

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

Tallinn University

Decision of fulfilment of the secondary condition imposed on the quality assessment decision of the Social Services study programme group

29.06.2023

The Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education decided to deem the secondary condition imposed on the quality assessment decision of the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University to be fulfilled.

Pursuant to subsection 53(3) of the Administrative Procedure Act and clauses 42 and 42.4 of the document *Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education*, 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 27.01.2021, 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 quality assessment of the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University in seven years with the secondary condition that Tallinn University would submit to the Council on 27.01.2023 at the latest a report on the elimination of the shortcomings referred to in clause 12 of the assessment decision².
2. On 27.01.2023, Tallinn University submitted to the Council the following documents: 1) Annex 1: Report on meeting the requirements of the secondary

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.



condition; 2) Annex 2: Recommendations for improvement in a study programme group; 3) Annex 3: Study programme report – Health Promotion Specialist (PHE); 4) Annex 4: Study programme reports – Youth Work (PHE), Youth Work Management (MA); 5) Annex 5: Study programme reports – Social Pedagogy (BA), Social Pedagogics and Child Protection (MA); 6) Annex 6: Study programme reports – Social Work (BA, MA), Social Entrepreneurship (MA); 7) Annex 7: Child Welfare study programme.

3. HAKA invited the following experts to assess the fulfilment of the secondary condition:

Kerstin Svensson	Professor, Lund University, Sweden
Lowis Charfe	Senior Lecturer, University of Central Lancashire, UK

4. HAKA sent the initial report to the higher education institution on 25.05.2023, and the higher education institution responded on 8.06.2023 with its comments. On 9.06.2023, the Assessment Committee submitted a report to HAKA on the elimination of the shortcomings referred to in clause 12 of the Council's decision of 27.01.2021. The assessment was as follows:

The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition	Assessment: the shortcoming has been fully eliminated
Clause 5.1.2 of the document <i>Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education</i> states the following: <i>The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.</i> It is difficult to achieve in-depth knowledge of the field in the Master's programmes in the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University, in particular in the Social Pedagogy and Child Protection as well as Social Work programmes, because there is no eligibility criterion requiring previous education in a similar field and graduates of any Bachelor programmes are admitted. Therefore, a significant amount of time is spent on covering topics during Master's studies that should rather be the precondition for admission to the study programmes.	<u>Strengths</u> 1) More attention is paid to admission criteria. Both interviews and written works are used in the admission process to ensure that the students have relevant knowledge to base their studies on. The compulsory compensatory module is now a requirement for students without a Bachelor's degree in Social Work for admission to the Master's programme. 2) The Master's programme in Social Pedagogy and Child Protection is closed. A new Master's programme in Child Welfare has been developed. The focus on child protection is a development that deserves to be recognised, as child protection is one of the central domains of social work and social pedagogy. The domain is also very well covered with qualified teaching staff. The study programme also includes international aspects, which will support students in developing their critical and comparative analysis skills. Leadership

<p>Admission criteria for Master's programmes should be clarified in order to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes corresponding to the Master's level for all students.</p>	<p>takes an important place in the study programme, being well aligned with the professional standards of the domain.</p> <p><u>Suggestions for further development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In the future, attention should be paid to making sure that all written assignments and assessments in the Child Protection study programme support students in putting theory into practice.
<p>The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition</p>	<p>Assessment: the shortcoming has been fully eliminated</p>
<p>Clause 5.3.4 of the document <i>Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education</i> states the following: <i>Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.</i> Clause 5.3.5 states the following: <i>The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.</i> The practical training included in the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University is oftentimes too short and unstructured and raises questions about the competence of the graduates. Practical training should be better integrated into the study programmes and should allow for actual practice, not mere observation. Practical training should likewise be more thoroughly supervised by teaching staff.</p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Close contacts between teaching staff and the organisations for practical training provide a solid base for keeping good quality of the training. 2) The volume of practical training has been increased in the study programmes to provide all-around support to students in their studies. 3) The use of portfolios allows students to get a comprehensive understanding of their competences. The reflective peer activity between students is another example of good practice. 4) The teaching staff is closely collaborating with various departments of the Ministry of Social Affairs in developing the required competences and professional standards. Such activity supports teaching and learning as well. <p><u>Suggestions for further development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Given the importance of collaboration with the organisations for practical training, it is important to provide teaching staff with sufficient time within their workload to continue the collaboration.
<p>The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition</p>	<p>Assessment: the shortcoming has been fully eliminated</p>

<p>Clause 5.2.2 of the document <i>Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education</i> states the following: <i>There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.</i> There is good access to electronic literature in English available in the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University, but students would also like to use materials in Estonian and hard copies of textbooks. Many students will also need to know the terminology in Russian in their future work. The university should take a consistent approach to using materials in the appropriate languages in teaching and learning.</p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The students in the Youth Work study programme have access to an impressive collection of digital materials. The students are also adding to the materials. 2) The use of the thematic publications of scientific journals (e.g. "Sotsiaaltöö") allows students to be familiar with the latest scientific publications in their native language. 3) The university has good cooperation relations with ministries and vocational and professional organisations in the development of study materials. 4) The conferences and the official cooperation relations with foreign universities have also contributed to the production of the materials needed for studies. 5) As it is important for students in Social Work to speak Russian, courses have been held and study materials have been compiled in Russian. <p><u>Suggestions for further development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) In the field of social pedagogy, the freely accessible pan-European Social Pedagogy MOOC could be used.
<p>The shortcoming underpinning the imposition of the secondary condition</p>	<p>Assessment: the shortcoming has been fully eliminated</p>
<p>Clause 5.1.1 of the document <i>Guidelines for Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education</i> states the following: <i>The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.</i> Neither the identities of the study programmes nor the boundaries between the</p>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The link between the objectives of all study programmes and the professional standards supports the options for employment. 2) The close collaboration between the university and the ministries supports the options for employment. Collaboration is further supported by the fact that many graduates find employment within the ministries. 3) Collaboration relations with other universities are also beneficial. For example, in youth work, regular meetings have been set up in

programmes are clearly defined for the study programmes in the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University. The links between the Social Work study programmes and cooperation with other study programmes in the study programme group, i.e., with the Social Pedagogy and Child Protection study programmes, should be clearly defined. More attention should be paid to defining the potential employment opportunities for graduates. For example, the links between the Health Promotion Specialist's study programme and the needs of the labour market remain unclear.

collaboration with the University of Tartu with the Youth and Talent Policy department within the Ministry of Education and Research.

- 4) Each study programme now has a clearer identity, but also joint modules that take into account the multidisciplinary nature of future work.
- 5) Much has been done to strengthen the Health Promotion Specialist study programme and its links with the labour market. The knowledge and experiences of alumni have been used for developing a database of potential employers. The updating of the description of the study programme on the website provides employers with a clearer overview of the competences of the graduates.

Suggestions for further development

- 1) The development of the Health Promotion Specialist study programme is ongoing. It is important for the university to provide the resources necessary for the implementation of the study programme and to constantly monitor the development of the study programme and make changes if necessary.

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

Decided to consider the secondary condition imposed on the quality assessment decision of the Social Services study programme group of Tallinn University fulfilled and maintain in force the decision to carry out the next assessment in seven years.

The decision was adopted with 11 votes in favour. 0 were against.

6. 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