

ASSESSMENT REPORT**Institution:** Estonian Business School**Assessment committee:**

Finn Junge-Jensen– Chair
 Arlene Mlodzik
 Therese Cannon
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Coordinator: Liia Tüür**Dates of the assessment visit:** April 23-24, 2013**Component assessment:**

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organisational management and performance	X			
Teaching and learning	X			
RDC	X			

Service to society	X			
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Comments:

Overall, the Assessment Committee finds that EBS has developed a creative learning environment with the spirit of entrepreneurship, which is well perceived by students, alumni as well as by the Estonian society. The strategic thinking in managing the university is generally in place, but the committee recommends more emphases in building comprehensive and explicit strategies, especially in strategic priorities like internationalisation and research.

The team experienced a strong, coherent organization culture characterized by an open and frank dialogue in the organization at all levels and as strong commitment with engagement enthusiasm and flexibility in collaboration across structural boundaries.

EBS designs curricula to meet national and international standards by taking best practices in to account, requiring internships, balancing theoretical knowledge with applied and practical skills, promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in students, and working closely with the Estonian business community.

The personal attention to students is laudable and the staff is very committed, competent and confident. However, the new ways of recruiting faculty could be the crucial element of becoming an internationally recognized institution.

Providing service to society has been an essential part of the EBS operation. EBS provides excellent services and enjoys a good reputation in the Estonian society.

Commendations:

- EBS is commended for the emphasis it places on entrepreneurship, which results in well-prepared, innovative, self-confident graduates who are well received by the Estonian business community and are satisfied with their education.
- The programs have clear and publicly stated student learning outcomes and an effective process for summative assessment through the thesis and comprehensive exit exams.
- EBS is commended for its in-depth admission interviews and the personalized attention it provides to students, who feel welcomed and part of a community.



- EBS is commended for its efforts to internationalize the student body through exchange programs and enrolment of international students.

Recommendations:

- EBS needs to develop clear strategies to accomplish major strategic goals – namely greater research productivity and recognition, and internationalization. For example, EBS may want to consider new faculty models that allow differentiation of roles, creative ways to attract and maintain relationships with visiting faculty, and increasing the enrollment of doctoral students. Further, EBS should take concrete steps to build a relationship with the Finnish business community served by its Helsinki campus, perhaps by creating an institute in partnership with Finnish educational institutions and businesses.
- The committee recommends that EBS adopt and monitor more specific key performance indicators for the achievement of educational objectives and benchmark with other business schools outside Estonia. Further the team urges that the aggregated results of assessment of student learning be integrated with other measures of effectiveness. Related is the better use of data to evaluate the effectiveness and ways to ensure that all stakeholders are included in formal program quality assurance reviews. Finally, results of direct assessment of student learning should be aggregated and used in program evaluation, and the quality and use of surveys should be improved.

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: /10/06/13/

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: /26/06/13/

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 5 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: /01/07/13/

Assessment of sub-areas:**1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE****Commendations:**

- The Assessment Committee finds that EBS has developed a creative learning environment with the spirit of entrepreneurship, which is well perceived by students, alumni as well as by the Estonian society.
- The organisational culture is a strong asset and provides a fine platform for dealing with the challenges of becoming an internationally recognized business school with a strong research profile.
- The team observed that there is a talent-pool in middle management very committed to EBS who can move up into top management as the present members of the top management retire or withdraw from day-to-day management activities.

Recommendations:

- The team recommends that a process is initiated to select a limited number of key performance indicators especially within the areas of internationalization and research. Both areas are crucial for the successful development of EBS according to its strategy. The establishment of KPI's makes continuous monitoring easier and focuses on the internal and external communication and dialogue. In relation to internationalization, the team suggest that the reestablishment of a central top position (vice-rector) is considered in addition to the current philosophy of integrating internationalization in all the different parts of the organization. As for research, the balance between research and teaching has to be addressed by establishing a comprehensive strategy of rewarding and supporting research activities. In relation to branding and the strengthening of EBS' image, it is especially crucial in an international context. The team recommends that EBS identifies its unique profile more clearly and communicates the distinct characteristics of EBS both nationally and internationally. Finally, the team recommends that a systematic branch making in relation to foreign business schools is established selecting the relevant institution in each specific area of strategic importance.
- An important part of an internationalization process is the recruitment of foreign faculty. The team acknowledges the efforts done in this area as well as the barriers in relation to salaries expected etc. However, we would like to suggest the establishment of a more comprehensive visiting professors programme. The team is convinced that it will be possible to attract foreign professors for shorter periods (1-6 months) and even in some cases on a recurrent basis. This could strengthen the international profile of the programmes, establish joint research projects in core areas, develop networks – personal as well as institutional – and open up for possibly more permanent recruitment of international staff.

- The team has emphasized the challenges in relation to the internationalization process and the strengthening of the research profile. To support actions and projects especially in these areas (but also in other areas of high strategic importance), we suggest the establishment of a central development fund where resources can be used during the year to finance individual members of staff or groups that engage in the highly important activities. This will also provide a clear signal to the organization about the strategic priorities and the necessary actions.

1.1 General management	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.

During its 25 years of existence, EBS has had a strong focus on its role in the economic and social development of Estonia. Its vision is to provide people with academic knowledge, skills and values for a successful career and contribution to society. It has established comprehensive relations with stakeholders and alumni and collaborates with public universities in various ways. The SAR states: “The goal of EBS is to become internationally recognized business school thorough activities of its alumni and academic staff” realizing that in a global economy, a business school can only serve the national society by being strongly internationally orientated. By being a private university, EBS is able to be flexible and quickly respond to changing conditions in society, e.g. in relation to needs for new competencies in graduates and new research areas.

The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country’s priorities and society’s expectations.

EBS has a comprehensive development plan 2010-15 which determines a number of strategic goals following its vision and mission and taking into consideration the results and experiences from the previous period.

It identifies a range of areas to be developed and sets in certain areas quite specific targets to be obtained. It has proven useful for establishing a general strategic orientation as well as being an umbrella for sub-strategies in specific areas.

Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.

The key results of EBS have been defined as the strategic objectives of the development plan and the results are evaluated annually. However, there seems to be a need for a more focused approach, identifying the crucial areas of development that EBS needs to prioritize to fulfil its mission and goal. The development plan and the various action plans do not seem to give the organisation the

necessary focus and ability to sufficiently strengthen key areas like internationalization and research.

The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans and includes the members and other stakeholders in this work.

There is an annual review and analysis of the development plan and its implementation in an extended two days Senate meeting with the participation of all heads of departments, directors of committees and representatives of students. An annual action plan for priority fields in the development plan is designed during this meeting. The implementation of the action plans for each unit is analyzed regularly at Senate meetings during the year.

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.

The responsibilities of all levels in the organization are defined in the statute as well as individual responsibilities of the top management, heads of departments, directors etc. are defined in job descriptions, which support the implementation of the development plan. The management of EBS has specific performance plans.

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

Internal and external communication is connected to the development plan and the various action plans. Every year, a communication plan is established. In 2011, the position of a communication officer was established, which has led to the development of more systematic and regular internal communication processes. A weekly newspaper on the intranet has been designed and it distributes important information to all employees. The team experienced a strong, coherent organization culture characterized by an open and frank dialogue in the organization at all levels and as strong commitment with engagement enthusiasm and flexibility in collaboration across structural boundaries. External communication is distributed by the web page, a monthly news bulletin to all EBS partners, a weekly newsletter in Face book as well as specific press releases etc. for special occasions. The news reaches a wide audience and the news bulletin as an example has more than 3,000 readers. The team observed, however, an uncertainty in identifying the specific features of the EBS brand and a to certain extent different opinions about the EBS profile and its unique characteristics.

Commendation:

The organisational culture is a strong asset and provides a fine platform for dealing with the challenges of becoming an internationally

recognized business school with a strong research profile.

Recommendation:

The team recommends that a process is initiated to select a limited number of key performance indicators especially within the areas of internationalization and research. Both areas are crucial for the successful development of EBS according to its strategy. The establishment of KPI’s makes continuous monitoring easier and focuses on the internal and external communication and dialogue. In relation to internationalization, the team suggest that the reestablishment of a central top position (vice-rector) is considered in addition to the current philosophy of integrating internationalization in all the different parts of the organization. As for research, the balance between research and teaching has to be addressed by establishing a comprehensive strategy of rewarding and supporting research activities. In relation to branding and the strengthening of EBS’ image, it is especially crucial in an international context. The team recommends that EBS identifies its unique profile more clearly and communicates the distinct characteristics of EBS both nationally and internationally. Finally, the team recommends that a systematic benchmarking in relation to foreign business schools is established selecting the relevant institution in each specific area of strategic importance.

1.2 Personnel management	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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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.

EBS has established a set of guidelines in relation to the selection of academic staff following the requirements of the law. For all categories of staff, there exists job descriptions and for top management, a set of requirements linked to the goals in the development plan. The recruitment of academic staff is given high priority and the focus has been on a continuous improvement of the academic qualifications, e.g. by encouraging and supporting the staff to acquire a Ph.D. An effort has been made to improve the number of foreign faculty through international mobility programmes and contracts with other universities and more plans for strengthening international recruitment.

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.

The evaluation of the academic staff takes into consideration teaching abilities, research record, participation in development activities and results from student feedback. When selecting a candidate, EBS has developed a template for assessing the experience and the results obtained in a balanced way.

The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.

The EBS Guidelines for Remuneration of Academic Staff set out the general principles of salaries, fees and teaching and research obligations. The individual contracts of staff members take into consideration the specific distribution between teaching, research and development activities as well as specific bonuses of obligations.

Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.

The department heads and directors annually conduct development interviews with their members of staff discussing a broad range of topics as specified in a manual developed by EBS. From the interviews, action plans emerge and the results are discussed the following year during the interviews. Furthermore, regular meetings are arranged by top management with the participation of department heads, directors, representatives of the student council and alumni. The purpose of the meetings is to get feedback, share information and discuss relevant topics of interest.

Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.

An important part of the internationalization process is the participation in international networks, international research conferences, seminars, staff and student exchange programmes etc. EBS has been active in these activities and in various ways encouraged and supported individual members of staff to join mobility programmes, visit institutions abroad and develop joint projects. However, noted above under Section 1, recommendations, the team has observed the need to develop a more clear and comprehensive strategy for EBS' internationalization.

Employees base their activities on principles of academic ethics.

EBS has joined the Public Universities Agreement on Good Practice. And has established an Ethics Committee to deal with possible violations of ethical principles. Furthermore, EBS established a Centre for Ethics in 2001 with both teaching and research activities and it has developed a strong network of collaboration with private as well as public institutions. As a whole, ethics and CSR are an important and valued part of the EBS organization culture.

Commendation:

The team observed that there is a talent-pool in middle management very committed to EBS who can move up into top management as the present members of the top management retire or withdraw from day-to-day management activities.

Recommendations:

An important part of an internationalization process is the recruitment of foreign faculty. The team acknowledges the efforts done in this area as well as the barriers in relation to salaries expected etc. However, we would like to suggest the establishment of a more comprehensive visiting professors programme. The team is convinced that it will be possible to attract foreign professors for shorter periods (1-6 months) and even in some cases on a recurrent basis. This could strengthen the international profile of the programmes, establish joint research projects in core areas, develop networks – personal as well as institutional – and open up for possibly more permanent recruitment of international staff.

1.3 Management of financial resources and infrastructure	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution as well as 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).

EBS is heavily depending on tuition fees as a source of revenue (more than 90%) where a direct funding for research and development is too small to finance the current research activities not to mention the planned development and expansion of research activities. The dependency on tuition fees makes EBS vulnerable in relation to changes in demand for the study programmes but a well developed financial management system has secured an annual surplus with the exception of three years and the financial stability of EBS is furthermore supported by a large reserve fond at the level of the Estonian Business School Group. Challenges relate to diversification of income as stated in the SER and in increasing the international student demand for EBS programmes which has been addressed in the development plan and has resulted in a significant increase in the number of international students partly the result of the establishment of the Helsinki branch of EBS. The allocation of resources is closely related to the development plan and the strategic priorities and determined annually in the budget process

A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of its core processes.

EBS has a comprehensive IT support system which has been developed over the years. Needs for improvement is constantly being identified and a “strategy for information technology development 2011-13” has been setting overall goals for IT systems development. EBS also collaborates with other Estonian universities in various IT projects.

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.

EBS library is a well functioning entity for both students and academic staff. It carries out regularly a survey among staff and students which forms the basis of acquisition policies and the development of resources in general. EBS library has established a development plan for 2011-15 identifying a number of strategic areas, e.g. development of e-library, e-learning, satisfaction surveys and updated courses for information acquisition. The physical infrastructure of EBS is sufficient to serve the needs of a modern internationally oriented business school although the building is converted from other previous uses. It has been renovated but there are plans for moving to a new building if financial resources permit, which is going to be especially designed for the use of EBS. That will also address problems like the difficult access for handicapped.

Recommendations

As noted above, the team has emphasized the challenges in relation to the internationalization process and the strengthening of the research profile. To support actions and projects especially in these areas (but also in other areas of high strategic importance), we suggest the establishment of a central development fund where resources can be used during the year to finance individual members of staff or groups that engage in the highly important activities. This will also provide a clear signal to the organization about the strategic priorities and the necessary actions.

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

Commendations:

- EBS is commended for the emphasis it places on entrepreneurship, which results in well-prepared, innovative, self-confident

graduates who are well received by the Estonian business community.

- EBS is commended for the reliance it places on in-depth admission interviews with applicants, which helps to identify students with high potential.
- Alumni and the business community are well satisfied with the education that EBS provides.
- The programs have clear and publicly stated student learning outcomes and an effective process for summative assessment through the thesis and comprehensive exit exams.
- EBS provides students with personalized attention throughout their studies by the programme staff, who are nurturing and helpful to students. Students in turn feel welcomed and part of a community.
- EBS is commended for its efforts to internationalize the student body through exchange programs and enrolment of international students.

Recommendations:

- The team recommends that EBS continue to develop ways to support its internationalization as a means to prepare students to be competitive not only in Estonia but in other countries and regions and to ensure that it meets its goal of offering programs that meet or exceed international standards.
- The team recommends that more specific key performance indicators for the achievement of educational objectives be established and monitored, including benchmarking with other business schools outside Estonia. Further the team urges that the aggregated results of assessment of student learning be integrated with other measures of effectiveness of the institution and its programmes. (See more below in section 2.2.)
- EBS is encouraged to make better use of existing data to evaluate the effectiveness of its programmes and its institutional performance and to take steps to ensure that all stakeholders are included in formal program quality assurance reviews. Further, direct assessment of student learning should be aggregated and used in program evaluation and the quality and use of surveys should be improved.
- EBS should conduct a careful study of attrition to determine the causes and patterns for students' failure to complete the programs at the bachelor's and master's levels and should develop strategies to address the issues that may impair students' ability to complete the programs in a timely manner.
- EBS should consider more comprehensive ways for assessing student learning during the course of students' studies, in addition to the grades in courses, in order to provide students with regular formative feedback on their progress toward meeting the intended learning outcomes for their programs.

- EBS is encouraged to develop new and additional ways to achieve internationalization of its student body and faculty, which is a key priority for EBS and a recognized area for improvement.
- EBS should seek to improve its technology infrastructure, with special attention to the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. This effort should be seen as part of a larger initiative to expand the reach of EBS’s programs and to build understanding and use of sound teaching practices in keeping with recent research in cognitive science. It is noted that EBS’s Self-Assessment Report also identified this area as needing improvement.

2.1 Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.

As indicated in its Self-Assessment Report, EBS has defined its overall strategic objectives for the educational programs as 1) offering programs that are the same level as the best international business programs, 2) being responsive to labour market changes, and 3) creating opportunities for students to study in the best business schools on all continents.

It measures its effectiveness mainly by the following means:

- **National and international recognition.** EBS has passed the national transition assessment for all its programs at all levels. EBS representatives interviewed by the team indicated that they wish to pursue additional accreditations, which the team endorses.
- **The qualifications of academic staff.** EBS has increased the qualifications of faculty with doctoral degrees over the last five years to more than 60% although several department heads find that recruitment of well-qualified faculty members remains a challenge, given the lack of people available in Estonia who meet the requirements and are interested in academic positions.
- **The numbers of students in international exchanges.** EBS has steadily increased the number of students in outgoing and incoming exchanges each year to 43 and 85, respectively; however, this represents only about one-quarter of the total student enrolment. In interviews with the team, EBS indicated that students often cannot study abroad because of work and other commitments at home. EBS is encouraged to increase study abroad, especially in programs like international business.
- **The numbers of faculty in international exchanges.** The number of incoming lecturers has decreased in the last five years and the number of outgoing lecturers remains fairly stable at about five a year. The team encourages EBS to recruit more visiting

professors who can stay with EBS for extended periods to support this goal and to enhance research productivity, another of EBS's strategic priorities.

- **The number of students who enrol and graduate.** Although enrolment appears to meet expectations, with a current enrolment of about 1500 students, graduation rates are not as high as one would expect, especially for a private college whose students are paying for their own studies. See a discussion of this key indicator below in section 2.4.
- **Student and alumni feedback.** Alumni surveys are conducted periodically and student surveys more frequently. Generally the results show that students are satisfied with their education and find appropriate positions in business. The team met with students and alumni and found them to be enthusiastic and supportive of EBS's mission. Among the reasons that students and alumni are satisfied are that EBS is private and has a culture of private enterprise, is well connected with the business community, and promotes entrepreneurship.

In terms of anticipating and educating students for changes in the labour market, the team found that EBS has a close relationship with the Estonian business community, and is able to get good advice about labour needs from both government and business. The team recommends that an employer survey be conducted on a regular schedule to ensure that EBS has the latest perspective information on trends. Alumni interviewed by the team had a number of good suggestions for courses in new areas.

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

As noted under section 2.2 below, intended student learning outcomes are established for each program, included in syllabi, and are the basis for assessment in individual courses. Students in the BA and MA programmes complete a culminating project, mostly a thesis; however, the results of direct assessment of student learning are not integrated into the system for measuring EBS's effectiveness.

EBS designs curriculum to meet national and international standards by taking best practices into account, requiring internships, balancing theoretical knowledge with applied and practical skills, promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in students, and working closely with the Estonian business community. Students study in English and Estonian, have the opportunity to study other languages, and are encouraged to study abroad, although, as noted above, only about 25% do so. Some courses are designed with input from advisory committees and corporate partners to meet specific needs, such as banking and hotel management.

Notable is the EBS emphasis on entrepreneurship, which includes requiring BA students in all but one program to participate in developing a business plan for a start-up and also implementing it. EBS supports the activities of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and the "hub," including sponsoring competitions every year and awarding start-up funding for the best plans. As noted in section 1 above,

the team found that EBS has contributed substantially to the growth of the Estonian economy, and is well supported by the business community, which is demonstrated by the large number of corporate partners, the close connection between faculty members and the business community, and the success of the Executive MBA and other programs offered through the Executive Training Centre. The team lauds the recent changes to the EMBA, which have revitalized the program and increased its enrolment, and the development of the new coaching program, which reached its planned enrolment. The activities of the Executive Training Centre, while a separate entity from EBS, are well integrated with EBS and are indicative of a strong innovative capacity at the university, which the team found and supports.

Based on surveys and interviews with corporate partners and alumni, the team observed that the business community finds EBS graduates are well prepared to enter the business world in Estonia, have self-confidence, practical skills, and an entrepreneurial spirit. As EBS moves into new markets, like Helsinki where it has opened a branch campus, it will be challenged to identify and meet different and perhaps higher expectations of these new communities. It will be important for EBS to become well acquainted with the local business community in Helsinki and to build support for its students and graduates in that market.

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

EBS determines the number of places in each incoming class on budgetary needs, history, and labour market and demographic forecasts. As noted above under section 1.3, EBS is a private institution, which is heavily dependent (more than 90%) on tuition revenue. The declining number of college-age people in Estonia (ages 18 to 30), which will continue to decline through 2020 at least, has in part driven the EBS goal of having half of its students come from other countries and led to the decision to open a branch campus in Helsinki. The leadership indicated that it plans to keep the student body between 1500 and 2000 students.

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

Admission to EBS is based on the student's prior academic experience, admission tests in language, and interviews. The team examined documentation, samples of tests, and interviewed staff to evaluate this area. The admission interview is an important part of the admission process, as the staff uses the interviews to evaluate the student's communication skills, drive and self-motivation, and other personal and professional factors that might indicate the potential to succeed. EBS is to be commended for using this kind of holistic process to evaluate and admit students who show high potential.

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

accommodated two students with special needs over the last five years, and offers sign language interpreters, transport, copying services, etc. to such students. Its current facility is not handicapped-accessible, as it has no elevators, and classes and offices are spread out among five floors. The team expects that the planned building, on which EBS expects to begin construction in 2017, will be accessible for students with mobility impairments.

Commendations:

- EBS is commended for the emphasis it places on entrepreneurship, which results in well-prepared, innovative, self-confident graduates who are well received by the Estonian business community.
- EBS is commended for the reliance it places on in-depth admission interviews with applicants, which helps to identify students with high potential.

Recommendations:

- The team recommends that EBS continue to develop ways to supports its internationalization as a means to prepare students to be competitive not only in Estonia but in other countries and regions and to ensure that it meets its goal of offering programs that meet or exceed international standards.
- The team recommends that more specific key performance indicators for the achievement of educational objectives be established and monitored, including benchmarking with other business schools outside Estonia. Further the team urges that the aggregated results of assessment of student learning be integrated with other measures of effectiveness of the institution and its programmes. (See more below in section 2.2.)

2.2 Study programme development	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account the strategies of the country and expectations of the society.

EBS offers programmes at the bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral levels in several areas of business, including business administration, entrepreneurship, finance, international business, communications, and management. Partners with which EBS offers joint or dual degrees include Lancaster University Management School, Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, and Nottingham Trent University, its newest partner.

EBS has a careful process for the approval of new programmes or ideas for specializations, which includes evaluation by both internal

and external experts and approval by various individuals and committees within EBS. These processes require evidence of labour market needs. The process is well documented in materials reviewed by the team.

Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different stakeholders are involved in the development of study programmes.

While EBS collects evidence for the evaluation of existing programs and considers improvements on an on-going basis, the team found that a regularly scheduled systematic review of the programs was not formalized. The team recommends that regular periodic evaluation of existing programs be improved, drawing on existing data that are already collected and ensuring the regular collection and use of evaluations from all stakeholders. Among the data that should be integrated into this quality assurance review are the aggregated results of assessment of student learning (in particular from the theses and exit exams); evaluations by internship sponsors; and more frequent written evaluations by employers. The EBS staff conducts many surveys of students to gauge their satisfaction with teaching and other aspects of their education. The team reviewed many of these surveys and found that the survey questionnaires did not always contain well-framed questions that would yield useful data and that the results were not always integrated into the existing quality assurance reviews. The team recommends that existing survey instruments be more carefully drawn using good practice for survey construction and that the results of surveys and direct assessment be more systematically collected, analysed and reviewed in keeping with sound psychometric/statistical principles.

Among the issues that EBS might better address through a more formalized, comprehensive and systematic approach to program review are the balance between theory and practice in its programs, which has been raised as an issue for exploration by both employers and alumni, and the identification of new needs in the labour market, which EBS is well positioned to address. And, while the faculty members assess the performance of each student individually, EBS would benefit from aggregating the data on student learning for each programmatic area to identify if there are student learning outcomes that are not being achieved to the degree expected by the faculty. This kind of analysis could be used to improve learning outcomes by adjusting pedagogy and curriculum where needed to promote student achievement and success.

Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability to the requirements of the labor market of graduates are surveyed and analysed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.

Students and alumni participate on committees and are surveyed. The latest survey results, from spring 2012, show that most respondents had appropriate positions or business and were working in Estonia (almost 90%). Survey results suggested that more emphasis be placed on oral and written communication in Estonian, IT and time management. As noted above, although students and

alumni are surveyed regularly and the results appear to be used in programme evaluation and improvement, employers are not surveyed on a scheduled basis and had not been surveyed since 2005, as of the time of the visit. This should be done more regularly and, as with other surveys, the construction and use of surveys should be improved.

Commendations:

- Alumni and the business community are well satisfied with the education that EBS provides.
- The programs have clear and publicly stated student learning outcomes and an effective process for summative assessment through the thesis and comprehensive exit exams.
- The emphasis on entrepreneurship is effective in preparing students for work and building their self-confidence.

Recommendations:

- As noted above, EBS is encouraged to make better use of existing data to evaluate the effectiveness of its programmes and its institutional performance and to take steps to ensure that all stakeholders are included in formal program quality assurance reviews. Further, direct assessment of student learning should be aggregated and used in program evaluation and the quality and use of surveys should be improved.

2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Student academic progress is monitored and supported.

Students’ academic progress is monitored by the staff members, who identify students who are not doing well academically or are missing classes and contact those students to see how they can help. There are activities to promote students’ transition to their academic programs, such as freshman seminars and introductory courses. The on-going personalized attention that students get at EBS is to be commended.

However, data provided to the team at its request show that attrition at EBS is high: In recent years, about 20-30% of the bachelor’s and 18-36% of the master’s students completed their programs in the designated time frame of three and two years, respectively. Further, longer term completion rates are also relatively low: less than 50% of students complete their bachelors’ degrees in seven years and about 55% of master’s students complete in five to six years. Staff members who interact with students believe that this is

primarily the result of students' financial problems and their need to work. The team found that the reasons that students drop out, the patterns of who withdraws and when, and other factors have not been extensively studied. The team recommends that EBS undertake a careful and thorough study of the reasons to learn which students are dropping out, when and why, for the purpose of identifying strategies to increase retention, persistence and completion. For example, EBS should study the correlation between prior education and work experience and completion; whether there are first-year courses that are causing students to withdraw; whether students who are dropping out need academic help like tutoring or, alternatively, are insufficiently challenged. Extensive academic and applied research has been published on practices that promote student completion, which should be studied and utilized to improve student progress and success.

Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.

Students are assessed throughout their studies in each individual course by their instructors. Syllabi show the basis on which they will be assessed and the student learning outcomes that they are expected to meet. As a culminating experience, most BA students do a thesis (75%) and others take a comprehensive final exam (25%). The team examined samples of both culminating projects and found them to be sound. Theses at the BA and MA levels are carefully vetted through a pre-defence and final defence process that involves multiple faculty members and external reviewers. Theses are assessed using a school-wide rubric, which was adopted in January 2013. Students might benefit from regular formative assessment of their progress toward meeting program learning outcomes through program-wide assessments at the end of the first and second year, such as signature assignments that all students complete and that are assessed by faculty using a rubric.

A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.

EBS has a process to evaluate prior learning, which is included in its Academic Regulations. This prior learning includes formal education at other colleges, training courses and informal learning such as work experience. About 150 students a year apply for credit for prior learning, most of which is based on previous coursework. About 25 applications for experiential or work experience credit are processed.

Commendations:

- EBS provides students with personalized attention throughout their studies by the programme staff, who are nurturing and helpful to students. Students in turn feel welcomed and part of a community.

- Recommendations:**
- EBS should conduct a careful study of attrition to determine the causes and patterns for students’ failure to complete the programs at the bachelor’s and master’s levels and should develop strategies to address the issues that may impair students’ ability to complete the programs in timely manner.
 - EBS should consider more comprehensive ways for assessing student learning during the course of students’ studies, in addition to the grades in courses, in order to provide students with regular formative feedback on their progress toward meeting the intended learning outcomes for their programs.

2.4 Support processes for learning	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.
 EBS offers all the courses needed for students to complete their studies within the prescribed time frame. This information is published and readily available to students. Courses are offered both day and evening, to accommodate both full-time students and part-time students who work during the day and attend in the evening. Note above in section 2.3 the recommendations concerning greater understanding of and support for student completion.

A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.
 Five study consultants in the Admissions and Studies Office provide academic and programme counselling and support for students. Three of them have also completed training to qualify them as career counsellors. The Career Centre, established in 1999, provides counselling, connects students with employers and internship sponsors, and offers career seminars. EBS reports that 17% of students participated in its seminars on studies and career each year although only a few take advantage of a credit-bearing course on Learning in Higher Education, a matter that is worthy of study.

A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
 EBS participates in ERASMUS agreements with other institutions of higher education in order to encourage students to study in other countries. About 25 students a semester, mostly in the bachelor’s programs, study abroad, and 35-45 exchange students from other countries study at EBS. EBS also seeks to enrol students from other countries and has a goal, noted above, that half of its student body be comprised of students from other countries. EBS currently has about 22% foreign students and its most recent

incoming classes were about 45% foreign students, in part due to the opening of its branch in Helsinki. Hence EBS is trending in the right direction.

In discussing this area, EBS asserted that the reason that more EBS students do not study abroad is that they are employed or have family obligations in Estonia, which prevent them from studying abroad. The team found that the internationalization initiative is critically important and supported EBS's efforts in this regard, and suggests that a comprehensive strategy be implemented to increase the proportion of students who study abroad, especially in programs such as international business.

Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.

EBS has Wi-Fi in its building, some computer labs for student use and for teaching, and has been a member of Estonia's e-university consortium since 2002. The use of technology for instruction, however, is very limited, with no courses that are all online. Some faculty members are experimenting with Moodle to develop hybrid courses. The team saw this lack of adoption of technology to enhance instruction as a missed opportunity and encourages the faculty to move more quickly into use of the technology for instruction. This effort should be seen as part of a larger attempt to develop new and effective teaching methods, making use of the extensive research into the science of learning that has been published in the last 25 years. The support for using modern teaching methods is especially important for the visiting academic staff and practitioners, who might not have as much experience with teaching, but are crucial for EBS. More broadly, the team recommends that the department heads and faculty seek to develop new and effective means for teaching, drawing on the extensive body of recent research on how students learn.

Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organisation of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.

Students are invited to participate in surveys each semester for each course and evaluate instructional effectiveness and support services. Recent efforts to improve the response rates have resulted in more than 60 per cent of students participating. Overall they rate teachers at 5.7-5.9 on a seven-point scale. The evaluation results are shared with the Rector, Vice Rector for Studies and Development and the department heads, who consider them in annual development interviews and plans. In the past students have asked for improvements to technology, many of which have been made. As noted above, surveys should be carefully constructed in keeping with good practice to yield valid and reliable results, and results should be carefully analysed using sound statistical methodology and integrated into regular review processes.

Commendations:

- EBS is commended for its efforts to internationalize the student body through exchange programs and enrolment of international students.

Recommendations:

- EBS is encouraged to develop new and additional ways to achieve internationalization of its student body and faculty, which is a key priority for EBS and a recognized area for improvement.
- EBS should seek to improve its technology infrastructure, with special attention to the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. This effort should be seen as part of a larger initiative to expand the reach of EBS's programs and to build understanding and use of sound teaching practices in keeping with recent research in cognitive science. It is noted that EBS's Self-Assessment Report also identified this area as needing improvement.

3 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)**General comments:**

EBS has established that academic research is a priority for the next five years as a means to gain international recognition in addition to EBS's goals related to improving the Estonian economy.

Recommendations:

- EBS should develop a clear strategy on how to accomplish its research goals. At the present time, the faculty culture at EBS is teaching-oriented. EBS may wish to consider setting different expectations for different faculty categories, with a varied degree on emphasis on research or teaching, depending on the interests and skills of the faculty members. At present, it would enhance research productivity if new faculty hires were more research oriented.
- EBS needs to develop a new model for attracting visiting faculty and involving them in research projects and maintaining contact with them once they leave.
- EBS should seek to increase the number of doctoral students who contribute to research projects and even become the future researchers for the school.

3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	X	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p><i>A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.</i></p> <p>As indicated in its Self-Assessment Report (SAR), EBS has defined its research strategy for 2012-2015: “To continue applied research and consulting services with the aim of doubling the R&D financing (primarily from external sources).” It is also seeking to expand the international recognition of EBS for its research, while contributing to the Estonia economy and ensuring the quality of training for Estonian managers. Topics of recent research have focused on organizational change, innovation and entrepreneurship, legal issues, economics, consumer issues, information technology and ethics.</p> <p>Research is conducted in cooperation with government agencies and corporate partners and is closely related to the doctoral program.</p> <p>EBS publishes a <i>Journal of Management and Change</i>, which contains articles on the research conducted by faculty and doctoral students and has a Centre for Management Research.</p> <p>EBS has included international recognition for research as one of the major strategic goals for the next five years. However, there does not seem to be any strategy to implement this goal, especially concerning the human resources necessary to achieve it. At this time, EBS does not have full-time researcher positions and a considerable proportion of its research output is produced by the Vice Rector for Research.</p> <p>EBS’s Self-Assessment Report indicates that the number of publications per academic employee has declined in the last five years, except for publications in of articles or chapters in books.</p> <p><i>A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.</i></p> <p>EBS has an active Advisory Board, as well as a strong network of corporate and alumni relations. Defining research topics and projects is the result of recommendations from corporate partners and through the interests of doctoral students. Companies are solicited to present projects or case studies for applied research at the BBA level. Research topics are relevant to the needs of</p>								

Estonian society and the economy.							
3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p><i>A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.</i> EBS has a Vice-Rector for Research and a Research Council. The Academic Secretary carries out daily administrative tasks for research. As noted, there are a research centre and a journal.</p> <p>The Vice-Rector for Research is responsible for the development of research. The VR is also a member of the Senate & Research Council. The Research Council coordinates research projects, helps in finding research grants, foreign partners and publishing opportunities. The daily administration of RDC, including academic organization of doctoral programmes and preparation of defence of theses is performed by the Academic Secretary.</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.</i> Professors and associate professors are required to carry out research. As indicated in the SAR p.50, research grants have increased every year for the last five years and the number of academic staff with research responsibility has also increased. Core academic staff can apply for sabbatical leave every five years for research.</p> <p>The EBS research grants represent 12.4% of EBS operating budget, which also represents an increase in the last five years. Despite this, research productivity is declining. A more clearly defined action plan on how to increase funding, how to find foreign partners for research projects, and how to generate more widespread faculty involvement in research is needed. EBS may wish to define expectations for research, scholarship and creative activity more clearly and establish specific goals for each person who contributes to the pool of research done at EBS. Different categories of faculty, some doing more research, could be a good step.</p> <p><i>A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.</i> As indicated in the SAR p.50, EBS staff actively participate in the following international research networks: Globe Society (leadership studies), Cranet Network (strategic HRM surveys), IMSS Network (manufacturing strategy survey), EBEN network (business ethics), EABIS network (CSR), and Nordplus Network. EBS is also part of E-World research group and Network around European Knowledge Management Conference. Given the workload of the different academic staff members, their participation in</p>							

the different networks is quite satisfactory.

EBS is an active member of following organizations: EFMD, CEEMAN, BMDA. EBS also organizes scientific conferences, such as the EURAM conference in 2011. EBS will organize the EGOS conference in 2015.

There is also the publishing of joint articles with researchers and doctoral students from other countries.

RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.

The updating of software is included in the Development Plan 2010-2015. There are cooperation agreements with several Estonian public universities, international universities & corporate partners for sharing of resources.

EBS is quite active in improving its RDC infrastructure, which functions adequately. As EBS goes from a teaching-oriented culture to a more research-oriented culture, the infrastructure will evolve according to the needs.

3.3 Student research supervision and doctoral studies	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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A higher education institution includes students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.

There is a detailed description of the different academic programs with their research components in the Academic Regulations. Research papers are required of all Bachelor students. At the end of the Bachelor program, students can opt to do a final thesis. All Masters students have to produce a final thesis. All doctoral students have to produce a thesis.

Students are surveyed twice a year on the quality of the supervision of their research projects. Even though only 58% of the students answer the survey, the supervisors have received 4.4 out of 5 as an average. A new standardized rubric was adopted in January 2013 for Bachelors and Masters theses.

In interviews with students from the different programs, they were all satisfied with their relationship with their theses supervisors. They were able to make appointments to discuss issues, or received a response within 24 hours by email.

Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates.

The faculty contracts define the time spent for supervision of research projects and theses. The number of doctoral students admitted and the number of PhD graduates is listed on p.48 of SAR. There are 36 doctoral students at present, with four to 11 admitted each year for the last five years. The number of doctoral students admitted since 2008 is 39 and the number of PhD graduates is 10. This represents about 25% of the doctoral population. Given the small number of doctoral students, and the fact that most doctoral students have full-time employment and take longer to finish their theses, the graduation rate is acceptable.

Depending on the semester, 18-23% of academic staff working hours is spent on supervising the different theses. Part-time and visiting faculty are also engaged in supervision of Bachelors and Masters theses. In addition to this, doctoral students supervise Masters and Bachelors theses, and Masters students supervise Bachelors theses.

Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.

Plagiarism is dealt with in the School Regulations, in the description of the Academic Programs, and in the Manual of Writing Style.

Study programs of all levels include a course on research methodology. EBS has a Manual of Writing Style to illustrate how to cite sources correctly according to international conventions. Thus, both students and supervisors are made aware of ethics in academic writing.

In cases where plagiarism has been detected, there are clear guidelines on how to deal with it.

Conditions have been created for admission of international doctoral students and for studies abroad for all doctoral students.

Three foreign students were admitted to the doctoral program in 2010-2012. EBS has hosted four short-term visiting doctoral students. Several EBS students have spent short time studying abroad.

EBS actively encourages its doctoral students to study abroad. However, this initiative is limited because of financial and personal constraints on the part of the students who often hold full-time jobs.

It is part of the EBS development plan to increase the number of foreign doctoral students and foreign faculty involved in research projects.

A higher education institution includes recognised foreign scientists in the provision of doctoral studies and the supervision of doctoral theses.

In the period 2009-2012, EBS had 11 visiting foreign academics teaching in the EBS doctoral program.

Most doctoral theses are presented in English and therefore have at least one foreign opponent on the panel. Every doctoral student has one internal supervisor but is also encouraged to use an external supervisor either from academia or the corporate world. It is also customary to involve co-supervisors from other Estonian universities.

4 SERVICE TO SOCIETY

General comments:

Providing services to society has been an essential part of the EBS operation. It is also vital for EBS's existence that it has excellent services and good reputation in the Estonian society. EBS is now offering several highly qualified services and activities for the society.

In general, EBS needs services and activities, which are unique and important for the business sector. Especially due to competition, the ESB profile should be different compared with the other Universities in Estonia. According to the self-evaluation report and the interviews, people are aware of the challenges to provide unique services to the community.

Personal connections are important in Estonia, because people are highly networked with each other. Good and close relations mean that organizations are able to react to needs in the society. On the basis of the interviews, the staff has good personal connections and it has been the strength of EBS.

EBS has a good reputation and a distinctive profile in Estonia. It is more business-oriented, more flexible, and internationally-oriented compared to other universities. Similarly, EBS has a good reputation in combining practice and theory. Also, its position as the only private university makes EBS stand out from the other universities.

It is important that EBS will maintain its current way of operation in the Estonian society. At the same time, however, it is clear that competition will be stronger with the other universities concerning services and activities in the society.

EBS is also increasingly working in the international business environment. This creates opportunities to serve the Estonian society in a new way. EBS could work as a link organization that promotes international development in the business sector. At the same time, however, the challenge is that the EBS will have to create a reputation in the international business environment.

Recommendations:

- EBS shall be able to create competence as a learning organization. It shall be capable of constantly developing the activities and creating new types of services to the community in the future.
- In the development of services they should take into account the challenges of internationalization.
- We suggest that EBS would try to establish an institute that would be responsible for the Finnish and Estonian business co-operation in research, development and consulting. The Institute's credibility would increase if it were established as a partnership with some Finnish partner universities. The financing of the institute could come from companies that have operations in both Finland and Estonia. The institute would be created to support the EBS mission, which means that the Finnish and Estonian economies would be more integrated in the future. Establishment of the Institute would help to generate interaction between EBS and Finnish companies. At the same time, it would significantly strengthen the quality of bachelor and master programs implemented in the Helsinki branch.

4.1 Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities.

EBS has developed a strategy targeting all sectors of society (public sector, business sector, non-governmental sector). On the basis of the self-assessment report EBS has a number of functions, which promote that the core activities are visible in the society.

The popularizing of core activities could be more analyzed. This emphasizes the importance of public relations.

Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations, and as experts, in other

social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.

The staff have several memberships in various boards. Publications and different kinds of services play an important role in popularizing EBS’s activities. Similarly, EBS has cooperation agreements with various partners.

EBS staff are well-networked in the society. Many of the memberships depend on personal connections. The challenge is how systematically EBS is able to use the extensive networking as the organizations operate in different kinds of activities.

To be considered especially, is the activity in which together with the Estonian Development Fund, the Junior Chamber International Estonia, and Baltic di AS, EBS has annually been organizing student research competitions in business, entrepreneurship, and management. These are open for students of other universities as well. This kind of action could create practice-oriented innovation.

Since the EBS is playing a growing role in the international context, it is important that the staff will also increasingly participate in international networks. In the future, EBS should actively support the international networking which is based on strategy.

4.2 In-service training and other educational activities for the general public	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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A higher education institution has defined the objectives regarding in-service training and measures their implementation.

Established in EBS are several structural units (the Centre for Entrepreneurship, The Centre of Ethics, the Center for Free Economic Thought) to serve the different needs of the society. EBS has a career center with the task to support students’ co-operation in relation to business. Open university provides different kinds of educational services to the society. Executive Training Centre (ETC), offering Development Programmes to top and middle managers in different areas of management. In addition, EBS has established a separate unit, EBS High School.

The institutions definitely have a significant role in what kind of services EBS provides to the society. However, the ongoing changes in the society and the difficult economic situation are challenges to the services. Student numbers have decreased to some extent, for example, in the EBS High School and in the Open University. However, the situation is recognized in EBS. Hence, especially for the

High School, the situation may become a challenge in the future.

Co-ordination between the institutions could be problematic because there are so many small institutions in EBS. EBS will consider if fusions of the institutions will be needed.

Strategically, we consider it important that ETC's aim is to concentrate more and more in Estonia-Finland cooperation.

In-service training is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups as well as with the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.

In-service training has been planned with a practical perspective and according to the needs of the target groups, as well as the purposes of ESB.

In particular, the criteria from the evaluation point of view, the Centre for Entrepreneurship's and Executive Training Centre's activities involve aspects significant to the society. On the basis of the papers, ETC has qualified the Executive MBA program, which combines theoretical perspective and practical knowledge. In addition, the ETC organizes several interesting training programs for the business sector. The Centre for Entrepreneurship has contributed to the opening of many student enterprises. The business incubator is a hub of the Centre, which supports the students' enterprises in the start-up period. These kinds of activities have a substantial potential to promote entrepreneurship in Estonia.

EBS could pay more attention to life-long learning. In the future, due to the demographic trends, the aging population may become a more important target group.

EBS could develop think-tank platforms for further development, stimulating the discussion on the economic challenge and discussion on the innovation ecosystem of Estonia.

Alumni activities are quite purposeful. Attention has been paid on the development of alumni as well. Particularly significant is the alumni formed around the MBA program. It has created a pivotal network for Estonian business life.

Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.

The participants' satisfaction with the quality of services expected is evaluated in a typical way. In addition, further development of the institution's activities is necessary, and people are well aware of it in EBS.

The Community will connect in a better and more systematic way into training design and into the institutions' activities

4.3 Other public-oriented activities	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition	
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Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.

EBS organizes other public-oriented activities to the society to some extent. The self-assessment of public-oriented services is not necessarily very systematic.

EBS also organizes several events for the society. The student organization's role is significant in the events.

EBS is expected to be the institute that organizes active discussion on business in Estonia. It could be organizing discussions on the current situation, the Estonian business culture, and future prospects. Actually, there are several possible topics for those events. Discussions are needed on the best practices and to clarify the current situation in the business sector. Similarly, what could be carried out is to organize events in cooperation with other universities and partners.

EBS needs to evaluate what it is doing and uses the results of that evaluation.

A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or by organising concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.

EBS library works as a typical library in a university. It has opened a number of specialized electronic subject gateways. The subject gateway, which is constantly being updated, provides free access to web-based resources, information portals, virtual libraries,



reference books, dictionaries, journals' full-text databases, homepages, e-books, etc.

We pay positive attention to the fact that the library service has actively developed e-services which could be available to public in the future.