Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Informatics and Information Technology Study Programme Group

University of Tartu

21/02/2013

The Quality Assessment Council of the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency decided to approve the assessment report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Informatics and Information Technology study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the University of Tartu in seven years.

Assessment Committee

Manfred Nagl – Chair	Aachen University (Germany)
Viljar Mee	Student member (Estonia)
Liz Bacon (Elisabeth Kabler)	The University of Greenwich (UK)
Virgo Inno	Tieto Eesti AS (Estonia)
Laszlo Keviczky	Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Hungary)
Andres Kütt	Webmedia, MIT (Estonia)
Ernst W. Mayr	Technical University of Munich (Germany)
Ignas Niemegeers	Delft University of Technology (The Netherlands)
Rain Rebane	Elion Ettevõtted AS (Estonia)

The Committee's observations on the study programme group level

Strengths:

- *There is close cooperation between the University and IT companies. Employers are involved in teaching on a regular basis.*

- *Members of the teaching staff are highly motivated to teach students and also consider them to be their cooperation partners.*

- *Basic courses on entrepreneurship are integrated into study programmes and the support system for launching start-ups is impressive.*

- *The system for student feedback functions well and, as a rule, students' recommendations and suggestions have been taken into consideration in study programme development.*

- *The internationalisation rate in ICT at the University is high: there are many young foreign members of the teaching staff (25%), guest members of the teaching staff, and international doctoral students; master degree programmes are partially or totally provided in English.*

Areas for improvement and recommendations:

- *The Assessment Committee did not find enough examples of close cooperation among different institutes and specialty areas. It is also necessary to optimise both substantive and organisational cooperation between the Tallinn University of Technology and the University of Tartu in implementing their joint study programmes (Cyber Security, Software Engineering). Cooperation between the Institute of Computer Science and the Institute of Physics in implementing study programmes should be stronger.*

- *The building of the Institute of Computer Science lacks an adequate number of personal rooms. Given the increasing demand in the labour market and the increase in international mobility, it is necessary to find a solution to the space problem in the near future.*

- *Cooperation between the University and outside enterprises should be better exploited to develop the content of study programmes and reduce student outside employment while studying, among other things.*

- *The required student workload regarding their academic activities and independent work is considerably lower than seen in international practice. The University should definitely raise the level of those standards to ensure a sustainable international competitiveness of its graduates. It is necessary to enforce strict rules regarding deadlines for academic activities.*

- *Assessment criteria and requirements for course completion vary significantly. It is possible to complete courses and pass final papers on a level that is significantly lower than international standards.*

- *In students' opinion, the proportion of practical work in study programmes should be larger. It is necessary to find a better balance between theory and practice without reducing the amount of theoretical materials.*

- *E-learning should be used more widely and systematically.*

- *One of the biggest problems is the high student dropout rate and the University should deliberately and systematically deal with it across all observed study programmes.*

- *There is insufficient willingness on the part of teaching staff to analyse teaching activities and their results. However, teaching skills (including the motivation of students) are of critical importance for reducing dropout rates and increasing participation rates.*

- *The computer engineering in the IT study programme group needs extra attention because it does not adequately cover that field, regarding both the content of study programmes and research.*

- *International mobility of Estonian students should be increased. Vigorous development of internationalisation and foreign relations is critical and essential. More high-level partners in international research are necessary.*

Further information:

Assessment Report