

ASSESSMENT REPORT**Institution:** Eesti Maaülikool (*Estonian University of Life Sciences*)**Assessment committee:**

Michael Emery – Chair
 Birgitta Malmfors
 Cees Karssen
 Eero Puolanne
 Margus Tiru
 Olev Kalda

Coordinator: Maiki Udam**Dates of the assessment visit:** May 15-17, 2012**Component assessment (mark with 'X'):**

	conforms to requirements	conditionally conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organizational management and performance	X			

Teaching and learning	x			
RDC	x			
Service to society	x			

Comments: Overall, the Assessment Committee finds that there is a good learning environment across all levels of studies at EMÜ and, overall, the university is well managed and developmental in outlook. There is room for improvements, as is the case in all institutions, and the Committee has made some recommendations and suggestions based on documents provided, the site visit, and a full range of meetings and discussions that hopefully will prove helpful to EMÜ in its future.

The Committee wishes to thank EMÜ for its cooperation during the site visit and before that in preparing a very full self-assessment report that usefully followed the EKKA guidelines. Much of the outline planning was due to the professional work of Maiki Udam, the EKKA coordinator, and her counterpart at EMÜ.

Commendations:

1. The student numbers have remained stable at 4,650 - 4,900 in recent years despite the economic, banking, and eurozone crises. The effective use of the accreditation of prior learning (APL) and work experience has proved an important element in retaining students and broadening the applications from society. This is in sharp contrast to many equivalent universities in the Baltic states and across Europe where student numbers have fallen significantly in recent years.
2. EMÜ provides a significant family-like environment of care for its students that is fostered very successfully by the staff; it is much appreciated by students at all levels at EMÜ.
3. EMÜ liaises well with its stakeholders including professional associations, alumni and employers through its highly-valued open management style employed successfully by the Rector downwards. Internships also play an important part in this very strong on-going link with society that helps student into successful careers/jobs.

4. EMÜ has significantly influenced the development of rural life in Estonia through engaging with supervisory boards and other decision-making bodies.
5. The infrastructure is continually being improved and modernised as evidenced by the Assessment Committee during the site visit.
6. The curriculum is continually revised and developed in relation to the needs of society; stakeholders are involved in such developments including professional associations, employers and alumni.
7. The quality of the teaching is good overall with staff using a wide range of teaching techniques/methodologies much appreciated by the students who are satisfied overall with their learning. The process is directly encouraged by the annual teaching quality awards at EMÜ.

Recommendations:

1. Marketing in its widest sense needs to be improved and become pro-active including marketing for some weaker subject areas. The planning and monitoring of media communications and public-orientated activities should be undertaken together with collecting, assessing, and communicating feedback from these events by the Department of Marketing and Communication. This might influence the optimisation of the workload of the teaching and research staff of the institutes.
2. The Department of Marketing and Communication also needs to improve EMÜ's English internet pages. It needs to have a specific focus on wider internationalisation embedding it across EMÜ. An international office might help to expand numbers further upon the already increasing, in some areas, student and staff mobility both outwards and incoming. 'EMÜ' in English is a very effective logo and might be more widely used to good effect – may be to increase the number of senior post applications at EMÜ as there are few applications currently.
3. More use of English is needed across EMÜ's programmes from bachelor level upwards. This includes the teaching, the student learning, the writing, and the oral work. Estonia is member of the EU where English is the official business language. English is important for students to obtain a wide range of careers including jobs with international businesses both inside Estonia and externally. The Assessment Committee are concerned if the Estonian language only is to be adopted for EMÜ's bachelor programmes and also partly for master programmes as is suggested by a new law yet to be legally adopted. EMÜ graduates would then become less competitive in the careers/jobs market, particularly with international companies and international trade.

4. The effectiveness of the feedback systems is variable. Feedback from ÕIS is low at 20-15%. The Assessment Committee recommends a review of the feedback systems for overall coherence and effectiveness.
5. The Assessment Committee recommends that library staff provide guidance on literature searches to groups/classes of students, instead of individually, early in their studies and make attendance compulsory.
6. Although there is an effective management system in place at EMÜ, there is a very long list of management features including plans, strategies, sub-strategies, priorities, fields of activity, and a plethora of indices. Too many and used too often can dilute the effectiveness of management. Thus, the Assessment Committee recommends that regular checks and evaluations are made on these many management features (as has been undertaken in the past) and adjustments and refinements made where appropriate in order to provide a sharp management system and greater clarity.
7. There should be an improvement in the overall standard of research supervision including the supervision of PhD students researching off-site. An analysis of staff workloads between teaching and research duties would be beneficial to attain an appropriate balance overall.
8. With benefit both to EMÜ, to Tartu University, to the city, and to the Tallinn University of Technology, the Assessment Committee recommends continuing with and increasing the collaboration overall between students, between staff, between the infrastructures and between programmes/curricula. There is collaboration currently but the Assessment Committee believes that this should be enhanced. It might also be possible to establish Tartu as a scientific centre for Estonia, even the Baltic states, and maybe for wider regions too. More collaboration internationally would also be of benefit.
9. A constant vigil is needed for plagiarism. It is too easy for students to use the internet and plagiarise other people's work/ideas. It is a world-wide problem in higher education particularly. Although there is no evidence of recent cases at EMÜ, checks must be maintained and the EMÜ policy, with penalties clearly provided, should become more widely known and embedded with all staff and students.

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 08/06/2012

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: /25/06/2012

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 6 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Signature of the Chairperson of the Committee:

Date: Friday 29 June 2012

Assessment of sub-areas:

1 ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
<p>General comments: EMÜ defines its role in society well. Overall, its management structure functions well from the EMÜ Council, the Rector and the Rectorate downwards. There are on-going Development and Action Plans. There are structured internal links across EMÜ and external links with stakeholders including employers. An international focus needs enhancing. Staff mobility is very limited. The open management style fosters these links. Academic staff (84%) is satisfied with the management of EMÜ. But there needs to be regular checks and evaluations kept on the very long list of management aspects (eg. Plans, strategies, sub-strategies, indices etc) and continuing adjustments and refinements made when needed for clarity. There are few applicants for senior posts. Basic ethical principles are present but there needs to be vigilance with checking plagiarism. There are checks on financial affairs with effective financial controls in place. There are satisfactory conditions for teaching, for research, and for student studies but library opening hours are limited.</p>

1.1 General management	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society. The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built</i></p>					

on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country's priorities and society's expectations.

Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.

The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans, and involves the members and different interest groups.

Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the achievement of institutional purposes and the coherent performance of core processes.

Internal and external communications of a higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are purposeful and managed.

EMÜ defines its role in society. It has a mission, a vision and expressed values. There is a Development Plan that over time is revised according to the needs of society and the financial situation. There are on-going links with the economy and its public and private interest-group members and this is reflected in the Action Plan for EMÜ and each of its institutes. There are structured internal communications (sar, EMÜ management structure, p. 20) and regular external contacts, as exemplified by the sports presentation evening during the site visit. There is, in theory, a marketing strategy with fields of activity and a range of indicators, all detailed (sar, page 14). A specific focus on internationalisation needs to be embedded with possibly an international office established together with a clear and coherent plan to increase student and staff mobility both outwards and incoming. There is contact with the stakeholders via the open management style; these include employers and alumni. As regards liabilities of management, there are clear definitions of responsibilities including the 30-body EMÜ Council, the Board of Governors, the Advisory Board of EMÜ, and the EMÜ leadership group. The responsibilities of the directors of the five institutes and the college are also defined.

There are detailed feedback procedures that in theory lead to improvements (sar, EMÜ feedback matrix, pp. 22-24). Personnel satisfaction with the management of EMÜ is high with, for example, some 84% of academic staff satisfied on the basis of the recent staff survey. Overall, the Assessment Committee observes that the management structure of EMÜ functions effectively from the EMÜ Council, the Rector and the Rectorate downwards. This was confirmed in discussions with the administrative and academic staff.

Care needs to be taken with the long list of management aspects that includes plans, strategies and sub-strategies, priorities, fields of activity, and a plethora of indicators quoted (sar, pp. 10-16). Too many and quoted too often can dilute the effectiveness of these management features, though no doubt all are thought to be essential by EMÜ. The Assessment Committee advocates regular checks and evaluations of these many aspects and EMÜ continues to make adjustments and refinements when needed, as has occurred in the past, thereby providing an even sharper management system and greater clarity.

1.2 Personnel management	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development arise from the objectives of the development plan of a higher education institution, and ensure academic sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities (teaching, RDC, student feedback, etc.) are taken into account in a balanced way.</i></p> <p><i>The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.</i></p> <p><i>Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.</i></p> <p><i>Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.</i></p>								
<p>The responsibility for selecting academic staff lies with the institutes, though any professor in post for 11 years may apply for continuation. Other posts are for fixed terms and there is open application. But for top positions for teaching and for research there are few applicants at EMÜ; it is up to the heads of institutes and the Department of Marketing and Communication to consider this situation and to attempt to raise interest, including internationally, if possible in these senior posts. More teaching in English at EMÜ would be needed to attract more international interest. Also, salaries tend to be lower in Estonian universities than, say, in Western Europe. In spite of this precarious position, staffing has remained stable and EMÜ hopes to even expand the professorial posts using DoRa2 funding. As is normally the case when making appointments at universities world-wide, EMÜ considers qualifications, teaching abilities, research activities, publications, supervision experience and student opinions. Successful applicants receive formal contracts stipulating responsibilities, working details, and remuneration. Their performance thereafter is evaluated periodically and career development discussed. Some careers are possibly stagnating, as is the norm occasionally at other universities, and in such instances at EMÜ the Assessment Committee suggests more active and on-going professional careers guidance from appointment onwards.</p>								
<p>In discussions with both teaching and research staff and also some administrative staff, the Assessment Committee found broad</p>								

satisfaction with working conditions at EMÜ. According to the 2011 survey, staff is satisfied with their work, with their colleagues, with their line manager, with the support received and with university events. It is no surprise that there is only fair satisfaction with salaries. In contrast to rectors in larger universities in Europe, the Rector at EMÜ's salary is modest. This feeds down to all other posts. Clearly, when the economy improves then some consideration might be given to improving salaries at EMÜ.

Some EMÜ employees take part in international mobility programmes. There are limiting factors restricting the numbers involved. One aspect is that the use of English may be a problem as the guest staff may be expected to teach the programme abroad in English and maybe their proficiency is not sufficient. Another factor is that the programmes in Estonia may not be entirely compatible with the one in the foreign country and, for example, the compulsory subjects may be different and this may impact adversely on the expertise and confidence of the EMÜ employees and involving them in international exchange. Finance may be another factor. If it is an exchange process, then the lower salaries in Estonia may not encourage staff from higher paid countries to exchange. There is some international staff exchange at EMÜ but it is minimal at about 15 staff in 2010 under the Erasmus programme, but in 2012 staff mobility has progressed to 28 under the Erasmus programme, still a relatively low number for Erasmus exchanges. The Assessment Committee are aware that there are other mobility aspects but recommends overall that there needs to be a higher on-going culture of internationalisation and expected staff mobility for significant improvements to be made on the EMÜ staff and associated international-influenced teaching.

The Assessment Committee confirms that the EMÜ staff bases its teaching and research activities on basic ethical principles. This honest and legal approach impacts advantageously across EMÜ; there are no recent cases of student abuse or harassment or biased marking of student work at EMÜ. The staff seen by the Assessment Committee is fully aware of the problems associated with plagiarism, both in their own researches and in student research. Some guidelines are provided that appear to have been currently effective. The staff also regularly informs their students of the penalties of plagiarism, but this tends to be individual and somewhat informal. Staff interviewed by the Assessment Committee has not discovered plagiarism in student work recently. However, it was made known to the Assessment Committee that students, if found guilty of plagiarism are, in one situation exemplified to the Assessment Committee, asked to resubmit new work vice the 'old' original work. However, in other universities, penalties are sometimes harsher and students, after one verbal warning, are asked to leave their programme if discovered a second time. Plagiarism is serious in virtually all countries with the easy access to the internet and constant vigilance is needed in all universities including EMÜ.

1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution, and the administration and development of infrastructure, are economically feasible; and are based on the objectives of the development plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).</i> <i>A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of core processes.</i> <i>The working conditions of the staff and the learning and RDC conditions of students (library, studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.) meet the needs arising from the specifics of an institution of higher education and the expectations of members.</i></p>								
<p>At EMÜ the Assessment Committee finds that with the allocation of its financial resources the administration and development of the infrastructure are economically feasible. Over recent years, EMÜ has been able to develop an impressive infrastructure as evidenced at its main site in Tartu. These developments are based on a clear Development Plan that is reviewed on a regular basis over time and in line with economic feasibility. There is an appropriate Action Plan that results with 11 areas identified. The budget sources are varied including EU monies and this broad approach helps EMÜ to counteract any arising risks. The student numbers between 4,650 and 4,900 in latter years are reasonably stable and this is financially comforting for EMÜ in the current European economic situation and eurozone problems. In many equivalent European universities, student numbers have fallen significantly in the past few years. The budget is based on the Development Plan and EMÜ’s Investment Plan. It is monitored by the Department of Finance and audited according to the Rules for Budget (comprising Budget for Studies). Overall and appropriately, the EMÜ Council confirms the annual budget and the associated report on its implementation. Overall checks on financial matters at EMÜ are rigorous.</p> <p>There is a new information system using the latest databases that supports the structured management system at EMÜ providing a full range of updated financial indices to the Rectorate and the Leadership Team together with the heads of the institutes. This is coordinated effectively by the Department of Information and Communication Technology, an enthusiastic body. This produces</p>								

effective and on-going financial controls at senior management level across EMÜ.

The library was visited by the Assessment Committee. It has a good learning environment with some up-to-date books, journals and newspapers; some are in English to help internationalisation but more would be helpful. Additionally, there are computers and there is a range of databases for the students and staff including EBSCO and Oxford University Press databases. Back copies of hard stock are stored in stacks available for research studies. Libraries still provide an essential study resource appreciated by the students. EMÜ library, however, has rather less opening hours than some other universities, from 0900-1800 hours and closed at weekends. Many university libraries today are open 24/7. However, there is access for EMÜ students to the city and to Tartu University libraries.

The staff working conditions and those of the student learning environment meet the needs of EMÜ and the expectations of the students including their requirements for research activity. The teaching rooms are, in the main, of high standard with modern teaching equipment. A few rooms are somewhat confined with no windows. The research laboratories are well equipped including those for veterinary research activity and engineering research with opportunities for student independent work and research. There are new sports facilities on campus much appreciated by the students. The on-campus dormitories were refurbished in 2004-2005. Distance-learning students are able to use the accommodation for their studies as required. The EVIRON building is state-of-the-art as the Centre of Excellence in Research in Environmental Adaptation. There are continuous improvements to EMÜ's infrastructure as part of the Development Plan and a 'green' learning environment is now, appropriately, a high priority at EMÜ and being pursued. The Assessment Committee endorses these approaches.

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

General comments:

EMÜ has defined its educational objectives. Its students are competitive in the domestic jobs markets. Student places are planned. Admission rules are consistent for students and applications can be submitted from all areas of society. Programmes reflect the needs of the labour market – but more English is needed across the curricula from bachelor upwards if students are to apply for careers with international companies both inside and outside Estonia. EMÜ students will be less competitive internationally if English is not available in bachelor and some master programmes if the new law is accepted. Curricular developments are systematic

and stakeholders are involved. The Graduates are satisfied with their studies – overall, there is good teaching with staff using the full didactic range. There is increasing efficiency of study recorded. Many programmes are interdisciplinary providing more competences for students. Employers are generally satisfied with the quality of the graduates but indicate some skills and knowledge need embedding further. Students are well supported in a ‘family’ environment and progress is monitored. Assessment relates directly to the learning outcomes. The accreditation of prior learning (APL) and work experience is applied well and professionally. The outcomes from a range of feedback systems is variable. Feedback from the ÕIS is low at 20-25%; the Assessment Committee recommends a review of the feedback systems for overall coherence and effectiveness. More effective guidance to groups by the library staff is recommended about the library resources/literature search early in student studies. A broader recruitment base for attracting new students is suggested by the Assessment Committee.

2.1 Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.

A higher education institution educates students so they are nationally and internationally competitive.

The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.

The admission rules are consistent with the mission and purposes of an institution of higher education and support the formation of the motivated student body.

Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.

The Assessment Committee acknowledge that the educational objectives of EMÜ are fixed in the EMÜ statutes and in the Development Plan and procedural rules and responsibilities for specific persons have been worked out. One of the measures for evaluating the efficiency of study is fulfilling the State Commissioned Education Contract. The EMÜ self-assessment report (sar, p.37) indicates that a steady increase in efficiency has been observed since 2008, and in 2011 the fulfilment was on average 100% (or near to

that) for the specific fields of study in EMÜ: i.e. agriculture; engineering, manufacturing and construction; science; services; social sciences, business and law. Veterinary medicine has considerably better results of graduate statistics than other areas. Some EMÜ study programmes that were mentioned to have a fulfilment below average still reached higher percentages than corresponding study programmes at Tartu University and Tallinn University of Technology.

Alumni surveys in 2009 and 2011 indicate that 42% of EMÜ graduates work a year after graduation, another 20% work and study, and 20% continue with studies only (sar, p.38). Information was not given, however, on what the remaining 18% are doing. A survey in 2010 by the Ministry of Agriculture reveal that in agriculture about 1700 highly educated leaders and specialists need replacement every 10 years; in the food production industry the number is 450. This indicates a future possible demand for some EMÜ graduates.

A feedback study in 2009 showed that 57% of the graduates regularly use the knowledge and skills acquired in their university programme. The graduates highly value the theoretical knowledge and practical skills they have obtained, the wider view on the world and the ability to analyse. Study counselling has been assessed as a positive feature (sar, p.38). Improving the development of self-expression, management and negotiation skills has been recommended by the alumni. These skills have been included as optional subjects for all EMÜ curricula and are regularly attended. A study on the competence, skills and the needs of the labour market in the agricultural, food and forestry sector in 2010, as well as an employer survey in 2011, has concluded that employers highly value the graduates' wish to develop in their job interest, job preparation and motivation for the job, good communication and cooperation skills, and the application of their knowledge and skills. However, it was also concluded that management skills and knowledge on entrepreneurship need to be improved

Following the results from the surveys, training in management and entrepreneurship has been included as optional subjects for all EMÜ curricula and are also regularly attended. In several curricula, management has actually been included as a compulsory subject. In addition, cooperation with entrepreneurs, employers and alumni is now closer (sar, p.38). This is appropriate and is reflected in similar programmes in other European countries. A Curriculum Commission has been founded, as well as an Alumni Council. The Assessment Committee supports such steps as also being appropriate. Interviews with employers and alumni during the site visit revealed that students educated at EMÜ are highly competitive on the labour market in Estonia. All the EMÜ curricula include compulsory internship periods, and the university has good collaboration with various enterprises and companies in organising this practical training. The internships per se thus contribute to increasing the collaboration with society outside the university.

The planning of state-commissioned study places is done according to guidelines given in the recommendations by the Ministry of Education and Research. The study places that are not state commissioned are planned according to the attractiveness of the

curriculum and the needs of society. Students' application documents are submitted via the national electronic system and the admission of students follows the rules set by the EMÜ Council. A few students may be admitted on specific conditions, such as gold and silver honours high school graduates, or even outstanding sports results. Students are provided with opportunities to study at EMÜ regardless of any special needs. With admission on the basis of sports results, the Assessment Committee was informed that there just two such students. In some other countries there are more such admissions as it is felt that these outstanding sports students improve the image of the institution. This is true of agricultural colleges in England and America.

The number of applicants per place in state-funded programmes varies considerably between the EMÜ study areas, both at bachelor, master and combined bachelor-master levels. The areas of social sciences, business and law have a lot more applicants than the other areas. Alarming low numbers of applicants (~ 1 applicant/seat) are particularly found for master programmes and integrated bachelor/master programmes within the EMÜ areas of agriculture, engineering and science (sar, p.41-42). The university is advised by the Assessment Committee to improve its marketing in these areas and become more pro-active.

2.2 Study programme development	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and considers the strategies of the country and expectations of the society.
Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different interest groups are involved in the development of study programmes.
Graduate satisfaction with the quality of studies and employer satisfaction with the quality of graduates are surveyed and analyzed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.

EMÜ offers education programmes of high relevance for society. A good overview of the EMÜ fields and levels of study is given in Table 2.1 of the self-assessment report (sar, p.43). At present EMÜ offers 13 curricula at bachelor level (3 years) and 24 at master level (2 years). In addition, there are two professional study programmes (4 years) and three integrated programmes, one of those being veterinary medicine (6 years). There are also five doctoral curricula. It should be noted that EMÜ is the only university in Estonia providing agricultural, forestry, animal husbandry, veterinary medicine and food science education based on research. Presently two master programmes are given in English (Landscape Architecture, as well as Biodiversity and Landscape Management). The plan is to

start giving the veterinary medicine programme in English as well. As noted, this is still a low number of programmes in English, considering the relatively large number of EMÜ study programmes offered at advanced levels. The Assessment Committee recommend that the focus on English is enhanced by offering many more courses and programmes at all levels in English.

Three of the bachelor curricula are not financed by the state, and that is the case also for three of the master curricula. The grouping of the fields of study is not always in accordance with the EMÜ specialty groups used when comparing applicants per place in state-funded study programmes. This makes it somewhat difficult at times to relate numbers of applicants to the various fields of study. Because the programmes are comparatively interdisciplinary, this provides increased competences for students and larger class sizes. In speaking to the staff and students, the Assessment Committee learned that most classes appeared to have 16-18 students and occasionally more.

The process of developing or initiating curricula for EMÜ as a whole is managed by the Curriculum Committee and the Vice-Rector of Studies, but also other aspects are involved in the process (sar, fig 2.8 & 2.9). According to information given at the site visit, the EMÜ institutes largely decide on their curricula. The prerequisite for opening a new curriculum is a clear and grounded need for it in the society and sufficient academic and tangible resources available (sar, p.44). In 2010/2011 EMÜ participated in a project with the objective to work out indicators for measuring sustainability and applying a system of internal assessment for curricula. Today, those indicators are in place and data has been collected in 2008-2011. This is proving an effective process.

The close contact between EMÜ, employers and alumni forms a good basis for constructive discussions on the development or revision of study programmes. Also, questionnaires are used and, as previously noted, a detailed feedback matrix has been worked out (sar, p.22, Table 1.1) specifying feedback questionnaires to varying degrees for various interest groups, such as students, post-graduates, employers, participants of lifelong learning courses, people that order RDC services, and students and teachers of upper secondary schools.

Various methods are used with varying degrees of success to obtain feedback from the graduates and also from employers on the quality of the graduates: specialised roundtable talks; participation by employers and alumni in the councils and committees including one for teaching methods; meetings of the university management (including representatives of the institutes) with heads of various enterprises, meetings of the Alumni Council and its Board; and questionnaire surveys (sar, p.37). The Assessment Committee confirms that information obtained from graduates and employers is used for updating the current curricula, improving trainee activities, creating new curricula, and carrying out various projects and surveys.

2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>Student academic progress is monitored and supported.</i> <i>Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.</i> <i>A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.</i></p>								
<p>Academic achievement of students is assessed according to data in the ÕIS (Study Information System) on the Academic check day, August 31 (sar, p.48). As study allowances are made according to the results rank order, checks on students' study pace and academic progress are actually done twice a year. Standard periods of the different education programmes, as noted, are: BA/BSc 3 years; MA/MSc 2 years; PhD 4 years; professional higher education 4 years; construction engineering 5 years and veterinary medicine 6 years. According to figure 2.10 (sar, p.48), the actual periods of study for the EMÜ bachelor and master programmes did not exceed the standard length in 2010 by any large measure. The same was found for the veterinary medicine programme. However, for the PhD programmes in 2010 and adjacent years the actual average study period exceeded the standard period, although to a varying extent (sar, p.69). But, the actual PhD students interviewed by the Assessment Committee confirmed that their studies were all likely to be completed within the standard time frame, though this needs careful and on-going monitoring.</p> <p>Withdrawal (drop-outs) of students is quite common, especially in study Year 1 at bachelor level (freshmen) as illustrated in Fig. 2.11 (sar, p.49). Among withdrawals in 2010 the main reasons were: personal decision (~45%), poor academic results (~20%) and exceeded time limit (~15%). During the site visit it was pointed out to the Assessment Committee that withdrawals are most frequent among self-paying students due to problems of continuing funding their studies. It was also emphasised that most of the students that withdraw from an EMÜ study programme actually continue in another programme. This is also often the case in other universities in Europe.</p> <p>According to the self-assessment report (sar, p.49), the student assessment procedure (including exams and thesis defences, announcement and format of grades) is transparent and guarantees fair treatment for the students. Rules for theses are specified in regulations by the University Council. For each course in the curriculum the expected learning outcomes (or the learning objectives), are essential, and should also form the basis for the examination. It is important that students are informed about the expected</p>								

learning outcomes already at the start of the course, and that the teaching methods used in the course support the required learning. Using several teaching methods usually gives the best result. Interviews with EMÜ teachers and students during the site visit revealed that a variety of teaching methods are normally used in the courses, for example, lectures, group work, assignments, labs, modelling, calculations, field trips, problem solving, e-learning (including video lectures), IT, seminars, workshops or projects. Hardly any courses are based on lectures only. The facilities needed for using different teaching methods are usually in place at EMÜ. In speaking to the students, the Assessment Committee were told by the students that they understood the learning outcomes for their programmes and courses.

Student learning is supported when teachers are good in didactics. The site interviews revealed that there are good opportunities for EMÜ teachers/researchers to attend training courses on teaching or supervision. Such courses are often funded by the Archimedes foundation, and usually given in collaboration between EMÜ and Tartu University. There are annual possibilities at EMÜ to give recognition to good teachers, both at university and institute levels; though none of the staff interviewed had received such an award one had come second in her institute. A majority of the EMÜ teachers also perform and supervise research about 25-50% of their working time. This also contributes to on-going improved student learning.

For writing and presentation skills, the students train in writing and presentation through projects they do in courses, and, of course, also when producing their bachelor and master theses. At master level all students take the course 'Research Methods', where teaching in science communication is included. At bachelor level, it seems that instruction on science communication relies on the supervisor.

EMÜ is equipped with modern educational and research technology that both lecturers and students use. This was evidenced by the Assessment Committee during the site visit. The facilities and the environment for studies are positive and will become even better when the construction of new facilities is finished by the end of 2012. After that, all major departments will reside within the EMÜ campus area, clearly a positive outcome.

A visit to the EMÜ library revealed that students are not taught library search in class groups, but they can obtain individual instruction where needed when they go to the library. The Assessment Committee recommends that the library personnel provide guidance on literature searches to groups of students (instead of individually) early in their studies at EMÜ and make it compulsory for students to attend maybe two such events. That would guarantee that students quickly realise what wealth of knowledge they can access through the library.

Thesis topics are presented on the EMÜ website. Students find it easy to get in contact with their supervisor. If suitable, students can have a supervisor from another university. Master theses are published on the EMÜ website. Bachelor theses are not published. Students' master and PhD theses are checked electronically for plagiarism as part of the student assessment process (See also: 3.3).

Overall, the eight students from bachelor/master programmes interviewed during the site visit by the Assessment Committee seemed to be very pleased to study at EMÜ. They mentioned specifically to the Committee that:

- EMÜ has good education programmes
- It is easy to get in contact with the teachers and other personnel at EMÜ
- There are professors with lots of experience
- Internship is a valuable experience
- There are good facilities for teaching and also access to computers with recent software
- It is nice with the campus life and dormitories on campus
- There is an excellent student council

The procedure of recognition of prior learning and work experience is provided in the regulations by the EMÜ Council (sar, p.50). In 2010 there were 557 applications, including 17% for recognising credit points from foreign universities. Some 75% of the applications were accepted, 13% were partly accepted, and 12% were not accepted. The process works well because it is free of charge and is monitored annually by the Curriculum Commission.

2.4 Support processes for learning	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
The organization of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the nominal period.
A higher education institution provides counselling related to studies and career.
A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organize educational activities.
Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organization of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.

EMÜ is considered as an open-minded university, where a sense of family atmosphere is created between students, staff and Rectorate. Students feel that they are supported, expected and provided with conditions to complete their studies within the prescribed period, as was confirmed in discussions with the Assessment Committee. As mentioned, a very high proportion of graduates have managed to do that. As noted, some PhD studies exceed their time frame but those that the Committee met were confident of completion within the time frame.

EMÜ applies different methods to support studying in EMÜ and to avoid dropouts. The checking of students' study pace twice a year helps identifying problems early. A number of measures are taken to avoid failure; this includes help from tutors, careers, study and psychological counselling. In addition, secretaries of institutes, study directors and the Rectorate provide different possibilities to help students with their academic problems and to assist. This study, career and psychological counselling is provided to students in all study levels. Not all students use these services, but they know it exists. Career and psychological counselling staff have provided a series of lectures on individual development since 2011. Students know about the lectures and some have attended them. According to the self-assessment report (sar,p.51) there has been positive effects from the seminars, for example the students' have opportunities to learn from others' experience, awareness of career choices increased, and students receive better knowledge on how to prevent and handle problems.

International mobility for students is supported by EMÜ participation in programmes such as: Erasmus, NOVA/BOVA, DoRa, doctoral schools, Erasmus IP projects and the Kristjan Jaak state scholarship programme. These opportunities are provided to students at all levels, but are not all fully utilised. Still, the number of outgoing EMÜ students has increased. In 2007 there were in total 36 outgoing EMÜ students. In 2010 the number of outgoing students had increased to 66 within the Erasmus programme, out of which 24 BSc/BA, 41 MSc/MA and 1 PhD student (sar, p.52, Fig. 2.15). Those numbers were reached mainly due to the opportunity to do practical training (compulsory internship) abroad under the Erasmus programme. Some 3-4 PhD students undertake a full semester abroad. There is also short-term student mobility under several student exchange schemes and these are increasing year-on-year, particularly so for scholarships under the DoRa programme 8. The Assessment Committee recommends that continuing efforts should be made to increase student mobility, including the outgoing student numbers, across all programmes at EMÜ.

The corresponding numbers for incoming foreign students were 26 in 2007 and 36 in 2010. About 70% of those in 2010 were Finnish students coming for full-time studies in the EMÜ Veterinary Medicine programme (Finnish students can rather easily understand the Estonian language). As noted before and very relevant currently only two master programmes at EMÜ are provided in English

(Biodiversity and Landscape Management, as well as Landscape Architecture). The plans are now to also provide the veterinary medicine programme in English. Although an increase in incoming students can be observed, it should be noted that foreign students constitute only about 3.5 % of the total student body at EMÜ, which also calls for improvements. To increase the number of foreign students, EMÜ has information materials in English and also promotes the curricula in the portals masterstudies.com; moveon.net, educations.com and on the SiE webpage. Furthermore, foreign students are offered orientation days, welcome packs, Estonian language courses, and the possibility to have a tutor. But the Assessment Committee urges more to be done in this respect.

The Assessment Committee recommends that EMÜ should gain by further increasing internationalisation in teaching, both with regard to contents, international contacts and use of the English language. The Assessment Committee are aware that only programmes taught in Estonian are financed by the state. During the visits in Estonia, however, the Assessment Committee had information that a national decision favouring increased use of the Estonian language in teaching has been taken. This decision would include that bachelor programmes should be given in Estonian language and that some scholarships for students would be provided to master programmes given fully in the Estonian language. Such a decision would most likely give the effect that the EMÜ interest in providing more master courses given in English would be reduced, which in turn would reduce numbers of foreign students coming to EMÜ. With reduced interest from foreign students it would also be more difficult to receive agreements for student exchanges e.g. Erasmus exchanges. It may not help to provide some more EMÜ programmes fully in English, at least not if the foreign students in those programmes would need to pay tuition fees. Such fees would not be accepted in student exchange programmes. With fewer exchange agreements, the Estonian EMÜ students have fewer chances to study abroad, and also fewer chances to interact with foreign students and to practice English, both abroad and in Estonia. The Assessment Committee believes that an unfortunate outcome if the decision is taken might be the reduced international competitiveness of EMÜ graduates in the European and world-wide jobs markets.

Regular assessment of teaching based on student feedback seems to have started in 2001. Since 2008/2009 students can periodically provide feedback on courses and lecturers into the electronic Study Information System (ÕIS), using the scale 0-5, where 5 means excellent. This is also used by students at other universities in Estonia. ÕIS contains a summary of the subjects a student has chosen, as well as grades. Students can register for courses using ÕIS and, furthermore, many study materials etc. are accessible. Some overall results on EMÜ students' feedback to teaching staff are given in the self-assessment report (sar, p.39, fig2.2 & fig2.3). The average results in 2011 were: outcome for the student from the point of view of the teaching ~ 4.2 and for lecturer ~4.3; the results from the use of contemporary teaching methodology were: ~3.9. Satisfaction with the teaching staff was slightly higher for EMÜ than for TÜ and TLÜ. The present questions in ÕIS are considered somewhat estranged. The questions are very focused on the teacher, and will now

apparently be replaced with questions that focus more on the course and the learning outcomes of the student. These are very important aspects, but so is the teacher.

The ÖIS evaluation is voluntary and on average only 20-25% of the students in a course do this evaluation. Students we met during the site visit mentioned the following two reasons for the low reply frequency:

1. The ÖIS is not opened until in January when all courses are ended, and by then the students no longer feel motivated to do the evaluation.
2. The students do not have any feedback on their course evaluation, and they do not really see whether their evaluation will contribute to improvements of the course.

Also other feedback systems/evaluations are used in EMÜ for different reasons:

- personal feedback on course to lecturer/department;
- regular survey among first year students about EMÜ and courses;
- institute-level survey among students for courses and programmes;

It may be so that students that have completed some of the other evaluations are not willing to also complete the ÖIS evaluation. It should be noted, however, that it is the ÖIS evaluations that are discussed in the Education Committee of the respective education programmes. It is then a pity that those discussions are based on the replies of only 20-25% of the students and the Assessment Committee recommends an investigation of this matter. It is essential to increase the response rate in ÖIS by different means. The Assessment Committee recommends to consider if it might be possible to further improve the ÖIS evaluation with regard to points 1 and 2 above, and also make it possible for the course leader/teacher to add some course specific questions. Then additional course evaluations at institute or teacher level would not be needed, and the situation where students are expected to reply to several evaluations of the same course would be avoided. It might also be discussed to make the ÖIS evaluation compulsory. Some students informed the Assessment Committee that they would agree to a compulsory system if it included appropriate questions.

3 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)

General comments:

The new focus areas have led to modernisation of EMÜ's goals. Collaboration is an important feature but more is needed including collaboration with international institutions. EMÜ monitors the needs of society and its labour market but responsible professors should also be pro-active in this work too. Finance for research activity is provided. There are strong differences in the amounts

provided the five institutes; greater balance would be beneficial to reflect the importance of the research work undertaken across the institutes overall. But more research activity is advised overall across EMÜ including that with an international focus and collaboration. Infrastructure is very good overall and is continuously modernised. More joint ventures with Tartu University might be beneficial. Tartu itself could become a scientific centre advantageous to the two universities and also to the city itself. The overall image would increase possibly attracting even more students and quality teaching staff. The Assessment Committee recommends that standard of research supervision including for off-site students should be improved.

3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
Requirements:								
<i>A higher education institution has defined the RDC objectives and measures their implementation.</i>								
<i>A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning RDC activities.</i>								
<p>The EMÜ has set the RDC objectives and the measures for their implementation, but there are several lists of priorities. Focus areas are clearly defined and this has affected the departmental structure of the university. The new interdisciplinary focus areas in the originally more practically-oriented agricultural university such as ‘Knowledge-based Bio-Economy’ and ‘Green University’ show a modernisation of the EMÜ goals.</p> <p>The self-assessment report indicates that internal collaboration between research groups and also different units is an essential element of the strategy of EMÜ. According to the Assessment Committee, the success of that strategy requires an integration between, for instance, natural and social sciences in all areas of EMÜ and especially in the environmental research. During the site visit it was shown that such an integration is under development, but the Assessment Committee thinks that a wider interdisciplinary collaboration between EMÜ and other universities nationally and internationally would also be of a benefit.</p> <p>There are strong differences between the research budgets of the five institutes. An analysis and action plan to increase the research funding of the low-input institutes, if warranted, is suggested by the Assessment Committee with regard to possibly emphasising and balancing the significance of those relevant focus areas in EMÜ.</p>								

During the site visit the Assessment Committee received more detailed quantitative and qualitative information about the size and the character of international joint projects to complement the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report also mentions NOVA and BOVA as a part of the international cooperation. Also during the site visit the Nordic and Baltic cooperation success was emphasised, among the other international cooperation links. EMÜ uses some EFS money to support cooperation (sar, p.62, RDC income, figure 3.8).

EMÜ has several organised forums to monitor and discuss the needs of the Estonian society. The self-assessment report presents the methods, but again, these generally seem to be ‘top-down’ type actions. During the site visit, it was noted that the work opportunities for the graduates are good and that EMÜ monitors the labour market needs. EMÜ has several ways to follow the situation: a survey done by University of Tartu, frequent meetings with alumni and employers. The Assessment Committee suggests that the institutes’ responsible professors also collect this kind of information more systematically for internal use for planning and for student/graduate outcomes.

3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

- A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.*
- A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.*
- A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.*
- RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.*

EMÜ has an effective indirect and direct system to support research. The requirement to have three to five scientific publications in five years and a certain number of doctoral students per academic post in order to get promoted or to be re-elected/ to have the permanent post produces a motivation for research. Also the requirement to have three refereed papers in a doctoral dissertation sets requirements and standards to the research groups and to their principal investigators. The way doctoral students are funded results in the required number of students. There are also specific publication requirements for the research staff members clearly

documented by the 'Council Regulation 31 March 2009, No. 3'. These are appropriate. The financial support for research is well organised, starting from basic funding to external funding. EMÜ has allocated research funding to the focus areas to a reasonable extent, although increased funding may be needed, as noted, to the areas of lower funding according to the self-assessment (sar, p.61, Targeted financing of research, figure 3. 7) ie. to areas other than agriculture and environmental science.

Networking in EMÜ has been effectively utilised. During the site visit it was repeatedly mentioned that funding for those activities is available. The PhD students outlined to the Assessment Committee their networking involvements including contact with speciality associations within Estonia and internationally. One student from Denmark specifically mentioned the good networking arrangements.

The buildings are mostly at a very good level technically, and there is a marked investment programme going-on or planned. The facilities in the buildings are also good. During the site visit it was shown that the collaboration between the institutes functions well, for example, expensive instruments are in one place only and shared and technicians have been hired to do the analyses. The Assessment Committee also discussed establishing a more organised system to facilitate the better use of the facilities; particularly discussed was the joint sectors that are methodologically common within ENVIRON and involving not only the University of Tartu but also Tallinn University of Technology and encompassing five research groups from these three universities . The Assessment Committee acknowledges that there is also on-going cooperation with the University of Tartu under the Competence Centre programme. The Assessment Committee recommends continuing with and increasing the collaboration overall. The Assessment Committee also suggests that Tartu is considered for becoming a single scientific community concerning the sophisticated facilities and methodological aspects.

There is a positive trend in the research activities in EMÜ. The number of peer-reviewed papers has increased and the quality of research shows a clear growth. The participation of employers and alumni has been beneficial to establishing an improved strategy of research both at the university level and at institute/research group level particularly. The Assessment Committee suggests that this should be actively continued and enhanced.

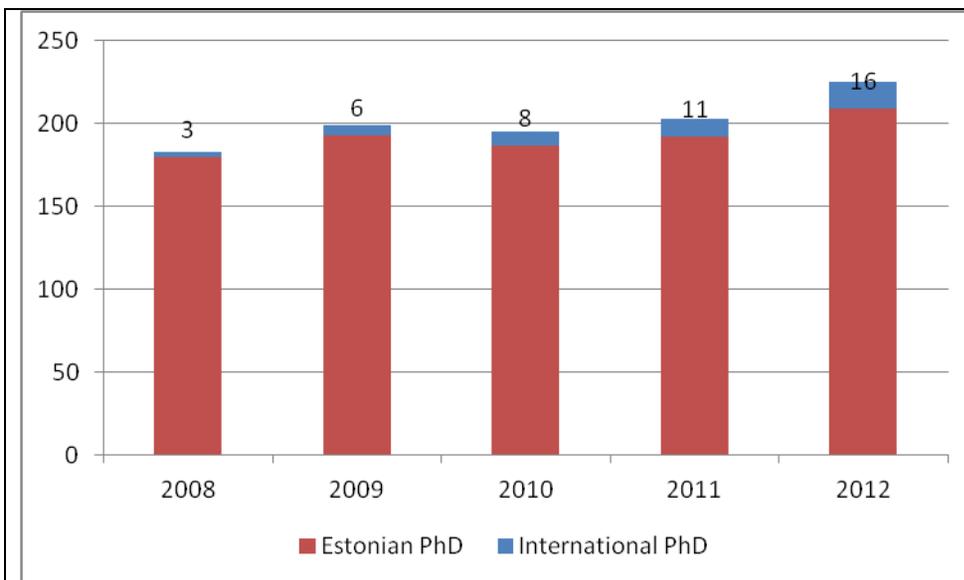
The improvement of a feedback system for supervision and the functions of research groups might improve the quality and effectiveness of the research throughout EMÜ. An improvement of the English Internet pages would create a much better visibility of the research and research groups of EMÜ, thus fostering further internationalisation of EMÜ. This could indicate more clearly and publicise with benefit the presentations of the research groups and the publication lists for completed research work at EMU

particularly, even though details are provided overall for Estonia in the Estonian Research Portal.							
3.3 Student research supervision and doctoral studies	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution involves students of all study levels in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.</i></p> <p><i>Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates.</i></p> <p><i>Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.</i></p> <p><i>Conditions have been created for admission of international doctoral students and for studies abroad for all doctoral students.</i></p> <p><i>A higher education institution involves recognized foreign scientists in the provision of doctoral study and the supervision of doctoral theses.</i></p>							
<p>EMÜ involves students of all study levels in research as well as in creative and project activity. It is the natural course for EMÜ students to evolve and participate in research groups during their study. Creative activities in EMÜ involve, for example, the Estonian Forestry Students Association (EMEÜS), Estonian Landscape Architecture Students Association (EMÜS), Estonian University of Life Sciences Environmental Protection Students Association, Construction Students Association, Ergonomics Students Association etc. Students are actively involved in these activities and help promote their fields of study and for EMÜ overall.</p> <p>In general, there is a reasonable balance in many cases between the workloads of relevant staff for teaching and for research activities including research supervision but in order to cover all cases the Assessment Committee suggest that an evaluation would be of probable benefit. According to satisfaction surveys among PhD students (2008, 2010), 65-78% of the students were satisfied with being involved in research projects and networks. A number of students were not satisfied with the quality and skills of supervisors (survey and interviews). Students mentioned their dissatisfaction with older supervisors who seldom attend international conferences and produce only a few scientific publications. This has also been mentioned in the areas for improvement in the self-evaluation report –‘improve supervisor skills (training and seminars)’. The Assessment Committee recommends the</p>							

improvement of the standard of research supervision including that for off-site students.

EMU Council has recent and detailed regulations from May 2011 concerning academic fraud (plagiarism) but in the meetings held during the site visit by the Assessment Committee with students and with academic staff any guidance about plagiarism given to the students seemed to be somewhat informal and relaxed. This is still a problem as there is no (automatic) systematic effective plagiarism checking system. Such a system is planned to be introduced by the Ministry of Education in the autumn semester 2012 but will include only Estonian publication cross-checking. Also EMÜ has dissertations on all levels digitalized, available, and displayed in their library internet database. Only a few cases of plagiarism have been found at EMÜ; this does not mean that such a problem is minor in EMÜ. It is recommended by the Assessment Committee that the policy becomes more widely known and embedded across EMÜ for checking on plagiarism in all levels of student work. Should any cases be discovered in future then these should be analysed and quickly remedied.

Conditions for admission of international PhD students and for studies abroad for Estonian PhD students have been created but internationalisation level in EMÜ is very low. Only 7.1% (16/225) of all PhD students are international students (3.3% in other study levels). This number has increased over time but EMÜ has to think how to effectively increase the attraction of international PhD students both because of the need to increase internationalisation as well as avoid a decrease in the number of PhD admissions because of sudden fall in the Estonian population in admission age groups over the next 13 years. The small number of international PhD students compared to Estonian PhD students is indicated in the chart below for 2008-12:



Number of international PhD and Estonian PhD students in EMÜ 2008-2012.

As indicated, the number of outgoing long-term PhD students is very low. The conditions for students to go abroad have been created, but mostly because of personal reasons students do not have the motivation to spend long periods of time abroad. These students prefer short-term trips to conferences and short-term scientific missions and these are seen as being sufficient. The average period is only two to three months.

Foreign scientists are being attracted to EMÜ to conduct research, supervise PhD students and also for reviewing PhD thesis defences. The Committee acknowledges that there are 13 researchers from foreign universities supervising PhD students in 2011-12. Any specialised courses about PhD production and regulations have not been provided for larger groups of students because of the comparatively small number of PhD students. Instead students take special face-to-face courses in small groups or on an individual level. This system appears to work at the moment with the relatively small PhD student numbers.

4 SERVICE TO SOCIETY

General comments:

The EMÜ has a system for popularising its main activities, including RDC. The university is considerably influencing the development of Estonian rural life via the presence in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies. There are strategic objectives and a clear action plan in the field of lifelong learning; the implementation of the action plan is periodically evaluated and improved as necessary. There are a number of public-oriented activities provided by EMÜ on regular or case bases and EMÜ contributes to the enhancement of community welfare, is sharing its resources and organising exhibitions, conferences, fairs and other events. The School of Natural Sciences teaches schoolchildren about nature. But, marketing including that undertaken by the Department of Marketing and Communication needs to be much more pro-active and more clearly structured. The policy of open management fostered by EMÜ is much appreciated by society and helps make liaison between EMÜ and society effective. The activities/programmes from the Open University could be more widespread throughout Estonia.

4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

*A higher education institution has a system for popularizing its main activities.
Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.*

The EMÜ has set the activities to support society and the activities to promote the image and popularity of the university as identified in the self-assessment report (sar, pp.71-76) and confirmed by the Assessment Committee. EMÜ promotes the results of research and development to the public as indicated in the Development Plan for up to 2015 and, in theory, in the EMÜ marketing strategy .

EMÜ seems to be active and industrious in its popularisation of science and making society more aware of the research and

development activities of the university. The number of EMÜ participations in the contest for popularisation of science was 5 in 2009, 7 in 2010 and 5 in 2011. The activeness of student societies in that subject should be noted. Every year Talveakadeemia (Winter Academy) is organized with the help of students with the aim to promote student research on sustainable developments and unite all Estonian universities for the activities, to promote cooperation of universities and to promote issues of sustainable development, including research for a wider audience. Every year, students of EMÜ take part in organising the Winter Academy (2009 – 7 students, 2010 – 7 students, 2011 – 5 students), meaning that 28% of the organising team are from EMÜ. In 2009, 2010 and 2012, a student from EMÜ lead the project; 20% of the students that made presentations at the contest were from EMÜ. Since 2007 EMÜ organises the School of Natural Sciences to teach children how to observe nature. The number of participants has grown from 16 in 2008 up to 26 in 2011. This is proving to be a successful venture.

In 2011 the project 'Live Science' was initiated with EMÜ doctoral candidates promoting both research work and EMÜ. The project won support in the research popularisation projects contest sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Research and the Archimedes Foundation; also there was a Grand Prix in the contest (by the Archimedes Foundation) for the 'Best Initiative for Popularising Research and Technology'. 28 doctoral students from EMÜ are taking part in the 'Live Science' project (in 2011 - 15). In 2011, they visited 18 schools in different regions of Estonia to publicise the project, which is a worthy exercise.

The opportunities for study and cooperation in EMÜ are presented annually in fairs and events. For promoting the study opportunities, including the fields of research and of development, there is regular communication with upper secondary schools and vocational schools, also cooperation contracts with schools have been signed. Regular 'Doors Open Days' are organized by EMÜ twice a year. This complements the open management style at EMÜ. As a result the entrance number of students is quite stable with only a small reduction of some 200 students in recent years. This is a significant achievement in today's difficult economic climate.

RDC project applications are co-ordinated with entrepreneurs and other interested groups. There are also members in the Kuratoorium (Advisory Board) from representing industry, entrepreneurs etc. All plans and strategies are co-ordinated with the Kuratoorium. Alumni also have a strong involvement in planning of RDC activities through producer and processor organisations in which EMÜ is also represented. Alumni also use direct contacts with the staff of the EMÜ. Research topics are proposed by these organisations (sometimes with funding) or co-ordinated with these organisations. Entrepreneurs are aware of the capability of EMÜ and they put their requests to EMÜ. EMÜ's possibilities to act on their requests are mostly related to the availability of qualified staff and funds.

Entrepreneurs and alumni are also having their word in designing the curricula. But, there is no special feedback questionnaire here.

The topics for bachelor and master theses are proposed by the institutes, by the entrepreneurs or other interested partners or selected by the students. The socio-economic aspect is a relevant criterion for the selection. This reflects EMÜ's strong and on-going links with society.

Feedback questionnaires are used in some cases for collecting information from events promoting RDC, but it is not always routine-based and in many cases there is no special feedback questionnaire or other system for obtaining feedback. Sectorial seminars are organised with discussions and also some direct contacts are used in order to gather information and to discuss the results.

The EMÜ has considerably influenced the development of Estonian rural life via the presence in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies, for example:

Institute of Economics and Social Science - 6 organisations/associations

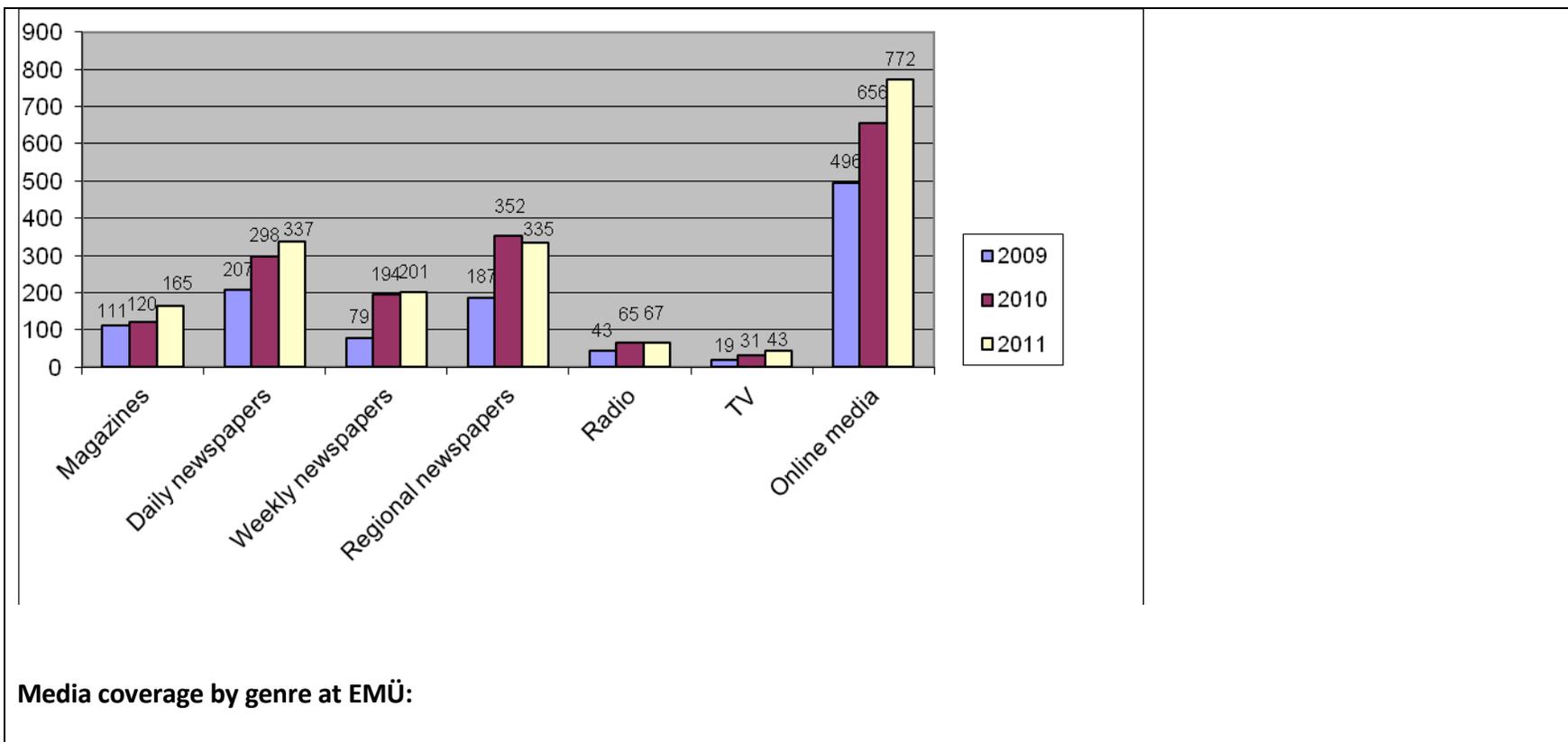
Institute of Forestry and Rural Engineering - 5 organisations/associations

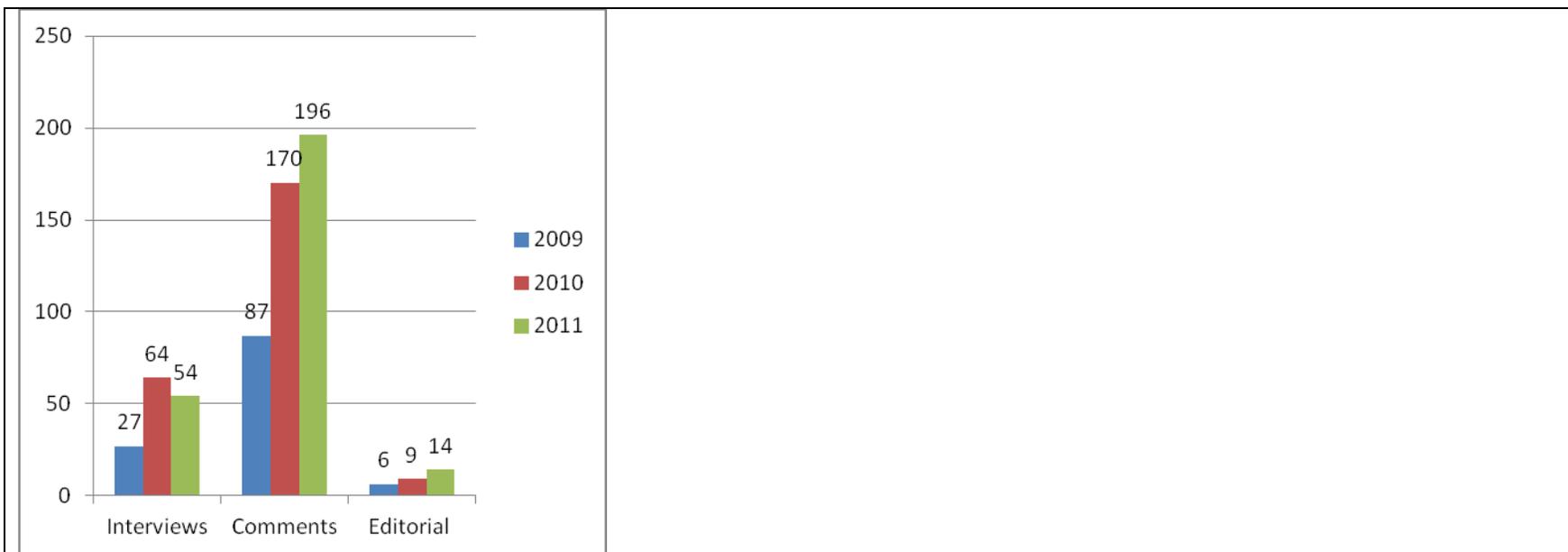
Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences - 53 organisations/associations

Institute of Technology - 4 organisations/associations

Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences - 6 organisations/associations

Employees of EMÜ have their word in the media. The numbers of media coverage and press releases have been raising year by year (indicated in the two charts below), for example, 2009 826 and 70, 2010 1799 and 80, 2011 1823 and 107 accordingly. Much is achieved online. But the number of interviews has fallen from 64 (2010) to 54 (2011) and this needs to be redressed and monitored. Key areas for communicating with the media are the Rectorate and Agriculture and Environmental Science Institute. The other areas including students and alumni appear to have less contact with the media and this should also be monitored by EMÜ.





For the years 2009, 2010 and 2011 161 articles were published; it is about 0,23 articles per employee. There is no strategy specifically for media communication yet. It has been planned to have it by the end of the summer 2012. So there are no criteria and plans established at the moment. The objective, hopefully, is to be pro-active in future. The Assessment Committee recommends the need for clear planning and monitoring of communications by EMÜ undertaken by the Marketing and Communication Department.

4.2 In-service training and other educational activities for the general public	conforms to requirements	x	conditionally conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
A higher education institution has strategic objectives and a clear action plan in the field of lifelong learning. The implementation of the action plan is periodically evaluated and improved as necessary.

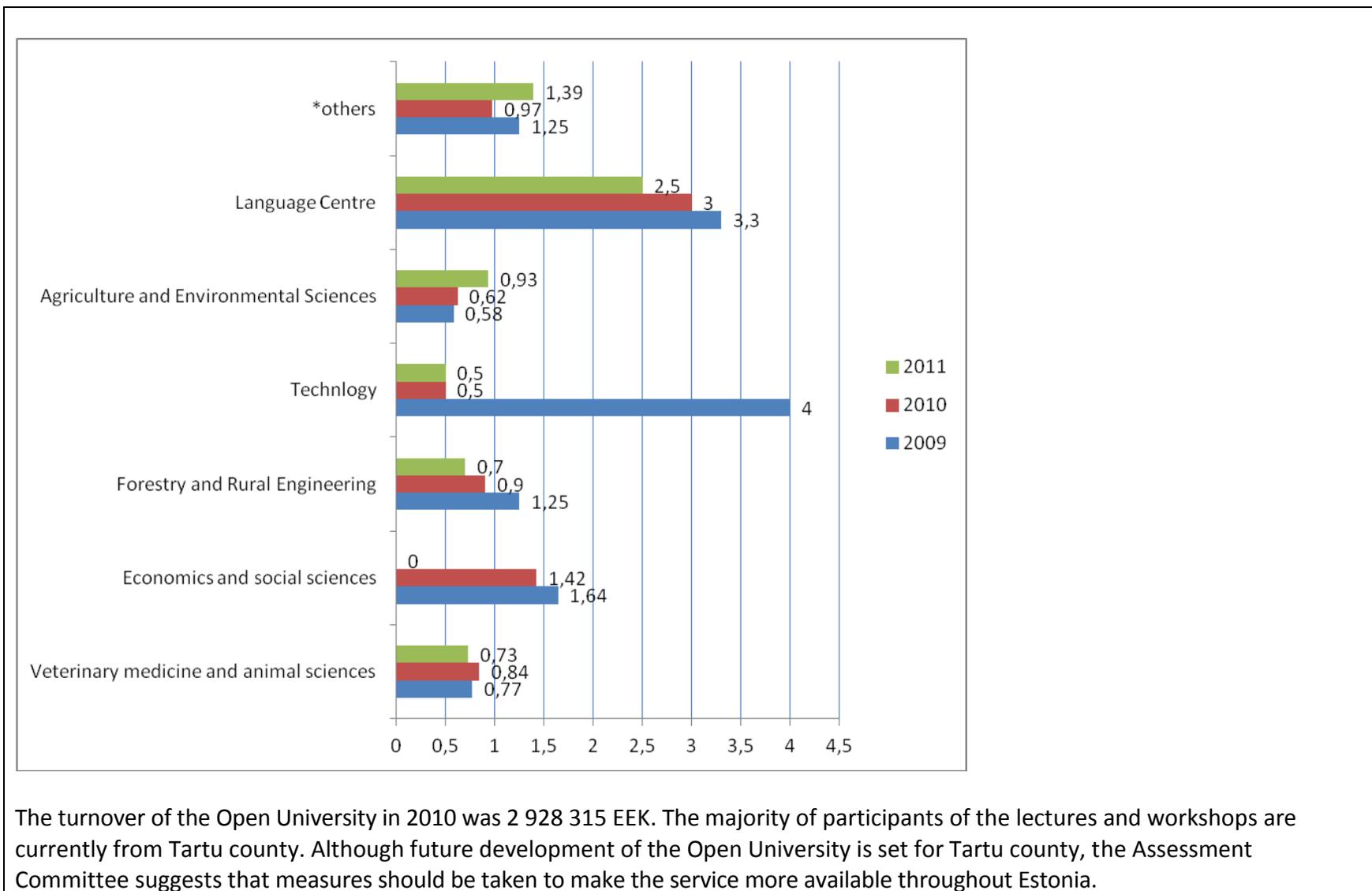
The EMÜ has strategic objectives and a clear action plan in the field of lifelong learning provided in the EMÜ Development Plan for up to 2015 and in the potential EMÜ marketing strategy. The lifelong learning is provided by the Open University (AÜ), the aim of which is to improve the learners' knowledge, skills and competences according to the needs of society and labour market. The main tasks of the AÜ are to create and organise opportunities for continuing education and lifelong learning and offering them to the public, identify the training needs of target groups, and to cooperate with other universities, institutions, professional associations and enterprises.

On the basis of strategic documents an Action Plan for two year has been adopted by EMÜ. The Action Plan stipulates the general objectives, timetable, responsibilities, funding, methods and the expected results with indicators. In case of objectives the demand and opinions from society, entrepreneurs, alumni and participants, requirements of legal acts, new projects and proposals of the institutes are all considered. Detailed plans are developed by the institutes. Courses are mostly two days. Students can also attend and they get credits for the courses. Funding for courses has been garnered from different sources in order to make them as affordable as possible. The implementation of the Action Plan is periodically evaluated and improved as necessary; this is the correct procedure to have.

The activities of continued education and lifelong learning are assessed once a year at the annual joint development seminar for all structural units of the EMÜ where also the following year's developmental tasks are defined. Feedback is gathered via printed questionnaires which are stored at the AÜ. Discussions about feedback end up with protocols indicating the measures to be taken in order to meet the expectations of participants. The courses of the AÜ are popular; the satisfaction level with the courses has been relatively high and it is rising. The results from opinions are analysed and used in drawing up future development plans, keeping current programmes up-to-date and developing new programmes; the programmes are adapted to fit a specific client's needs and wishes if necessary. The system of development, implementation and evaluation of continuing education ensures its quality and relevance, including the quality of documents issued.

The number of participants and the number of courses in the AÜ is increasing (participants in 2008 – 1955, in 2009 – 2175, in 2010 – 3006; course in 2008 – 112, in 2009 – 129, in 2010 – 169). In 2009 the ECP (European Credit Points) per participant was 0,91, in 2010 0,86 ECP and in 2011 0,94 ECP. As the Open University runs mostly short term courses one or two days courses, this gives 0,5 to 1 ECP per course. The longest courses include those for driving instructors providing up to 4 ECP and for language study courses which provide up to 3 ECP. Some institute details are shown in the chart below:

ECP per institute:

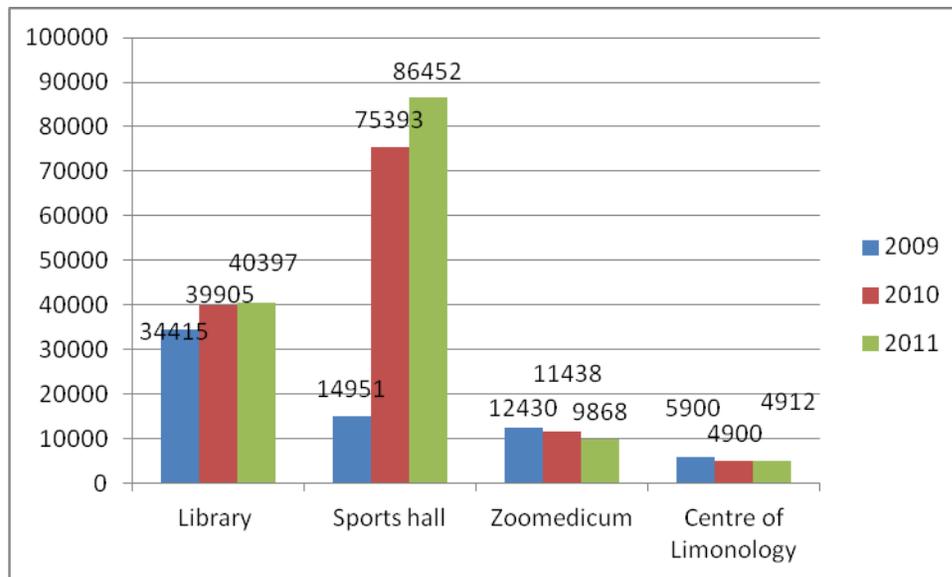


4.3 Other public-oriented activities	conforms to requirements		conditionally conforms to requirements	x	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <i>Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.</i> <i>A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare, sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or organizing concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.</i></p>								
<p>The Assessment Committee acknowledges that there are requirements for and objectives of the public-orientated activities and these contribute to the enhancement of the community’s welfare, sharing the university’s resources and other events provided in the EMÜ Development Plan and EMÜ strategies.</p> <p>The Department for Marketing and Communication has, theoretically, a main responsibility of organising public events and marketing. In practice the Department is counselling the institutes who are doing the actual work. Initiatives for these events comes mostly from institutes, which are receiving requests or opinions from the entrepreneurs, different producer and processor organisations, alumni etc. Performance depends mostly on the resources, which are up to the management of the EMÜ and institutes to apply and allocate. No procedures and clear explanations were provided to the Committee by the Department of Marketing and Communication on planning procedures of public-orientated events.</p> <p>The last survey for assessment of need, performance and effectiveness of public events and contribution to the enhancement of community’s welfare, sharing the university’s resources was made several years ago. Up to now it has been up to the organiser (mostly institutes and their departments) to collect and assess any feedback. The position of the Department of Marketing and Communication in that subject is unclear. As yet, there is no specific regulated feedback questionnaire but the Assessment Committee suggests one is now required to formalise matters. It is therefore recommended by the Assessment Committee that the Department of Marketing and Communication should have a more significant and pro-active role in the planning and conducting of public-orientated activities and in collecting, assessing and communicating feedback from these events. This could influence the</p>								

optimisation of the workload of teaching and research personnel of the institutes.

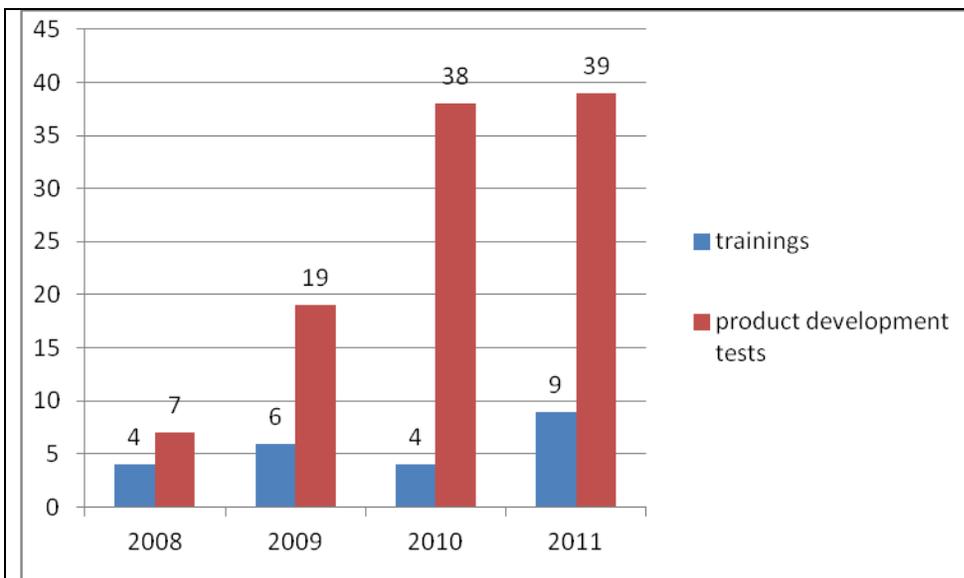
Many of the EMÜ’s facilities are open for the public, for example, the library and the sports hall. The visitor numbers of both are rising as indicated in the chart below:

Number of visits to facilities open to the public at EMÜ



Good examples of sharing of resources are a micro dairy, which is operating with the help of entrepreneurs and local municipalities, and also a landscape theatre and Polli Competence Centre (which is just being developed). The micro dairy is the most visited, the numbers of both visitors (from 150 in 2008 to 250 in 2010) and product development items (almost doubled) are rising, so are visitor groups with specific interests, as shown in the chart below:

Activities at the Micro Dairy at EMÜ



The number of public events is growing, including annual and traditional ones but a more pro-active Marketing and Communication Department might increase this number. The number of participants in EMÜ public events are indicated below:

YEAR	TEUK	Healthy animal and healthy food	Smart Green Economy (2 events)
2009	280	200	-
2010	220	250	175
2011	200	267	-

Additionally, the AÜ is providing once a month so called 'Family University' courses, providing educational activities for different age groups and in different topics – academic lectures for parents and workshops for children – from September 2012 . This provides further important links with society for EMÜ.