

The decision of the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education

Tallinn University

Decision of fulfilment of the secondary condition of institutional accreditation

05.06.2023

The Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education decided to consider the secondary condition imposed on the institutional accreditation decision of Tallinn University fulfilled.

Pursuant to subsection 53(3) of the Administrative Procedure Act and clauses 43.2 and 43¹ of the document *Guide to Institutional Accreditation*, established on the basis of the authorisation contained in subsection 38(3) of the Higher Education Act and subsection 24(5) of the Statutes of the Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (hereinafter referred to as the Council) states the following:

1. Pursuant to subsection 53(1)2) of Administrative Procedure Act, *the secondary condition of an administrative act is an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act, and clauses (2)2) and 3) prescribe that a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition or if issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of the administrative right of discretion*. On 7.06.2021, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education adopted the decision to approve the assessment report¹ and to carry out the next institutional accreditation of Tallinn University in seven years with the secondary condition that Tallinn University would submit to the Council on 7.06.2022 at the latest a report on the elimination of the shortcomings referred to in clause 12.3 of the assessment decision².
2. On 3.02.2022, the Council decided to extend the deadline for submission of the report as requested by Tallinn University until 17.01.2023.
3. On 17.01.2023, Tallinn University submitted to the Council the following document: 1) Report on activities implemented by Tallinn University to eliminate the deficiencies described in clause 12.3 of the assessment decision of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA) Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education (07.06.2021).

¹ The assessment report is an integral part of the decision and is available on HAKA's website.

² The assessment report is available on HAKA's website.



4. HAKA invited the following members of the Institutional Accreditation Committee to assess the fulfilment of the secondary condition.

Anja Oskamp	Professor of Law; Former Rector of the Open University of the Netherlands
Liz Bacon	Professor, Deputy Principal and Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Abertay University; President of EQANIE (United Kingdom)

5. HAKA sent the initial report to the higher education institution on 27.02.2023, and the higher education institution responded on 13.03.2023 with its comments. On 21.03.2023, the Assessment Committee submitted a report to HAKA on the elimination of the shortcomings referred to in clause 12.3 of the Council's decision of 7.06.2021. The assessment was as follows:

The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition	Assessment: The shortcoming has been fully eliminated
<p>Shortcomings in the implementation of the distributed management model: Tallinn University's management system is characterised by highly dispersed management. Even though this ensures the involvement of staff at all levels, in practice it has led to inconsistency / excessive variability / lack of coherence in its implementation. It is recommended that Tallinn University develop the reporting and monitoring of academic units in a way that ensures continuity of practice and compliance with documented rules throughout the university and thus the harmonisation of the organisational culture. Although the development plans of the different units are based on the university's strategic plans, they are still not fully aligned. In order to ensure an appropriate and coherent approach to the priorities of Tallinn University throughout the university, the development plans of both academic and support units need to be aligned with them.</p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The progress made by the university in strategic management and planning has been considerable. A strategy has been developed for the years 2023–2027, which also contains performance indicators for all goals, and a publicly accessible information system has been created for all employees, which allows monitoring the fulfilment of the goals. In parallel, the development plans of the academic structural units were also prepared to ensure their connection to the development plan of the university as a whole. A specific member of the Rectorate is liable for the fulfilment of each goal in the development plan. <p><u>Suggestions for further development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is recommended to take a structured approach to the review of planned activities to assess their impact on the units of the university and to ensure continuous improvement.
The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition	Assessment: the shortcoming has been substantially eliminated

<p>Gaps in quality culture: quality issues may not always reach decision makers, and pragmatic solutions to problems at unit level are not necessarily in line with university policy. In order to close the gaps in the quality management of Tallinn University and to harmonise quality management processes across different units, it is recommended to develop a clear framework that explains and links processes at different levels of quality management and specifies who is responsible for what. Currently, the exchange of best practices is taking place through different networks and informal channels and lacks a systematic approach. It is recommended that Tallinn University develop a system for sharing best practices as well as a structure for analysing and exchanging quality-relevant information outside the existing networks.</p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The university has been very serious about fulfilling this secondary condition and the work done towards quality management is impressive. A quality framework has been developed, which is a good basis for quality-related discussions at the university and helps the staff to better understand the values and goals of the university. <p><u>Suggestions for further development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality framework is still rather general and needs supplementation with other quality themes to ensure its consistent interpretation and implementation across the university.
<p>The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition</p>	<p>Assessment: the shortcoming has been fully eliminated</p>
<p>Shortcomings in carrying out the Digital Learning Games study programme: in the Digital Learning Games study programme, a significant part of the studies (including basic courses) is carried out by second year Master's students of the same study programme. A sufficient number of qualified teaching staff must be ensured for the high-quality delivery of the study programme.</p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students are no longer carrying out teaching. The council of the study programme has been updated with the purpose of expanding collaboration with companies. The presentation of student work at industry events in the field is commendable, just like the relaunch of the Digital Learning Games Society. This should be supported in the future as well. <p><u>Suggestions for further development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The principle that students of the same study cycle cannot teach their fellow students must be documented in writing and the observance of this principle must be verified.

6. Given the fact that the shortcomings underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition have been fully or substantially eliminated, the Council

Decided to consider the secondary condition imposed on the decision adopted on 7.06.2021 on the institutional accreditation of Tallinn University fulfilled and to maintain in force the decision to accredit Tallinn University for seven years.

The decision was adopted with 9 votes in favour. 0 were against.

7. A person who finds that his or her rights are violated or his or her freedoms are restricted by this decision may file a challenge pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Court Procedure Act. The challenge shall be filed to the HAKA Assessment Council within 30 days after the person became or should have become aware of the decision. The Council shall send the challenge to the HAKA Appeals Committee, which shall, within five days of receipt of the challenge, provide a written unbiased opinion to the Council on the validity of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the challenge within 10 days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If further examination of the challenge is necessary, the Assessment Council may extend the deadline for examining the challenge by up to 30 days.

Hillar Bauman

Secretary of the Council