

**Decision Regarding the Assessment of the
Transport Services Programme Group
TTK University of Applied Sciences**

05/02/2016

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

On the basis of subsection 21¹ (2) of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher Education and VET (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and point 41 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', authorised in point 3.7.1 of the above-mentioned EKKA Statutes; the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of EKKA (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') affirms the following:

1. On 27.11.2014 TTK University of Applied Sciences and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct the quality assessment of the study programme group.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 17.08.2015, approved the following membership of the quality assessment committee for the Transport Services study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Tallinn University of Technology and TTK University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

Kevin Patrick Brendan Cullinane – Chair	Professor of Logistics & Transport Economics, University of Gothenburg (Sweden)
Trevor David Heaver	Professor Emeritus, Operations and Logistics Division, University of British Columbia (Canada)
Olli Matias Kauhanen	Student, Faculty of Technology and Maritime Management, Rauma University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
Gabriel Lodewijks	Professor of Transport Engineering and Logistics, Faculty of Mechanical, Maritime and Materials Engineering, Section of Transport and Logistic Technology, Delft University of Technology (Netherlands)
Hercules Haralambides	Professor of Maritime Economics & Logistics, Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands)

Janek Saareoks	Schenker Ltd., CEO (Estonia)
Raivo Vare	Estonia Railways Ltd., Chair of the Management Board (Estonia)

- TTK University of Applied Sciences submitted the following programmes for evaluation under this study programme group:

Railway Engineering (Prof HE)
Transport and Logistics (Prof HE)

- TTK University of Applied Sciences submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 24.08.2015 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 27.08.2015.
- An assessment visit was made to TTK University of Applied Sciences on 22.10.2015.
- The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 02.12.2015, EKKA forwarded it to TTK University of Applied Sciences for its comments on 02.12.2015, and the University delivered its response on 15.12.2015.
- The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 20.12.2015. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
- The Secretary of the Council forwarded the Committee’s final assessment report along with the University’s self-evaluation report to the Council members on 26.01.2016.
- The Council with 9 members present discussed these received documents in its session on 05.02.2016 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding the Transport Services study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at TTK University of Applied Sciences.

Assessment at the Level of the Study Programme Group

Strengths

- There is a great demand for graduates of both study programmes, therefore they have no difficulties finding jobs in their specialisations. The University has an excellent reputation among employers who also recognise the graduates’ good theoretical knowledge and practical skills.
- Representatives of alumni, employers, industry and other universities are included in the curriculum councils and thesis defence committees.
- Continuous involvement of external stakeholders in both the study programme development and the teaching process ensures that the programmes are relevant and meet the labour market needs, as well as strengthens the University’s existing excellent relationships with industry.
- The teaching staff, students and graduates of these study programmes are very pleased with the programmes. There is open communication at the University. The feedback system is formalised and well documented.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- Study programme development needs closer collaboration with other study programmes and departments both inside and outside the University.
- Only minimum research is undertaken due to a lack of central government funding. It is advisable to recruit teaching staff with experience in successful research and research group leadership.

- The number of modules taught in English is small and English language skills are relatively poor at the University. The proportion of visiting teaching staff included in the teaching process is very limited due to financial reasons and an inadequate number of international relationships. It is recommended that the University develop an internationalisation strategy to improve the English language skills of its teaching staff, offer them the opportunity to practice at international higher education institutions, and support the development of international partnerships.
- One of the main concerns for these study programmes lies in the high dropout rate. It is advisable to organise studies in a more flexible way (e.g. using more e-learning methods). Also, the mathematical skills of University entrants should be identified as early as possible so that they could be provided with remedial teaching if necessary.
- The University should build a network of alumni and key partners, and maintain it in a more determined and systematic way.

Assessment at the Study Programme Level

Railway Engineering (Prof HE)

Strengths

- The Railway Engineering programme is unique in Estonia because this profession can be learned only at TTK University of Applied Sciences.
- According to employers, a number of theses prepared within this programme have had a direct positive impact on railway organisations (e.g. topics related to railway traffic management at the Narva and Tartu-Orava border stations).
- Together with partner universities in Latvia and Finland, TTK University of Applied Sciences led the EDURail project which was funded by the EU INTERREG programme. As a railway education harmonisation project, five modules were developed which could also be utilised in the teaching process at the University. This project created a favourable starting point for successive international cooperation projects.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- Modifications should be made to either the name of this study programme in English or its content. Under the current name of Railway Engineering the programme should offer a significantly larger load of engineering training. A good alternative name could be 'Railway Technology'.
- Both students and employers would prefer to see fewer generic modules and more opportunities for specialisation during the last two years of the programme.
- At present the number of students is small and the range of potential employers limited. This may become an obstacle for further development of the programme.
- The study programme should be better marketed to student candidates. One option to increase the number of students would be to establish a competence centre.
- It is recommended that the programme offer more courses delivered in English.
- The study programme should pay more attention to the development of students' ICT skills.
- Teaching staff should be provided with better opportunities for personal development, especially in research. At present teaching workloads are very large.
- More e-learning courses should be utilised in the teaching.
- With regard to teaching generic courses, teaching staff should collaborate more with other departments of the University and also with the teaching staff at Tallinn University of Technology.
- The English language skills of students are poor when compared to the students of the other programme in this study programme group.

Transport and Logistics (Prof HE)

Strengths

- There is effective collaboration with Tallinn University of Technology within the framework of this study programme. Due to good communication between the programme managers, the graduates of this programme have favourable opportunities to continue their studies in the MA programme in Logistics at TUT.
- The annual Logistics Seminar, organised by the students themselves and valued highly by all stakeholders, provides an eminent example of best practice.
- Modern learning technologies are used extensively in the teaching and learning process. Teaching staff is provided with substantial support in their use of educational technology.
- Practical training constitutes approximately 15% of the load of the study programme and is very well organised. Internship opportunities in more than 100 enterprises are available to students.
- Representatives of enterprises have been invited to teach in the programme, which is highly appreciated by both students and employers. Teaching staff has good contacts with enterprises in the field.
- The teaching staff receives strong support for their personal professional development from University management.
- The teaching staff receives feedback on their work from colleagues and students through the centralised electronic platform.
- Development of the teaching skills of practitioners who are included in the teaching staff is ensured. A module offered by the University of Tartu is utilised for this purpose, but other courses are used as well.
- Employers are very pleased with the professional preparation of graduates.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- Mostly logisticians are trained in this programme and therefore its current name ('Transport and Logistics') is misleading. The content of the study programme should be aligned with its title.
- The study programme should also include subjects that develop creativity (e.g. marketing).
- It would be useful to formalise an agreement between TTK University of Applied Sciences and Tallinn University of Technology for the students' transition to TUT's MA programme.
- The IT infrastructure of the University needs to be updated. The University should obtain access to the eduroam digital network (<https://www.eduroam.org/>).
- Employers, alumni and students all believe that English is the language of logistics, but the study programme does not offer enough content in English. Students express strong willingness and readiness to study in English. The modules of marketing and logistics system management planned to be delivered in English starting from 2017 will not be sufficient, modules with more generic content should also be taught in English.
- Students should receive substantial feedback on their theses after the thesis defence.
- The study programme does not have a Professor, all staff being comprised of lecturers. Academic staff turnover is high. Sufficient recruitment and career progression should be ensured for the teaching staff.
- To qualify as a professional logistician, a graduate of the programme still needs to take a separate professional exam. The study programme management should begin negotiations with PROLOG to be given the right to award qualifications appropriate to the study programme.
- Students are eager to participate in student mobility and to have more international students involved in their own study programme, but they are not given good opportunities for international student mobility. To facilitate both inward and outward mobility, more modules should be made available in English. It is also advisable to participate actively in the Erasmus

programme and to conclude bilateral agreements with foreign higher education institutions that offer similar study programmes.

10. Point 41 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', establishes that the Quality Assessment Council shall approve an assessment report within three months after receipt of the report. The Council shall weigh the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations pointed out in the assessment report, and then shall decide whether to conduct the next quality assessment of that study programme group in seven years, or in less than seven years.
11. The Council weighed the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations referred to in point 9 of this document and found that the study programmes, the teaching conducted under these programmes, and development activities regarding teaching and learning conform to the requirements if the University eliminates the following shortcomings:
 - At present the title of the Transport and Logistics programme and its design are not consistent, since the study programme primarily trains logisticians. With regard to *Raudteetehnika* programme, the programme's name in English ('Railway Engineering') is inconsistent with its content since the programme does not offer a sufficient load of engineering training. The names of these programmes in both Estonian and English need to be brought into harmony with their structures, according to subsection 6 (5) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of Higher Education'.
 - To qualify as a professional logistician, a graduate of the Transport and Logistics programme still needs to take a separate professional exam. The study programme management should begin negotiations with PROLOG to be given the right to award qualifications appropriate to the study programme.
12. According to clause 53 (1) 2) of the Administrative Procedure Act, a secondary condition of an administrative act is an additional duty related to the principal regulation of the administrative act, and according to clause 53 (1) 3) it is also a supplementary condition for the creation of a right arising from the principal regulation of the administrative act. Clauses 53 (2) 2) and 3) establish that a secondary condition may be imposed on an administrative act if the administrative act cannot be issued without the secondary condition, or if issue of the administrative act must be resolved on the basis of an administrative right of discretion. The Council found that, without a secondary condition, the next quality assessment of the study programme group should be conducted in less than seven years, and

DECIDED

to approve the assessment report and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Transport Services study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at TTK University of Applied Sciences in seven years with the following secondary condition:

TTK University of Applied Sciences shall eliminate the shortcomings described in point 11 of this document by 05.02.2017 and will 1) bring the name of the Transport and Logistics programme into accordance with its design, 2) bring the name in English of the Railway Engineering programme (*Raudteetehnika*) into accordance with its design and 3) start negotiations with PROLOG to be granted the right to award qualifications appropriate to its Transport and Logistics programme.

The decision was adopted by 9 votes in favour. Against 0.

13. No later than 05.02.2017, TTK University of Applied Sciences shall submit a written report to the Council on the implementation of the secondary condition.

14. In case TTK University of Applied Sciences does not comply with the secondary condition by the due date, the Council will repeal this assessment decision and set a new date for a quality assessment of the study programme group, or establish a new secondary condition.
15. A person who finds that his or her rights are violated or his or her freedoms are restricted by this decision may file a challenge with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding. A judicial challenge to the decision may be submitted within 30 days after its delivery, filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Tõnu Meidla
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council