

## Decision Regarding Assessment of the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences Study Programme Group

### University of Tartu

**10/03/2017**

**The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the University of Tartu in seven years, with a secondary condition**

On the basis of subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (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 26.11.2015 the University of Tartu and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct a quality assessment of the study programme group.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 21.10.2016, approved the following membership of the quality assessment committee for the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the University of Tartu and Tallinn University (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

<b>Milan Pol – Chair of the Committee</b>	<b>Professor, Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic</b>
<b>Päivi Atjonen</b>	<b>Professor, University of Eastern Finland, Finland</b>
<b>Kerttu Huttunen</b>	<b>Adjunct Professor, University of Oulu, Finland</b>
<b>Maritta Hännikäinen</b>	<b>Professor, University of Jyväskylä, Finland</b>
<b>Diarmuid McAuliffe</b>	<b>Lecturer, University of the West of Scotland, UK</b>
<b>Ulla Mutka</b>	<b>Professor, JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland</b>
<b>Hannele Niemi</b>	<b>Professor, University of Helsinki, Finland</b>
<b>Florian Rampelt</b>	<b>Student, University of Passau, Germany</b>
<b>Margit Timakov</b>	<b>Head, Estonian Teachers' Union</b>

<b>Peter van Petegem</b>	<b>Professor, University of Antwerp, Belgium</b>
<b>Rupert Wegerif</b>	<b>Professor, University of Exeter, UK</b>

3. The University of Tartu submitted the following programmes for evaluation under the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences study programme group:

**Primary School Teacher (INT BA+MA)**  
**Primary School Teacher in Multilingual School (INT BA+MA; Narva College)**  
**Special Education (BA)**  
**Special Education and Speech Therapy (MA)**  
**Early Years Teacher (BA)**  
**Early Years Teacher in Multilingual Environment (BA, Narva College)**  
**Early Years Educator (MA)**  
**Teaching Humanities and Social Subjects in Basic School (BA)**  
**Humanities in Multilingual School (BA, Narva College)**  
**Teacher of Humanities in Multilingual School (MA, Narva College)**  
**Teacher of Several Subjects in Basic School (MA)**  
**Teacher of History and Civics (MA)**  
**Teacher of Estonian Language and Literature (MA)**  
**Teacher of Estonian Language and Literature in Non-Estonian School (MA)**  
**Educational Science (Sciences) (BA)**  
**Educational Science (Math and Sciences) (BA)**  
**Secondary School Sciences Teacher (MA)**  
**Teacher of Mathematics and Informatics (MA)**  
**Teacher of Arts, Handicraft and Home Economics (MA)**  
**Teacher of Vocational Training (BA)**  
**Educational Sciences (MA)**

4. The University of Tartu submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 26.08.2016 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 29.09.2016.
5. An assessment visit was made to the University of Tartu during 29–30.11.2016.
6. The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 7.02.2017, EKKA forwarded it to the University of Tartu for its comments on 7.02.2017, and the University delivered its response on 20.02.2017.
7. The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 20.02.2017. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
8. 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 21.02.2017.
9. The Council with 8 members present discussed these received documents in its session on 10.03.2017 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the University of Tartu.

### **Assessment at the Level of the Study Programme Group**

#### Strengths

- 1) The leadership at the University of Tartu (UT) supports reforms in the field of Teacher Training and Educational Sciences. Management of this field is clear and effective. A teacher education action plan for 2016–2020 has been developed at the University level.
- 2) The study programmes clearly meet the needs of the Estonian labour market.
- 3) The study programmes have strong conceptual bases, as well as clear contents and objectives. Syllabi have been updated and their further development is carried out in a multifaceted way.
- 4) Study programme development has been carried out in collaboration with the core stakeholders such as teachers, teacher associations, employers and students.
- 5) Pedagogicum of the University of Tartu is a very promising platform for development of study programmes; it promotes interdisciplinarity and provides opportunities to link research with teaching more effectively.
- 6) Narva College also plays an important social role as a community centre. The buildings of Narva College are of a very good quality.
- 7) The library is well stocked with modern literature.
- 8) Different methods are used in teaching to combine theoretical learning with practical learning. Practical trainings are well organised and integrated into the study programmes.
- 9) Mentoring is offered to novice members of the teaching staff.
- 10) Students are motivated and focused on their studies.

#### Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) A perceived low reputation of the teaching profession, and consequently of teacher education, is a challenge which also affects the quality of teacher training. The University should collaborate with its partners to enhance the reputation of the teaching profession in Estonian society.
- 2) The proportion of research in the workloads of the teaching staff is generally small. The teaching load of some lecturers does not allow them to engage sufficiently in research, and consequently the quality of teaching suffers.
- 3) As teacher training programmes are delivered by different units of the University, they should conduct joint reviews of the programmes on a regular basis.
- 4) It is important to monitor that UT Pedagogicum would not become overly focused on administrative issues and thereby diverge from the actual teaching and learning process.
- 5) Critical issues for most programmes include the high student dropout rates, insufficient research performed and the low international mobility rates. Special attention should be paid to resolving these issues.
- 6) More collaboration with other universities in Estonia and abroad is recommended.
- 7) It is recommended that the University develop a plan for how to finance education and research in the future, when funding from the EU structural funds ends.
- 8) Internal evaluations of study programmes could be conducted on a regular basis so that lecturers may learn to reflect critically on their own activities.
- 9) More attention should be paid to inclusive education issues and to working with pupils who have special educational needs.
- 10) Feedback from alumni could be collected in a more comprehensive way at the University level.
- 11) Anonymity should be guaranteed for the feedback from small groups. Students should be encouraged to provide feedback on their study programmes.
- 12) Feedback collected by Pedagogicum on students' practical training periods could be analysed together with regular feedback received on the study programmes to get a better overall picture of the situation.
- 13) More attention should be paid to international dimensions of literature used in teaching, international student and staff mobility in both directions, and international projects.
- 14) In addition to short-term, separate development projects, more focus should be placed on longer-term development activities with prospects of financial rewards.

- 15) The academic building in Salme Street is in need of renovation.
- 16) Specific funds should be allocated for both research and international staff mobility.
- 17) Knowledge of the Estonian language among students at Narva College is currently inadequate and should be improved.
- 18) Learning materials should be updated on a regular basis.
- 19) Research-based teaching should become the norm in all study programmes. The degree of staff engagement in research should be increased. A strategy should be developed and implemented to increase the percentage of staff members with PhDs.
- 20) Students must be shaped through informative and formative feedback so as to become self-directed learners.
- 21) There is a continuing need to think about how to create a balance between students' full-time studies and their work in order to enhance the quality of learning, increase chances for mobility and reduce the dropout rate.
- 22) Given that the number of students enrolled in some of the programmes is very small, programme leaders could consider merging some courses and programmes.

### **Assessment at the Study Programme Level**

#### **PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER (INT BA+MA), SPECIAL EDUCATION (BA), SPECIAL EDUCATION AND SPEECH THERAPY (MA), EARLY YEARS TEACHER (BA), EARLY YEARS EDUCATOR (MA)**

##### Strengths

- 1) The study programmes have been designed in close cooperation with employers as well as with colleagues from Tallinn University and from other countries. Monitoring systems of the programmes are consistently improved. The study programmes have recently been updated to meet the changing needs of society. When developing and updating the programmes, feedback from students has been taken into account to a great extent.
- 2) Complex entrance examinations are used in many programmes.
- 3) The BA programme in Early Years Teacher is very popular among student candidates and its graduates have good prospects in the labour market.
- 4) A functioning network of innovation schools and kindergartens has been developed.
- 5) In-service trainings focus, inter alia, on issues related to didactics, project work, and children with special educational needs.
- 6) Academic buildings have been refurbished and equipped with modern digital devices. A variety of IT tools are employed. Students learn to use digital devices needed in the work of teaching.
- 7) The library is of good quality and is actively used. A broad selection of journals is made available. Access to professional databases and e-journals has been ensured.
- 8) Students are involved in research and development projects (e.g. when writing their MA theses) and they are able to publish articles together with their lecturers. Some research topics are of great importance for the study programmes. In some study programmes, research is conducted on teaching methods. Assessment materials are developed within the subjects of many MA theses.
- 9) Staff members collaborate with one another, including in the form of voluntary discussion clubs.
- 10) In some subjects (e.g. in the Early Years Teacher BA programme), web-based courses are actively created, and flexible forms of study are used.
- 11) Employers participate in the supervision and defence of theses.
- 12) Teaching staff members are highly qualified. Lecturers participate in trainings to enhance their professional knowledge and to improve their IT skills.
- 13) Staff members take into account feedback from their colleagues to improve their skills.

- 14) Students are satisfied with their programmes and studies, and believe that their views have been taken into account in the development of study programmes. Students also rate their lecturers highly.
- 15) Study programmes are actively marketed to find motivated and suitable potential students (e.g. the Special Education BA programme).
- 16) Exchange students from abroad regularly participate in the Primary School Teacher programme.

#### Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) The study programmes must pay more attention to children with special educational needs, gifted-child pedagogy, anti-bullying interventions and the Content and Language Integrated Learning.
- 2) The University should provide better feedback to the supervisors of practical training regarding students' skills development.
- 3) It should be acknowledged at the University level that the fields of special education and speech therapy require a lot of individual or small group teaching, which in turn requires additional resources.
- 4) In the Special Education programme, students should have exposure to children with special educational needs at the early stages of their studies. More practical training opportunities should be created for students in the Special Education programme.
- 5) International cooperation must be promoted. Some courses could be taught in English and more learning materials could be offered in English. Lecturers from abroad should also be regularly involved in teaching.
- 6) International staff and student mobility in both directions must be strongly encouraged, including forming agreements with partner institutions of higher education and increasing flexibility when transferring ECTS credits that are earned at higher education institutions abroad.
- 7) Members of the teaching staff should be allowed more time to prepare learning materials.
- 8) More attention should be paid to the role of play in child development within the study programmes (e.g. in the Early Years Teacher programme).
- 9) The Primary School Teacher programme should place more emphasis on child-led and child-centred approaches. More attention should also be paid to the study of social sciences, multidisciplinary childhood studies, as well as issues of children's rights and age-related education (especially that of the very young children).
- 10) In the new Educational Innovation programme, to be launched in the 2017/18 academic year, consideration could be given to focusing on the development and management of early childhood education, and on pedagogical leadership.
- 11) In some programmes (e.g. the Primary School Teacher), student workloads for independent work and requirements for the supervision of independent work should be reviewed and specified more clearly.
- 12) The contents of the Special Education and Speech Therapy programme should be better introduced to the BA students enabling them later to make informed choices about the MA programmes.
- 13) Closer cooperation should be established with the 'Early Years Teacher in Multilingual Environment' programme offered at Narva College.
- 14) In order to promote staff involvement in research, their teaching loads should be reduced.
- 15) Lectures for the full-time and Open University students in the Special Education BA programme could be conducted jointly. The potentials of social media could be better employed while recruiting MA students.
- 16) There is a continuing need to find ways of reducing the dropout rates and motivating students (including Open University students) to complete their studies in a timely manner – for example,

by offering them more support for thesis writing and by enabling them to better combine their studies with their work.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL (INT BA+MA, NARVA COLLEGE), EARLY YEARS TEACHER IN MULTILINGUAL ENVIRONMENT (BA, NARVA COLLEGE), HUMANITIES IN MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL (BA, NARVA COLLEGE), TEACHER OF HUMANITIES IN MULTILINGUAL SCHOOL (MA, NARVA COLLEGE)**

Strengths

- 1) The study programmes are unique in Estonia for being multilingual and they support multiculturalism in many ways.
- 2) The new Study Support Teacher specialty in the Primary School Teacher programme equips students with skills needed for their work with children who have special educational needs.
- 3) The 'Early Years Teacher in Multilingual Environment' programme is popular and employment rates among graduates within their areas of speciality are high.
- 4) A good learning environment exists at Narva College. A broad selection of learning materials and tools, as well as effective IT support, is made available.
- 5) At the College, language learning is integrated into the specialist training. Both active learning and teamwork methods are utilised.
- 6) A number of visiting lecturers are involved in the teaching process, who introduce new topics and viewpoints to the students. Practitioners also participate in the teaching.
- 7) The teaching and learning process integrates theory, practice and pedagogical skills development in a thoughtful way.
- 8) Students' ratings of the teaching staff and the adequacy of their number are positive.
- 9) In-house trainings are organised for the teaching staff. Members of the teaching staff are engaged in professional development.
- 10) Staff members actively compile learning materials and publications about study programme development.
- 11) Active international cooperation exists, including participation in international conferences.
- 12) Students are satisfied with general competencies they have acquired and with the support and counselling systems at the College. Students are offered various flexible forms of study and individual study options as needed.
- 13) According to employers, students have good theoretical knowledge and can use modern technological tools and teaching methods. Students are self-reflective in their activities, as well as motivated and active in their work.
- 14) Starting from the year 2017, international students whose native language is Russian will be offered an Erasmus semester at the College.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) Major challenges for the College lie in the low completion rates within the standard periods of study and the high dropout rates, mainly caused by the students' inadequate knowledge of Estonian. Strict measures should be taken to remedy the situation.
- 2) The Early Years Teacher programme must focus more clearly on pre-school education. To this end, the number of joint subjects with the Primary School Teacher programme should be decreased and the number of subjects regarding the teaching and development of preschoolers increased. Teaching of children with special educational needs should be considered as a compulsory element in the study programme.
- 3) Students must be offered more support for thesis writing.
- 4) Teaching in English could be encouraged, to increase international student mobility in both directions.

- 5) Closer collaboration with similar study programmes at the University of Tartu should be considered in terms of contents of the programme and the organisation of studies. Among other things, cooperation with the Special Education and Speech Therapy programmes should be considered, in order to improve students' knowledge and skills related to children with special educational needs.
- 6) Students should be encouraged to provide more feedback on the study programmes.
- 7) Learning mobility must be considered to be part of the studies. Mobility options are narrowed by the fairly strict rules for transferring ECTS credits earned abroad. Students' outward mobility should be strongly encouraged and international students should also be recruited to the programmes.
- 8) More opportunities should be created for face-to-face communication between students and lecturers to discuss issues related to the organisation of studies and methods of learning.
- 9) The new system of practical trainings should be developed further.
- 10) Both the teaching staff and the students could make a better use of e-learning opportunities. The support of the Moodle environment could be extended to all courses.
- 11) Collaboration between Narva College and the schools should be strengthened.
- 12) Students are not involved in research. Teaching and research are not interrelated. It must be ensured that the whole process of teaching and learning is research based, and students must be involved in research and development.
- 13) More attention could be paid to development of the students' soft skills.
- 14) Members of the teaching staff should be encouraged to provide feedback to their colleagues.
- 15) The potential of candidates to complete the studies in a timely manner should be better identified during admissions.
- 16) In some programmes, student numbers are very small. The merger of those programmes could be considered.

**TEACHING HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SUBJECTS IN BASIC SCHOOL (BA), EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE (SCIENCES) (BA), EDUCATIONAL SCIENCE (MATH AND SCIENCES) (BA), TEACHER OF SEVERAL SUBJECTS IN BASIC SCHOOL (MA), TEACHER OF HISTORY AND CIVICS (MA), TEACHER OF ESTONIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (MA), TEACHER OF ESTONIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN NON-ESTONIAN SCHOOL (MA), SECONDARY SCHOOL SCIENCES TEACHER (MA), TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS AND INFORMATICS (MA), TEACHER OF ARTS, HANDICRAFT AND HOME ECONOMICS (MA)**

#### Strengths

- 1) One of the strengths of the study programmes is their coherence. This is a result of recent extensive reforms, which took into account feedback from various stakeholders.
- 2) Cooperation between the different units and Open University creates better opportunities for working students to participate in the studies, and supports the development of new and more flexible teaching methods.
- 3) The importance of the science education lab and the University of Tartu Natural History Museum in the teaching and learning process should be highlighted.
- 4) Significant efforts have been made to make teaching even more practical and student friendly. Modern teaching methods and technologies are employed. Students are treated in a flexible and personal manner. Good teaching practice developed at the University is worthy of recognition.
- 5) A network of schools for practical trainings has been developed. University lecturers and innovation schools organise annual conferences to share best practices.
- 6) Practical and theoretical learning are well interrelated. Students particularly appreciate the practical parts of their studies.
- 7) Subject teaching takes place in the relevant faculties, which provides students with good preparation in their chosen fields of study and allows for personalising the learning materials.

- 8) Teaching staff are committed to their teaching work and have excellent professional knowledge.
- 9) The University's new initiative to use portfolio-based assessment of staff's pedagogical skills and skills development is relevant and has a motivating effect on staff members.
- 10) The number of staff members holding PhDs is gradually increasing. This helps to enhance the quality of both research and teaching.
- 11) Staff members and students have good relationships. Due to the small study groups, students' individual needs to integrate their studies, work and family life are taken into consideration.
- 12) Students who have participated in learning mobility are remarkably enthusiastic, communicative and motivated, and are able to view things in a wider perspective.

#### Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) Regular feedback on courses (their coherence and quality of assessments) could be sought from experienced external assessors and these findings used in development activities.
- 2) The study programme managers could have a clearer vision of the contents and pedagogical development of their programmes.
- 3) Student workloads are unevenly distributed across different subjects. The workloads must be reviewed in order to ensure that they are in accord with the number of ECTS credits earned.
- 4) In the study programmes, the ECTS credits earned within Erasmus student exchange programmes are not allowed to be transferred in a sufficiently flexible manner. This creates obstacles to international student mobility.
- 5) There is too much observing in some study programmes and too little actual teaching practice. The loads of observation and practice should be reviewed and students should also be provided with teaching experience at different schools.
- 6) Given that there are many study programmes with very few students, a merger of programmes should be considered in the interests of efficient use of time and resources.
- 7) The dropout rate in the first year of MA studies is quite high. All students should be interviewed to determine their suitability for the teaching profession. This would also help to reduce the number of dropouts during the first semester.
- 8) Efficiency in the use of various digital learning centres (didactic centre, learning laboratory, Center of Educational Innovation) to support teaching should be analysed, seeing that there are too few references in the self-evaluation report of their use in the learning process.
- 9) Student mobility should receive more support, either financially or by creating "mobility windows" during the study period or both, which would enable more mobility opportunities to be exploited. The University could collaborate with other universities to harmonise relevant requirements for the contents and learning outcomes of courses.
- 10) The main teaching could be more fully integrated into the in-service teaching. In addition, collaborative learning should be supported in all areas of the study programme in order to develop team-learning skills.
- 11) All study programmes should pay attention to the education of children with special educational needs.
- 12) With regard to various courses and study programmes, future recruitment needs for new employees, including professors, should be anticipated in a systematic manner.
- 13) It is recommended that the BA programmes include short periods of practical trainings at partnership schools allowing students to test whether they would actually be interested in the teaching profession.
- 14) The efforts to market the study programmes through different channels must be continued and made more effective.
- 15) Students should be provided with better career counselling.

#### **Teacher of Vocational Training (BA)**



### Strengths

- 1) The study programme has provided good pedagogical development work in the training of qualified vocational teachers. There is mutual respect, support and cooperation between students and lecturers.
- 2) Coherence of the programme and the overlapping of different subjects have been analysed. Feedback from students, alumni, businesses and other stakeholders has effectively been taken into account while developing the study programme.
- 3) Courses have been updated, the Principles of Entrepreneurship course being a good example of this. The proportion of practical trainings in the programme has been increased.
- 4) There is a smooth and mutually beneficial cooperation with the Tartu Vocational Education Centre. The opportunities to use laboratories of the Tartu Vocational Education Centre and the Estonian University of Life Sciences are highly appreciated.
- 5) Research projects that support development of vocational education are carried out within the study programme.
- 6) Web-based learning materials and technology tools are widely used.
- 7) Teaching staff are familiar with new teaching trends and theories. A wide range of various teaching methods is used.
- 8) The partnership vocational schools believe that they have good cooperation with the University and that their viewpoints have been taken into account when developing the programme.
- 9) Members of the teaching staff have good international partners and opportunities to participate in international seminars and conferences.
- 10) The vast majority of students have considerable previous work experience that benefits them in their studies.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) Teaching staff should collect information from students about their work experience at the very beginning of their studies and develop individual study plans based on the information received.
- 2) According to the students, the practical training period in the first year should be reviewed, which is currently focused on the observation of the teaching and learning process at schools. Students want this practical training period to be more meaningful and active, so that they would be able to acquire practical teaching experiences at different vocational schools.
- 3) The Network of Innovation Schools could include more vocational schools.
- 4) Students of the Teacher of Vocational Training programme have very little opportunity to participate in the University's international exchange programmes due to their high workloads. Therefore, the programme could consider other options for internationalisation: to involve more international lecturers in the teaching process and to offer short-term and virtual mobility opportunities for students and staff in cooperation with other higher education institutions. Students working in the field could also take advantage of the mobility opportunities offered at their workplaces (vocational schools). One option would be to complete practical trainings in foreign countries.
- 5) It is advisable to increase admissions to full-time studies in the programme in order to meet the urgent need for qualified vocational teachers in coming years. The University of Tartu, along with other Estonian universities and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, should actively seek strategic and innovative solutions to the challenges related to the shortages of vocational teachers. One option would be to use all the existing expertise in cooperation with Tallinn University, to design new types of programmes for vocational teacher education.
- 6) Students could be offered more e-learning courses, and also receive supervision in the use of different technologies (videos, social media, etc.). This would allow them to better combine work with their studies. As an option the University could consider delivering the majority of or the entire Teacher of Vocational Training programme in the form of digital learning.

- 7) The future needs for learning resources should be thought through. Better digital learning opportunities should be created in the lecture halls.
- 8) Staff members should consider as to whether it would be possible to provide support for thesis writing from the very first year of study.
- 9) Teaching staff members feel great pressure to obtain research funding, but at the same time they carry heavy teaching loads in delivering both the study programme and the in-service trainings. Staff members should be provided with more suitable conditions for research. It would be desirable to launch a national research programme on vocational education and pedagogy, which would bring together the teachers, researchers and other stakeholders interested in the development of vocational education. Cooperation with companies and international researchers in the field of vocational education is also needed to promote vocational education and training.
- 10) Clear procedures should be established on how students can make up for missing parts of their studies caused by absences.

### **EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES (MA)**

#### Strengths

- 1) Students and staff are very dedicated. A very strong mutual respect and cooperation exist between staff and students.
- 2) Student-centred and modern teaching methods are employed, which is much appreciated by students. A great deal of self-evaluation and self-reflection is implemented. The flexibility of the study programme and opportunities to design individual learning paths are rated highly by students.
- 3) Theory and practice are integrated in the practical training period. Practical trainings are very well organised and relate closely to the students' everyday work and their career opportunities.
- 4) Feedback on the subjects and specialisation modules has been very positive throughout the years.
- 5) A sufficient number of learning materials and tools are made available, which are technologically innovative and of good quality.
- 6) The student body is very diverse. The teaching and learning process supports students' individual and social development. Each student is supported and counselled according to his or her individual abilities, needs and contingencies.
- 7) Some courses are taught in English in order to support internationalisation.
- 8) A significant number of graduates of the programme proceed with their studies at the doctoral level.
- 9) Members of the teaching staff are very highly qualified, 84% of them have PhDs.
- 10) Students are very satisfied with the possibility of joining research groups while writing their MA theses.
- 11) The student employment rate in different fields is very high. This shows that the study programme in general is in line with expectations of the labour market.

#### Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) Coherence of courses in the programme with the courses from other faculties should be improved.
- 2) In some modules the student workload is too high due to an accumulation of various small-scale learning assignments. The number of small-scale assignments should be reduced when designing the new merged programme (Educational Innovation). Updated learning materials should also be developed for the new study programme in line with recent international trends. International lecturers could be involved in the teaching. Internationalisation should be considered to be an essential part of programme development. Well-thought-through

opportunities should be created for students to allow them to participate in international mobility (including in virtual mobility).

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, five or three 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:
  - Subsection 6 (5) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of Higher Education', prescribes that *the title and structure of a study programme must be consistent, and the study methods used and the teaching and learning process, including the loads for independent work and practical training, must support achievement of the objectives of the study programme.* According to subsection 6 (2) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', *study programmes and the process of teaching and learning must be consistent, inter alia, with national quality requirements and agreements.* Point 5.1.2 of the regulation, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', authorised in subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act and in point 3.7.1 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, prescribes that *the structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme must support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.* In the structure and content of the study programmes, insufficient attention has been paid to inclusive education issues and to working with pupils who have special educational needs. The Early Years Teacher programme at Narva College does not focus on pre-school education in a sufficiently clear manner. The number of joint subjects with the Primary School Teacher programme should be decreased and the number of subjects regarding the teaching and development of preschoolers increased. Practical training opportunities created for students in the Special Education programme are not sufficient. In the Special Education programme, students should have exposure to children with special educational needs at early stages of their studies.
  - According to point 5.3.6 of the regulation, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', *the process of teaching and learning must support learning mobility,* and point 5.5.4 prescribes that, *as part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.* The international student mobility rate is low. In the study programmes, mobility options are narrowed by the overly strict rules for transferring ECTS credits earned abroad. In the study programmes at Narva College, international mobility or learning mobility is not seen as part of the studies. Students' outward mobility should be strongly encouraged and international students should also be recruited to the programmes.
  - According to clause 6 (7) 1) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', the teaching and learning process conforms to the requirements if *the teaching is performed by ordinary teaching and research staff who meet the qualification requirements established in legal instruments and whose number, based on their responsibilities, teaching and research loads, and numbers of students supervised, is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.* The proportion of research in the workloads of the teaching staff is generally small. The teaching load of some lecturers does not allow them to engage sufficiently in research, and consequently the quality of teaching suffers. Teaching and research are not interrelated, and

students of the study programmes at Narva College are not involved in research. Thus, given the number of students, the number of staff members whose research would support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes is not sufficient, as defined in the 'Standard of Higher Education'.

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 therefore, on the basis of points 41.1 and 42 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', the Council

#### **DECIDED**

**to approve the assessment report and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at the University of Tartu in seven years with the following secondary condition:**

No later than 10.03.2019, the University of Tartu shall submit a progress report in English to the Council on eliminating the shortcomings referred to in point 11 of this document. Members of the assessment committee shall be involved in the assessment of compliance with the secondary condition.

The decision was adopted by 8 votes in favour and 0 against.

13. If the University of Tartu 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.
14. The Council proposes that the University of Tartu will submit an action plan to EKKA with regard to the other areas for improvement and recommendations pointed out in the report no later than 10.03.2019.
15. A person who finds that his or her rights have been violated or his or her freedoms 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 this decision is possible within 30 days after its delivery, by 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**