey, the students noted missing marketing studies. The panel notes that with closer cooperation with industry and business, project-based learning of such subjects would be efficient. The study programme has organised and participated in various projects during the current reporting period. However, the panel believes that there is a further option to integrate inclusivity– topics to studies through close cooperation with the respective Pallas unit involved in service-to-society projects. This was also mentioned by students in the interviews.

At the beginning of a course, students are informed about tasks and assessments they must take. Due to the fragmentation of the curriculum, as mentioned above, the number of tasks to complete and assignments to take is rather high, as students reported. This very often keeps them from digging more deeply into a topic or going further in completion. Feedback on tasks and assignments is provided in an informal but very personal way which students highly appreciate; furthermore, they are also asked to give feedback themselves on their learning experiences and eventual improvement options. The students confirmed that feedback is taken up, often leading to improvements. Rules and regulations of RPL are easily accessible, and students confirmed that the processes are transparent and smooth.

Practical training constitutes an integral part of all Pallas curricula and aims at providing students with real life experience in their field of speciality. The overall credit amount for practical training is 18 with 15 credits attributed to placement practice and 3 credits for individual practice. To gain insight into their field of specific interest and thus foster self- directed learning, students are encouraged to choose the place that suits them best. Placements can also be taken abroad under the ERASMUS scheme, and the panel was given examples of successful exposure to the international textile field. Students unanimously confirmed that the overall practice- orientation of their studies fostered by their own "field experiences" during practice and placements helps them develop both professional and personal competencies and prepare them well for their future entry to the labour market.

International experiences are shared among peers to encourage others to follow the example. According to the curriculum development process, mobility options are considered when designing a

study programme, information on either companies or partner institutions is provided by the department and the internationalisation staff. Support for finding a good place to go to is also offered.

As students and teachers are very close as was mentioned in the interviews and teachers and administrative staff practice an open-door policy in a welcoming and friendly atmosphere (S) students can easily seek support in case of problems or queries. However, the panel noted that teachers are not particularly trained for dealing with critical mental issues. In such cases, Pallas provides students with contact details on professional psychologist as psychological support might exceed the range of staff responsibility. (T, M).

Graduates of the Textile department work as independent designers, employees in bigger companies or in their own company. The practical skills that they bring along helps them to easily find their place in the field. Many of them come back as teachers to Pallas or provide placements opportunities for their younger peers (A). Employers value the attitude and skills that Pallas graduates bring along but would also expect a deeper understanding of technical parameters and technologies. With a view to further development of the textile programme, graduates claimed a better interconnection of subjects, more interdisciplinary courses and cooperation with other departments, as well as closer cooperation with the industry. Students as well as alumni of the Textile Programme are creatively active and have more than once been awarded scholarships, won awards from outside of Pallas both in Estonia and internationally, a have exhibited at international fairs and participated in competitions.

Strengths

- Alumni are active in the textile and fashion field in Estonia. Their support and commitment to the institution beyond graduation create a strong relationship with alumni and other external stakeholders.
- The strong student-oriented focus of the Study Programme stimulates motivation and skills development of students.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The panel recommends reducing the number of assessments as this would greatly benefit the students' experience.
- In addition to the craft-oriented practical mindset, the panel recommends more collaboration with industry, including mass manufacturing facilities.
- The panel sees involvement and attendance of fairs and competitions as a valuable environment for learning. The panel recommends to not only concentrate on a few yearly international competitions, but to search for more options for the students to take part in, both in the textile and fashion sector and thus enhance their professional as well as personal skills.

2.1.3 Development, cooperation and internationalisation of teaching staff

- Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.
- Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.
- Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programs which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.
- The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI is taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the member of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

Like in all Pallas programmes, teaching is in the hands of a small but highly committed and professionally active permanent team and a substantial number of visiting lecturers that bring in their field experience and constitute a valuable link to the industry. Most specialised courses including practical training and elective courses are delivered by staff with a permanent work contract (SER). This team is complemented by visiting lecturers that provide students with the opportunity to learn from top national and international experts and artists and get to know artists and designers with distinctive styles (SER). Textile graduates are also invited to teach in the programme and thus foster the relationship between Pallas and its graduates. Yet, as the panel learned, graduates come back to teach early after graduation from Pallas or a complementary education in a different higher education institute, and thus did not have much time to develop their own perspectives or gain experience in work life. The main mission of all staff members – permanent or visiting – is to support students in their development as textile, design and fashion artists and specialists. As the panel could hear from students, lecturers are highly valued due to their professional competence, their positive attitude, and the collegiate way to motivate students and thus support their personal and professional development. The panel also learned that lecturers familiarize students with the principles of academic ethics in their courses, and that this happens more than once during the studies.

In line with the objectives of the department to educate skilled fashion designers and textile specialists, the department organises exhibitions, seminars and lecture days and participates in projects and the wider development of the textile and fashion field. Teaching staff of the textile department is actively involved in professional networks, and regularly takes part in national and international competitions and exhibitions. As they bring back their experiences from such events, students can benefit from these activities as well. Furthermore, they are encouraged to take up the

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challenge of participating in competitions and exhibitions themselves. As the panel heard from students, this is seen as an essential contribution to students' development of self-competence.

Teaching staff in all fields of the programme continuously develop their professional and pedagogical skills as was confirmed in the interviews; the panel heard that all staff had undergone training over the previous five years, and the departments are also guiding teaching staff towards a master's degree. Staff competence and skills development is mostly based on individual needs, general institutionally planned training was provided during Covid19 for digital competences. Students provide feedback on the performance of lecturers through course surveys which is considered in the overall evaluation of lecturers. Furthermore, textile teaching staff actively participate in international mobility. However, due to the pandemic, there has been an understandable decrease in the number of international mobilities. To make up for this, faculty participated in online conferences and other online events, held international lectures, and thus kept cooperation and knowledge exchange alive even during the pandemic times (T).

Students and graduates of all specialties confirmed to have greatly benefited from lectures given by guest lecturers who are invited by the Centre for General Studies and, upon request, from lectures by TAIR residents. Graduates told in the interviews that they had been assessed by foreign practitioners involved in their final project committees and thus could also demonstrate their fitness for the international market but also would have liked more input from people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

RDC in the textile department is intended to link the department's activities with the public and private textile and fashion sectors and thus focuses on creative activities and applied research such as material research (T). The department organises exhibitions and encourages students to participate to gain self-competence through the process of preparation. The panel could learn from the SER and hear in the interviews with staff, alumni and students that the department and its members (students and staff) regularly engage in many exhibitions and competitions and can be proud of having won several awards and scholarship in the past years.

Staff performance evaluation is to follow the institutional process considering among others; students' feedback, engagement in RDC and international mobilities. As staff confirmed, individual needs for further development are derived from their feedback. Cooperation among colleagues is also highly valued and seen as a means to share experiences, learn from each other and thus further both personal and programme development.

Strength

- The teaching staff is eager to support and enhance the student experience and is also very attentive to student feedback. This creates a strong feeling of community, and this was valuably reflected in the student and during the visit.

Area of concern and recommendations

- The panel acknowledges the value of a good alumni relationship and contribution of alumni to teaching at Pallas. However, rotating too much in the group of own staff and alumni risks creating a closed circle and is not too profitable to foster a forward-thinking atmosphere and openness to new ways of textile making and research. Therefore, the panel recommends deliberately inviting experts and teachers coming from different background to provide student with a variety of perspectives and convey trends and new developments.

2.2. Photography (Prof HE)

The Photography department sees as its mission to continue and develop the traditions of Estonian and European photography and critical documentary. The objective of the Photography curriculum is to ensure the next generation of independent and adaptable creative artists, scientists, and curators and to develop a readiness for lifelong learning (SER). The four-year BA curriculum concentrates on three fields: freelance creative practices; professional photography and critical documentary; curatorial practices, research projects and art management. It combines a rich theoretical curriculum with experimental courses and a large practical block (SER, website). The Programme is of hybrid nature, with joint management of underwater entertainment with visual semiotics as was stated in the interviews with management. The combination of selected theoretical and practical subjects enables graduates (especially considering the specifics of Estonia) to find a job in the field of art and art management, other areas of photography and as an independent photographer (SER, M).

Admission numbers are good – given the small size of the department – and so are graduation numbers although they vary from year to year. Drop-out rates are relatively stable, with an increase, however, in 2020.

The profile of the study programme is practical, focusing on applicable education both in the technical and creative field. The curriculum falls into the group of Arts programmes, with four years of study leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. The study language is Estonian, English is needed for achieving some learning outcomes.

Recently there have been changes in staff towards more gender and age diversity. Underwater photography, drone photography and 360 degrees cyclorama photography courses were integrated into the curriculum, and various publications have recently come to the market.

2.2.1 Planning and management of studies

- The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities is sufficient and supports the launching of the study programme(s).
- The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity and entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
- The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology support the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

According to Pallas SER, the Photography curriculum is developed in collaboration with experts, scientists, and employers to ensure competent graduates in the world of art both on the national and international labour market. The curriculum takes into consideration both national cultural and international interests. International visiting lecturers provide valuable input for updating the curriculum as was mentioned in the interviews with management and teaching staff.

In the interviews the panel learned that the procedure of including the expectations of students and other stakeholders, especially of alumni and employers, into the curriculum has not been implemented systematically (A, E, S). Both alumni and students referred to only modest consideration of their suggestions for curriculum development captured through surveys or direct feedback and input. Alumni suggested to be formally included in a long-term systematic and strategic development and thus systematically bring in their experiences as input to curriculum development. With the new management the students have seen some improvements in this respect, with their proposals bringing about change.

The curriculum is evolving by the RDC activities of the department which consist of publications, exhibitions, and various national and international collaborations. Teaching staff and alumni are active in exhibitions locally (Pallas Gallery up to two exhibitions per year and other venues in Estonia) and internationally (29th European Month of Photography in Bratislava). Their knowledge exchange and research practice inform the curriculum, both practically and theoretically (SER). The students appreciate that their teachers are successful in their field and share their knowledge, most of the lecturers being alumni of Pallas at the same time. Whereas 2nd year courses regard the demands of the labour market with specialist photography courses, the 3rd and 4th year subjects of the programme encourage students to participate in RDC through subject-based practical projects and their final projects.

In the interviews the panel learned that exhibitions such as in the Pallas Gallery are seen as forms of art practice combining skills practice and skills development. The assessments take place in Pallas

venues, and they are considered as overviews of students' semester work. The panel considers this a valuable and interesting approach yet thinks that there should be a more systematic approach how students' practice with various venues links to the overall curriculum and establishes further networks.

The photography programme follows the overall curriculum model of Pallas comprising a speciality, practical modules, general modules, modules for electives, free subjects, and a final project. The panel was provided with good documentation as to the programme curriculum with all subjects and learning outcomes, as well as a short timeline to explain the evolution of the curriculum. A system called 'evolutional development of knowledge' is applied and means for students moving from basic knowledge towards professional projects. Different technologies, industrial and technical categories form the basis for skills needed both for the labour market and individual practice. Although the photography curriculum follows an evolutionist logic, there have been some progression issues. In the discussions the panel learned that some students have felt that the content over the years did not add up to new things, that they already knew the subject and knowledge and competence development were limited. Free subjects can be cross-curricular and/or taken from other Universities as well (Tartu University, Estonian Academy of Arts). As general practical subjects there are drawing, painting, sculpture, composition, geometry etc., from theory philosophy to art history. The panel sees potential of collaboration across departments particularly in the practical and theoretical speciality subjects to form a more coherent whole. Learning outcomes are defined also for the Practice module and include teamwork and entrepreneurial training objectives but remain abstractly linked to the subjects.

The given structure of the curriculum is highly fragmented with many small volume subjects and numerous learning outcomes, a fact that causes time challenges and reduces the opportunity to focus on topics as the panel heard from students in the interviews. Staff expressed their wish to teach many skills and convey different forms of knowledge, but the departments' (and the institution') budget is too limited to renew equipment and increase teachers' remuneration; cooperation between the departments is limited as well.

In the Photography department interdisciplinarity is understood as an image-text work. Multidisciplinary projects have taken place with the Textile Department and the Media Department. In the interviews the panel heard that students would like to have more joint courses with other departments as well as with the cohorts of the different years of the photography programme.

The document on Principles of allocating operational costs to specialty departments was shared with the Panel. It consists of three parts: base component, performance component and cooperation component (SER). Although according to the information provided financial support for improving cooperation between two or more departments exists to reduce duplication but offering students more options, the Panel heard that such kind of cooperation had not yet come to life (S). The only thing that photography students can do for other courses is the obligatory 'practice in a working environment', where it is just dry shooting of Diploma works, and there is little creativity there (S, Pre-visit survey).

The SER points out that the Department of Photography is satisfied with their financial and material resources but the loss of support from the European Union's Structural Funds will soon cause a challenge. There is a need to find new sources for funding. At present, major purchases require additional money coming from funds such as the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, the Estonian

National Culture Fund, etc. So far, the university has supported the purchases of new technology. Due to the pandemic that dominated the last reporting period, more money has been made available for major investments. The department is fairly well equipped with specialised literature. The SER mentioned a need of renovation of facilities and renewing studio equipment. This was brough up by the students and staff as well as the need for updating and redecoration of study spaces and furniture. There are certainly opportunities for common voluntary work in the latter respect with some material support by the institution. Students stressed that more funding for teachers was needed, to have a better choice of experts and tutors. Staff also addressed the need and possibility to hire more lecturers with an employment contract (S, T, Pre-visit survey).

The panel was shown the rooms and facilities of the Photography Department – there is a big photography studio and a smaller one, an analogue wet lab, an informal lecture room, a common space with lockers, an equipment room, office etc. New equipment for drone and underwater photography has been obtained. Students are guaranteed access to the study rooms (studios, workshops) required for independent studying from 08:00 to 21:30 Monday to Saturday and from 10:00 to 20:00 on Sunday – this provides good opportunities for students to follow their own rhythm of learning as the panel found. This was confirmed in the interviews with students who obviously crave for the night-time access of facilities.

Strength

- A wide array of practical subjects combined with theoretical courses provides a solid basis of skills and competence development.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Students, alumni and employers are not systematically involved in curriculum design and curriculum development. Therefore, the panel recommends designing and following a clear process to capture input for curriculum development from different stakeholders.
- The panel also recommends adopting a more systematic approach how students' practice with various venues links to the overall curriculum and establishes further networks.
- The panel recommends screening carefully the progression issues in the curriculum to avoid duplication of topics and tasks.
- The given structure of the curriculum shows a strong fragmentation between many small volume subjects and numerous learning outcomes (although relevant ones) which causes time challenges as well as reduces the opportunity to focus on one topic. Therefore, the panel recommends reviewing the curriculum, its learning outcomes and how these overall competences could be achieved.
- As there is little cooperation between departments and curricula, the need for multidisciplinary courses and free courses from other departments is an issue for programmes. Thus, the panel recommends looking for options to make programmes more interdisciplinary and thus enhance students' perspectives to find their place in a growing interdisciplinary labour market.
- The panel also points out at the necessity to find new sources for funding to redevelop the infrastructure of the department for advanced learning needs.

Opportunity for further improvement

- Curriculum objectives are to provide high-quality, internationally recognised professional higher education in the field of photography and contemporary visual arts. The panel therefore recommends reconsidering linking theory with practice and learning by making and doing with larger modules as this could help concentrate on matter and content – deeper understanding of photography as part of critical thinking within visual culture and contemporary art and thus enhance the quality of the programme.

2.2.2 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.
- A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and career and supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.
- Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.
- The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.
- Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.
- Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

Pallas' conditions and the organisation of admission to the Photography study programme enable fair access to education and provide for a motivated student body. Students explain their choice for Photography curriculum in Pallas under convenient conditions, since there is no need to provide a portfolio when entering the programme even though some of the staff stated that the portfolio should be required for all programmes upon admission (S, Pre-visit survey). Admission competition in Photography per student place based on applications varies, from 4.1 in 2017 to 3.92 in 2021. Admissions have taken place virtually since 2020 (SER). Open-door days aim at introducing the department to future students who openly appreciated this activity as it makes them feel homey and cared for from the very beginning. In the interviews the panel could talk to highly motivated students and committed staff members who stressed the community and family-like feeling conveyed by the department. Classes are small, it is easy to get to know everyone. General art subjects like drawing and painting make students feel confident in the art matters (S).

Students' choice for specialisation is supported by three speciality modules, department and study office have helped some students to choose elective subjects and practice places suitable for their interests and practice. Students' survey commented on poor sharing of information within the

department. Although there is an individual approach in teaching, it is necessary to pay more attention to the communication between the teacher and the students, so that there will be coherent understanding of the achievement of learning goals. The provided subject cards reflect an uneven attribution of ECTS throughout the curriculum with an equally uneven distribution of tasks that students have to complete in one semester.

Teaching is characterised by an individual approach to students. In several interviews the panel heard that teaching and learning various professional skills are in the focus, self-development and life-long learning are important markers, and so are independent thinking, decision-making ability, and adaptability. There is a strong community feeling amongst students and alumni.

The assessment criteria for different courses vary, grading is done via letters or a corresponding number of points. Criteria refer to quality of work, motivation and attendance in the working process; assessment of practical courses differs from assessment of semi-practical courses. As students mentioned in the interviews, information is not always clear, and they would appreciate clearer and coherent information on these issues as well as monitoring of grading and criteria application, to avoid unfair approach. As example was mentioned the varying approach to attendance as assessment criterion as well as keeping of deadlines.

Different platforms have been used for online learning during Covid (Teams, Zoom, Meet). During lockdown periods evaluations happened online. Students brought out that the assessments are not well structured, and they are not evaluated equally. The feedback could be more evenly distributed, since the first students in the assessment row receive more attention than the ones in the second half of the day. The students would have more constructive critique and feedback with questions (S). Teachers of various courses collaborate at assessment processes (T). There are teachers who are interested in their works and discuss them, there are teachers who are less interested in them (S).

Prior and experiential learning is considered; recognition of prior work and learning is regulated on an institutional level; according to the students interviewed information on RPL is transparently supplied and related questions are clearly answered: RPL works well and is no issue of concern (S).

The main focus of the programme is on practical skills which are linked to achieving the programme learning outcomes. Even though practice comes first there is enough theory provided, some courses direct the students to analyse their practice in written or verbal form. To foster mutual learning, students are encouraged to work in pairs for their diploma project (M).

Students have opportunities for mobility within Estonia and internationally, the information on mobility options is shared via emails. International mobility happens mostly through Erasmus exchange. In addition to that study trips, participation in international exhibitions or meetings with renowned photographers are organised; work placements and practices with national cultural institutions enlarge students' mobility options and contribute to students' competence and skills development.

There are several support services available for the students. Handling of problems tends to be informal with students turning to the Head of the Programme or seeking help from the study office. They can also approach the Academic Vice Rector and the Rector. There is no formal path where to

turn with a specific problem or question. As there is no psychologist working at Pallas, students are provided with information on mental specialists' websites and phone numbers. For information about everyday studies the students use the Study Information System Tahvel. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported by the department and study office. During the COVID-19-time, social media channels were used for communication.

Graduates of the department of Photography have good practical skills and they can work as photographers and art practitioners in Estonia and abroad. Their jobs range from work as professional photographers, running their own business, editors at newspapers, school art teachers and managers, or directors of productions. Some alumni have become guest lecturers at Pallas and, in case of running their own business, employ Pallas students and graduates for minor or major tasks (A). In the interviews, alumni expressed their satisfaction with the knowledge and technical skills gained at Pallas. To capture feedback from alumni Pallas runs an annual formal survey and invites graduates to teach their peers after graduation.

As to the content of the curriculum, students and alumni suggested to provide more courses on entrepreneurship; furthermore, students find that the marketing part needs to be developed and there could be more economy lessons. The programme provides for practice in the real world but hardly any knowledge of how to apply for money (S, A). According to students, the duration of the internship is not sufficient; a more systematic and financially supported structure for internships at some employers could be implemented (A, E).

Strength

- The department is characterised by a strong community feeling and collegiate relationship between staff and students.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Information on assessment criteria is given by teachers yet in very different ways and different quality. To assure equity of all students on this process, the panel also recommends paying more attention to a consistent information on assessment criteria, achievement of learning outcomes and transparent and fair application of criteria for all students in an equal way.

Opportunities for further improvements

- Alumni can bring in ideas stemming from their experience in the labour market and retrospection on their studies. The panel recommends critically reflecting the programme course offer and take up alumni suggestions based on their experience, such as including courses on marketing and economy as these are useful, even necessary with a view to becoming an independent photographer.
- With a view to equal treatment of all students the panel recommends implementing a formal path of handling problems.

2.2.3 Development, cooperation and internationalisation of teaching staff

- Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.
- Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.
- Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programs which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.
- The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI is taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the member of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

Teaching in the Photography department is conducted by a small team of permanent staff and many guest lecturers who particularly appreciate the small group size and the creative spirit at Pallas. (T) Members of staff are active as photographers, researchers, and artists. The panel learned from the students that the teaching skills and teaching methods of teachers lack parity. When addressing this issue with the department, limited resources were named as the main reason that prevents hiring better qualified teachers. Pallas teachers also addressed the issue of money and stated that teachers in HEI can be considered as underpaid with regards to average salaries in Estonia (T).

The pedagogical training of teachers is understood differently. It might be training of teacher's skills in their subject field, or it may be improving their teaching methods. There is little support for developing teaching skills for guest teachers (T) in a structured way, the understanding of learning outcomes and how they impact teaching is diverse. The staff members suggested that there could be an introduction of innovative professional techniques (T). The need for staff and lecturers' training is monitored in an unsystematic way, and occasional application of courses goes in line with this. The problems in teaching manifest themselves also in the assessment process as the panel heard in the interviews. The panel also learned that Pallas has offered teachers' training at Tartu University to make for missing training options at Pallas itself.

The principles of Academic ethics are described in various documents, such as the study regulations, the Internal Rules of Procedure, the job description of the study and research structure staff. The interpretation of academic ethics is different by person. The panel was told in the conversation with the staff that the main issue in academic ethics is to not tolerate plagiarism, creative theft, and fraud as regulated by the Internal Rules of Pallas.

Students are aware of the ethical principles and intellectual property issues which the department follows. As future photographers, they are taught to discuss ethics while taking pictures. The learning

outcomes for the Photography curriculum contain awareness of issues on academic ethics principles and equality matters. One teacher mentioned the necessity to have a special ethical subject in photography programme since ethical questions immediately appear when photographing people.

Members of the teaching staff have participated in some international exhibitions and conferences using Erasmus mobility opportunities. This has been slowed down by the pandemic in recent years. The panel heard in interviews about the limited budget for international travel and collaboration, for taking part in international art, film, photography events. Guest teachers are up to date in current trends in the art and film world as they are professionals in their fields. Making exhibitions is one way for RDC to evolve; RDC is not limited to the school level only but there are also long-term relationships with museums for collaborations. The panel could sense that there is awareness of cultural openness in society and art field among staff as well as consensus on the necessity to networking and visible contribution in the field of Estonian visual culture.

The work of staff is evaluated every five years as attestation, this happens according to the Estonian HEI regulations. This evaluation considers the effectiveness of teaching and students' feedback and RDC activities. Between these attestations there are appraisals or development conversations that should take place every three years. The panel was told that there is no systematic handling of the results of these discussions nor written summaries of the conversations (M). There is no consistency in development conversations. A long-time member of staff had no such conversations in 20 years as the panel learned (T).

Areas of concern and recommendations

- As teaching, learning outcomes and assessment should be constructively aligned, the panel recommends implementing structured teachers' training opportunities especially for novice staff and guest teachers.
- To systematically handle the results of staff appraisals and meetings with teachers and implement actions accordingly, appraisal meetings should follow the defined process and timing, the results should be documented and taken forward to foster both skills' enhancement and curriculum update.

2.3. Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration (Prof HE)

The Study Programme has developed over recent years (since the last accreditation), with new staff and ideas permeating through the curriculum. This is evidenced in the strength of the student feedback as will be outlined below.

Student admission numbers, although small (somewhat defined by the estate space and staffing numbers), are reflected well in the number of applications for the Study Programme and supported by progression and completion data of students taking the programme. As a four-year undergraduate degree programme, it is predominantly focused upon the practice of painting (across different forms and materials, for example, watercolour, oil and acrylic) as well as restoration techniques including, for example, mosaic. The Study Programme is heavily skills focused enabling the students to understand and excel in their craft.

The programme aims to create graduates ready for the 'labour market', skilled artists (painters) or painting restorers that have, during their period of study experience of the external world and the opportunities available for them there. This is enhanced through the Pallas gallery and opportunities for students to exhibit their work as well as restorers being able to work in real-world environments. This enables the graduates to be independent professional painters, visual artists, painting restorers and specialists in their discipline, with entrepreneurial skills.

The shape of the Study Programme has unique qualities, the bifold specialist pathways through the programme, which creates a strong community of staff and students and enables students to gain broader skill levels during their study.

2.3.1 Planning and management of studies

- The design and development of study programme(s) take into account the expectations of students and other stakeholders, national strategies, legislation and trends in the particular area as well as labour market needs. The level and volume of RDC activities is sufficient and supports the launching of the study programme(s).
- The objectives of study programme(s), modules (including courses) and their learning outcomes are concrete and coherent. The teaching content and methods and assessment criteria and methods support students in achieving their learning outcomes and developing their key competencies. The study programmes support the development of creativity and entrepreneurship and other general competencies.
- The administration of material and financial resources that ensure the design and implementation of the study programme(s) is purposeful, systematic and sustainable. The learning environment, including materials, tools and technology support the students in achieving their learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis

The documentation in the SER outlining the Study Programme for Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration was detailed. The paperwork also defined the teaching methods, and assessment criteria as well as the credit structure for specific courses/modules. This documentation also included the course level learning outcomes, whilst giving a narrative of the study programme aims and the interlinked approach to Painting and Wall Painting Restoration, which was extremely useful to review prior to the visit.

During the visit, the panel were given a tour of the facilities for the Study Programme which helped to contextualise the information provided in the SER. During the meeting with current students, across the different years of the Study Programme and across the two specialisations, there was positive feedback for the teaching staff and their commitment to the programme, their knowledge of the principal discipline-level skills and the way that the staff regularly present their work to them.

One point raised by students that was then further discussed with graduates and academic staff related to the number of credit blocks, courses that students have to take, which seemed to be rather confusing to students and also leads to the potential, as described by the students of actually focusing on certain credits and not focusing so much on others, with a very heavy focus upon technical skills in years 1 and 2. It is understandable how this has developed, given the multiple areas of competence the staff team want the student to engage with, but a review of this procedure and condensing multiple small credit courses into larger credit block courses would be a major enhancement to the student experience.

A further discussion was around the area of specialisation and when students can do this, technically this happens early in the course, but realistically given the credit structures and course content this does not happen until 3rd year and reviewing this might also be of benefit to the students experience and allow more focused independent study from an earlier point in the programme.

Separately from this the panel carefully reviewed the learning outcomes across the different courses and further work needs to be done to identify students' learning rather than submission forms. This interlinks into the assessment strategy and the provision of course paperwork, assessment deadlines consistently across all courses through the Study Programme, constructively aligning this process would really benefit the quality assurance aspects of the paperwork and the panel believe that this should be reviewed as quickly as possible. In addition to this during the discussion with students, the panel discussed feedback/feed forward, and how this was provided, again there was no consistent approach to this, which should be put in place and clearly articulated to students. The course introduction and outlining of the learning outcomes also needs to happen at the start of each course, with clear deadlines and submission points in place. The panel felt that the staff team (given the relatively small student numbers) could consistently formalise written feedback for students, which again would enable students to understand how they need to develop as they progress through the course.

The panel saw that students within the department share studios collectively and have communal space access, yet the spaces are small, given the types of activities expected from the students and it became clear that some students had studios externally from the University, which opens concerns around equitability and inclusivity. The panel thinks that the department should investigate into the possibility to develop small individual studio spaces within the department. This would mean students

would be in the University more, rather than attending for timed taught classes and help to develop the independence of practice that would be fundamental to a Painting students' progression.

As outlined in the Research section of this report, research strategies should be integrated further into the Study Programme curriculum, across the two specialisations.

Strengths

- The individual approach and collegiate relationship between students and teachers further individual skills' development.
- The practical approach in restoration studies well supports developing students' skills in drawing, painting, and wall painting techniques (al fresco, mosaic, sgraffito)
- The strong relation with alumni and other external stakeholders strongly contributes to the further development of Pallas study programmes.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The panel recommends that the Study Programme academic team review the number of small credit subjects/course. The panel believes that there are too many small credit subjects/courses per semester, therefore leading to a workload that is too large for students, and with too many teachers approaching them with different assignments at the same time. Reducing the number of assessments would greatly benefit the students' learning experience and skills' development.
- The panel believes that there is too little space for painting studies and therefore recommends that the institution looks for additional space, where students could have their own individual private space for painting.
- The panel recommends that the academic staff team should review the module learning outcomes to ensure that these are in fact international learning outcomes and better align learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

2.3.2 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Conditions and organisation of admission ensure fair access to education and motivated student body. Students' choice of specialisation is supported.
- A student-centred approach is used in the studies, aiming at the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies and career and supporting the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme.
- Student assessment, including taking accreditation of prior and experiential learning into account, supports the students and corresponds to the learning outcomes. Objective and reliable assessment is ensured.
- The organisation of studies including practical work and training is based on the specificities of students and forms of study and supports the student in achieving the learning outcomes. Opportunities have been established for mobility within Estonia and internationally.
- Support services for students are in place and available for students. Individual development and progress of students are monitored and supported.
- Graduates of the study programme are competitive in terms of their knowledge and social skills both nationally and internationally.

Evidence and analysis

After discussion with the academic staff team, students, and Head of Department, the panel was convinced that there is a fair access to admissions and the Study Programme. Students can opt for their chosen area of specialisation, however as mentioned in the previous section, specialisation from an earlier point would be more advantageous; ensuring that Restoration students can undertake some restoration work in the earlier years would be of benefit as well. The panel were told that the institution (by the Rector and Vice-Rector) plans to split into three primary specialisation areas, Arts, Design and Restoration. This, the panel believe, will benefit the Study Programmes by making them more specific than they are currently, and enable students to specialise (with the introduction of greater independence of study) earlier, whilst still engaging with many different forms of skill-based learning. It must be noted that this should not preclude forms of cross Study-Programme engagement for students, as raised directly by the students who would like to see more specialisation alongside real opportunities to work collaboratively, or in interdisciplinary ways.

There is a student-centred approach to the Study Programme, enabling the students to assume responsibility for planning their studies. This also supports the students' career ambitions as was evidenced through the Advisory Board and external opportunities – particularly for the Wall Painting Restoration students. Furthermore, this supports the development of key competencies and achieving the learning outcomes of the study programme although staff should review the learning outcomes within all courses to ensure that they are formulated as learning outcomes as defined in the ECTS Users' Guide and how they align with assessment criteria.

Students do have opportunities for travel within Estonia and beyond, using Erasmus exchange, although numbers of students taking this option up is small; it would be good for the institution to consider how this could be expanded. The number of partner institutions and options for student and staff mobility are excellent and small numbers recently could have been impacted upon by travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 virus.

Support is available for students, but it is predominantly centred around the academic staff team. There is an international supporting staff member particularly focusing upon Erasmus exchange; more student support centrally within the institution would benefit students' sense of wellbeing, particularly around the areas of mental health, disability, dyslexia, etc.

The panel were able to meet graduates from the Study Programme, who were active in the labour market and outlined how the Study Programme had enabled them to do this so quickly after graduation. It is clear also that graduates go into many diverse types of employment, following the labour market in terms of the direct skills gained through the Study Programme, and teaching opportunities or importantly postgraduate study.

One particular strength of the Study Programme lay around the invention of an 'Opinion Festival' which was described to the panel during the visit. The opinion festival is an opportunity for students to give feedback on all areas of their Study Programme, and the courses within, to academic staff. This festival takes place once or twice a semester. The opinion festival was much appreciated by the students, giving them opportunities to discuss anything arising in a collegiate atmosphere. One note for the academic staff team would be to ensure that once they have responded to the feedback, they then inform the students of any changes that they have implemented to close the feedback loop.

Strengths

- The *"Opinion Festival"* - students' feedback discussed in the meetings with teaching staff 1-2 times per semester
- Alumni are active in the contemporary painting field and work in painting restoration area in Estonia, the strength of this is their support and commitment to the institution beyond graduation and this creates a strong relationship with alumni and other external stakeholders.
- The strong student-oriented focus of the Study Programme stimulates motivation and skills development of students.

Opportunity for further improvement

- The panel recommends that the Pallas and the Study Programme staff team focus upon the creation of more specialisation time as well as independent study time built into the curriculum, focusing upon the areas of specialisation and the split between Renovation and Painting.

2.3.3 Development, cooperation and internationalisation of teaching staff

- Teaching is conducted by a sufficient number of professionally competent members of the teaching staff who support the development of the students.
- Teaching staff follows the principles of academic ethics and the codes of conduct in case of non-compliance.
- Members of the teaching staff participate in international mobility programs which encourage the development of their teaching and RDC activities and the cultural openness of the HEI and the Estonian society.
- The effectiveness of both studies and RDC activities, students' feedback, the effectiveness of supervision, development of teaching and supervision skills, international mobility and entrepreneurial or work experience in the specific field outside the HEI is taken into consideration in evaluating the work of the member of the staff.

Evidence and analysis

The Self Evaluation Report and the visit to Pallas evidenced that the teaching staff number is excellent given the overall student number on the Study programme. In addition, the teaching staff are all active in their relevant field of expertise, presenting, publishing and/or exhibiting their work throughout Estonia and internationally, particularly using staff mobility through Erasmus and partnership agreements. This is reflected through their contribution to society locally but also through the further dissemination of their creative activities. The Pallas gallery also assists with a broader dissemination of the work being produced by academic staff (as well as students and graduates). One area that the staff team and upper management will want to consider is the relative low number of academic staff available currently to teach Wall Painting Restoration (only one); this was outlined by the students and would be an area of concern, particularly with the realignment of the pillars of Arts, Design and Restoration and the growth into further areas of painting restoration, for example canvas and oil paint restoration.

During the visit, the panel discussed academic ethics with the staff team and Head of Department, further to the information contained in the SER. The SER and interviews on-site provided evidence, that Pallas staff and students do not tolerate academic fraud, including cheating and plagiarism, and that they act immediately upon any such occurrence. An area to be reviewed would relate to the singular document outlining the institutional approach to academic ethics, providing a cross-institutional approach (that is reflected in an ethics committee). In addition, ethical approaches to practice should be considered and whether there is the requirement for a form that can be submitted for consideration.

Academic staff participate in international mobility programmes and the panel were able to understand during the meetings with academic staff how this supported their teaching and the currency of the study programme, whilst also enabling the academic staff team to disseminate their creative work internationally. From the perspective of the study programme this is evidently of great

benefit, not just to staff, but importantly to students during their study. This is supported by the RDC as was explained to the panel during the meeting with staff from the RDC and aligns to the overall institutional strategy and mission. As above the RDC activities around support for staff research and staff national and international mobility was well received by the students, as they outlined during the panel meeting with them. This does assist staff in understanding entrepreneurial approaches, although the panel did believe that these staff mobility opportunities could also assist in developing new innovative teaching practices within the institution. Enabling staff to witness alternative practices externally should be shared as good practice on their return to enable discussion about internal developments.

After evaluating the appraisal process and staff development within the SER and during the visit and panel interviews, it became clear that these processes are often undertaken in an ad-hoc and informal manner. In fact, the professional staff appraisals are formalised whereas the academic appraisal processes are not in the same way. This should be a consistent approach that would support staff, whether they be early career or looking to enhance and develop their teaching. Included within this would be the potential of staff development around new innovative pedagogical approaches that would enable the team to consider new methods for teaching painting. There should be a consistency within this institutional approach that would cover Learning and Teaching, curriculum development, staff development and research development, and should be undertaken annually. This would then provide the academic staff team with a regular opportunity to outline their future roles, and development needs, whilst supporting the institution in terms of identifying tasks, roles, and duties, that can and should be recorded centrally through HR systems. As noted, the academic staff team are all engaged in their creative activities but aligning this to institutional research priorities and at the same time to staff development requirements would benefit the student experience.

Strength

- The teaching staff commitment to the disciplines of painting and painting restoration is to be commended, the team is ambitious to execute the curriculum at its best, eager to support and enhance the student experience and is also very attentive to student feedback. This creates a strong localised community, and this was valuably reflected in the student sessions during the visit.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The panel recommends that Pallas and the staff team invest in supporting their colleagues working through the specialisation of Wall Painting Restoration, increasing the number of staff that can teach this form of work.

Annex 1. Accreditation Schedule

SCHEDULE OF THE VISIT
17–22 October 2022

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19			
Time	**Activity**	**Experts / room**	**Representatives of Pallas**
9.00 – 9.30	Introductory meeting with the self-assessment team	All panel members Room: rector's office	Piret Viirpalu, Rector Lennart Mänd, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Ivi Lillepuu, Vice Rector Maire Luud, Office Manager, Quality Specialist
9.45 – 10.45 *parallel meetings*	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Textile students**	Salolainen, Pook, Werner HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	India Maria Kiisler, 2nd year Liisa Hanvere, 3rd year Kirke Kirikall, 3rd year Johana Mauer, 4th year Marion Mölder, 4th year Merily Mikiver, 4th year
	Assessment of the selected study programmes**: Photography students**	Siib, Lange, Doona HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Signe Sumerik Dias Room: 306	Katariina Torm, 1st year Kaimar Tauri Tamm, 2nd year Sille-Riin Rand, 3rd year Laura Auer, 4th year Agnes Müürsepp, 4th year Andrea Margo Rottenberg, 4th year

	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration students**	Payne, Skaurone HAKA coordinator: Reet Taimsoo Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 205	Patrick Tall, 2nd year, arts Kristin Erm, 2nd year, arts Gertu Soosaar, 3rd year, cons/rest Polina Richter, 3rd year, cons/rest Mia Melanie Saar, 4th year, arts Triinu Meresaar, 4th year, cons/rest
11.00 – 11.45 *parallel tours*	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Textile tour of facilities**	Salolainen, Pook, Werner HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Kertu Liik	Aet Ollisaar, Professor, Head of Department Liina Kool, Technical Assistant / Assistant Head of Department / Lecturer
	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Photography tour of facilities**	Siib, Lange, Doona HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman	Peeter Linnap, Professor, Head of Department Andrus Kannel, Technical Assistant Kaisa Eiche, Assistant Head of Department
	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration tour of facilities**	Payne, Skaurone HAKA coordinator: Reet Taimsoo	Margus Meinart, Senior Lecture, Head of Department Pille Johanson, Lecturer, Assistant Head of Department Heli Tuksam, Professor - Conservation/Restoration Manager
12.00 – 13.00 *parallel meetings*	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Textile alumni and employers**	Salolainen, Pook, Werner HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Alumni: Annika Kiidron, 2017, fashion designer, Kiidron Design OÜ Liisi Tamm, 2022, textile designer, Kahu Vill OÜ Marta Tuulberg, 2018, decorator in Tartu Kaubamaja Employers: Marit Ilison, fashion designer (https://maritilison.com/) Heiki Paarson, Chief Executive Officer of Haine OÜ

	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Photography alumni and employers**	Siib, Lange, Doona HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Signe Sumerik Dias Room: 306	Alumni: Robi Zuts, 2022, photographer Andero Kalju, 2020, photographer Liisa Perend, 2020, designer Kristin Juurma, 2018, photographer and designer Reti Kokk, 2019, photographer, teacher, designer Employers: Virge Ratasepp, Head of Communications at Theatre Vanemuine Madis Kats, photographer, designer of the cultural magazine Müürileht. Katrina Sirelpuu, Art Director TANK creative agency
	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration alumni and employers**	Payne, Skaurone HAKA coordinator: Reet Taimsoo Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 205	Alumni: Silver Laadi, 2021/arts, freelancer Madli Lavin, 2018/arts, art teacher, freelance illustrator and artist, MA student at Tallinn University, Andragogy Maris Paal, 2021/arts, MA student at Estonian Academy of Arts, Contemporary Art Teele Ülesoo, 2019/cons/rest, freelancer Mari Kallaste, 2022/cons/rest, freelancer Employers: Viljar Vissel, board member of SA Virumaa Museums Peeter Talvistu, chairman of the board of Tartu Artists' Union
13.00 – 14.15	*Lunch*		
14.15 – 15.15 *parallel meetings*	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Textile teaching staff**	Salolainen, Pook, Werner HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Kadi Pajupuu, Professor Mari-Triin Kirs, Technical Assistant / Senior Teacher Liina Kool, Technical Assistant / Assistant Head of Department / Lecturer Anu Samarüütel, Guest Lecturer Maarja Tamjärv, Guest Lecturer

			Alide Zvorovski, Guest Lecturer
	Assessment of the selected study programmes**: Photography teaching staff**	Siib, Lange, Doona HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Signe Sumerik Dias Room: 306	Andrus Kannel, Lecturer, Technical Assistant Kaisa Eiche, Guest Lecturer, Assistant Head of Department Mati Mõttus, Guest Lecturer Rao Heidmets, Guest Lecturer Pillery Teesalu, Guest Lecturer Maris Savik, Guest Lecturer
	Assessment of the selected study programmes**: Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration teaching staff**	Payne, Skaurone HAKA coordinator: Reet Taimsoo Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 205	Pille Johanson, Lecturer, Assistant Head of Department Indrek Aavik, Technical Assistant Sirje Petersen, Associate Professor Veiko Klemmer, Lecturer Heli Tuksam, Professor - Conservation/Restoration Manager Katrin Maask, Lecturer, Centre of General Subjects
15.30 – 16.30	Assessment of the selected study programmes: **Heads of all three Departments**	All panel members HAKA coordinators: Tiia Bach, Hillar Bauman Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: 306	Margus Meinart, Senior Lecture, Head of Department of Painting Peeter Linnap, Professor, Head of Department of Photography Aet Ollisaar, Professor, Head of Department of Textile
16.45 – 17.45	*Panel meeting: summing up the Wednesday meetings. Room: 306*		

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20			
Time	**Activity**	**Experts / room**	**Representatives of Pallas**
9.00 – 10.30 *parallel meeting*	Meeting on **Strategic Management: Rector and Vice Rectors**	Werner, Skaurone, Doona, Payne HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Piret Viirpalu, Rector Lennart Mänd, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Ivi Lillepuu, Vice Rector
	Meeting on **Teaching and Learning and Student assessment**	Lange, Siib, Pook, Salolainen HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 306	Veiko Klemmer, Lecturer, Manager of Centre of General Subjects Janne Kasemets, Academic Affairs Manager Anne Rudanovski, Professor, Head of Department of Sculpture Kristina Allik, Senior Teacher, Assistant Head of Department of Furniture Maila Käos, Lecturer, Department of Leather Design Ave Avalo, Lecturer, Centre of General Subjects
10.45 – 11.45 *parallel meetings*	Meeting on **Strategic Management: representatives of Council and Advisory Board**	Werner, Skaurone, Doona, Payne HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Vano Allsalu, Member of Advisory Board (Vice President of Estonian Artists' Association) Mati Raal, Member of Advisory Board (Tsunftijänes OÜ) Ilona Gurjanova, Member of Advisory Board (President of Estonian Association of Designers) Aet Ollisaar, Member of Council, Professor, Head of Department of Textile Diana Edur, Member of Council, 4-year student, Department of Furniture Kurmo Konsa, Member of Council, Professor - Conservation/Restoration Manager

	Meeting on **Learning Support Systems**	Lange, Siib, Pook, Salolainen HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 306	Rasmus Eist, Lecturer, Technical Assistant of Department of Sculpture Piret Mägiste, Academic Affairs Manager Margus Meinart, Senior Lecture, Head of Department of Painting Janika Press, Librarian Meelis Ojasaar, IT Administrator Pille Johanson, Lecturer, Assistant Head of Department of Painting
12.00 – 13.15 *parallel meetings*	Meeting on **Quality Culture and Academic Ethics**	Werner, Skaurone, Doona, Payne HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Maire Luud, Office Manager, Quality Specialist Piret Kaevats, Development Manager Piret Viirpalu, Rector Kurmo Konsa, Professor - Conservation/Restoration Manager Aivar Habakukk, Professor, Head of Department of Furniture Marko Kekišev, Professor, Department of Media Design
	Meeting on **Service to Society**	Lange, Siib, Pook, Salolainen HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 306	Salme Kulmar, Continuing Education Manager Madis Liplap, Lecturer, Department of Painting Maiken Austin, Public Relations Manager Edith Hermann, Head of Library
13.15 – 14.30	*Lunch break*		
14.30 –15.45 *parallel meetings*	Meeting on **RDC and Academic Staff development**	Werner, Skaurone, Doona, Payne HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Kadi Pajupuu, Professor, Department of Textile Anne Rudanovski, Professor, Head of Department of Sculpture Peeter Linnap, Professor, Head of Department of Photography Ivi Lillepuu, Vice Rector Lennart Mänd, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Eve Eesmaa, Lecturer, Centre of General Subjects

	Meeting on **Resources and Communications**	Lange, Siib, Pook, Salolainen HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 306	Mare Muuga, Finance Manager Maire Arbus, Personnel Manager Piret Viirpalu, Rector Piret Kaevats, Development Manager Maire Luud, Office Manager, Quality Specialist Maiken Austin, Public Relations Manager
16.00 – 16.45	**Tour of facilities of other Departments**		
16.45 – 17.45	*Panel meeting: summing up the Thursday meetings. Room: rector's office*		

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 21			
Time	**Activity**	**Experts / room**	**Representatives of Pallas**
8.40 – 9.10	Visit to the Gallery	All	
9.30–10.30 *parallel meetings*	Meeting on **Internationalisation**	Werner, Skaurone, Doona, Payne HAKA coordinator: Hillar Bauman Interpreter Kertu Liik Room: rector's office	Riina Gendrikson, International Relations Manager Lennart Mänd, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs Keret Altpere, Guest Lecturer, Department of Textile Rene Haljasmäe, Professor, Head of Department of Leather Design Grete Lehemaa, Alumni 2022, Department of Furniture Eeva-Ruth Niitvägi, 4th year student, Department of Sculpture
	Meeting with the **representatives of Student Council**	Lange, Siib, Pook, Salolainen HAKA coordinator: Tiia Bach Interpreter Ingrid Podar Room: 306	Diana Edur, Head of Student Council Gregor Kiin, Member of Student Council Gertu Soosaar, Member of Student Council Stiina-Liis Koddanipork, Member of Student Council

10.30 – 11.30	✔ ***Inquiry of documents*** *(in case we have discovered during the visit that we need some more evidence)* ✔ ***"open doors"*** *– opportunity for those from Pallas who want to come to discuss various topics related to institutional accreditation with the experts (please register by sending e-mail:* hillar.bauman@harno.ee *by October 20; time limit is 5 minutes per person)* ✔ ***ad hoc interviews*** *(in case we have discovered during the visit that we need to talk (again) with someone)*
11.30 – 13.30	*Panel meeting: preparation for the preliminary conclusions. Room: rector's office*
13.30 – 14.30	*Lunch*
14.45 – 15.30	**Open meeting to staff and students: presentation of preliminary conclusions by the panel.** *Room: Library. Interpreter Kertu Liik.*