

ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

Institution: Tartu Art College (*Tartu Kõrgem Kunstikool*)

Assessment committee:

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Coordinator: Tiia Bach

Dates of the assessment visit: 3 – 4 November 2015

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 17.12.2015

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: 21.12.2015

Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 4 votes in favour and 0 votes against.

Date: 21.12.2015

Introduction

Tartu Art College (TAC) is a state institution of professional higher education, operating as a college of arts, conservation, restoration and design. TAC in its present form was founded on 1 August 2000; it is the successor to a private educational institution established by the art society 'Pallas' in 1919. Since the days of Pallas, the school has existed as both a secondary-level school and a higher art school. TAC seeks to contribute to the continuity of Estonian art education, improve its quality, and ensure a new generation of creatively minded and responsible applied artists who are open to an international perspective. The Assessment Committee believes that TAC has evolved into an important influencer in educational, artistic and cultural life in Estonia.

TAC is the only Higher Education institution of applied arts in Estonia. TAC has the right, for an indefinite term, to carry out studies in the field of arts and humanities in the study programme group of arts (Annex 3 to Government Regulation No. 178 of 18.12.2008, 'Standard of Higher Education'). Formal education is conducted across an integrated curriculum, comprising seven programmes of professional higher education, each with a period of study of four years, and each with a study load of 240 ECTS credits.

There are currently 336 students attached to the following curricula:

- Photography
- Painting and Wall Paintings Restoration
- Media and Advertisement Design
- Furniture and Restoration
- Leather Design and Restoration
- Sculpture
- Textile

The physical campus of TAC comprises 3 adjacent and well-appointed buildings, with additional dedicated gallery space (Gallery Noorus) in Tartu city centre. It has a small but focused library with access to relevant databases and reciprocal access with the Library of the University of Tartu. TAC is a partner in the collaborative roll-out of a jointly developed learning platform, a key tool for both staff and students at the College. The students at TAC come all over from Estonia, as well as from abroad. TAC actively promotes mobility amongst its staff and students; some 11% of the current student population is involved in mobility activity. The annual College budget amounts to some €1.73m. The College has been very successful in attracting EU infrastructure funding as part

of a modernization programme for staff development, buildings and equipment. In the current year TAC employs 93 staff, many of whom are practitioners and are engaged part-time by the College.

The Assessment Committee considered the College's Self Evaluation Report (SER) to be a very helpful and informative document. It demonstrated a high self-awareness of TAC's strengths. The period (2011-2015) covered by the current Development Plan was coming to an end and information presented to the Assessment Committee by the Rector confirmed that the College had a good awareness of current and emerging issues which would need to be fully addressed in the next development period and which would be key focus areas in the new Plan.

During the visit the Assessment Committee met and had full and open discussions with a wide range of staff, students, alumni, employers and civic stakeholders. The Assessment Committee is grateful for the helpful, courteous and open manner in which it was received.

I Summary of the assessment (mark with 'X'):

	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			

Comments:

After review of all the written and oral evidence, **the Assessment Committee concludes unanimously that TAC conforms to the assessment requirements of all four assessment areas.**

Commendations:

The Assessment Committee commends:

1. The clear leadership and sense of purpose across the College
2. The quality of education TAC provides in meeting the needs of students and employers and in responding very effectively to their changing requirements; good feedback from external stakeholders on TAC’s capacity for fulfilling market demands for graduate skills

3. The effectiveness of communication within and across the College
4. The College's approach to ensuring that staff and students have extensive and accessible mechanisms for providing views and feedback on both academic and non-academic issues
5. The effective management of the College's financial and other resources; the range, quality and high level of maintenance of the College's teaching and learning infrastructure, its general facilities and the quality of accommodation and recreational facilities available to students
6. The use of external examination committees. The system for defending the final thesis is robust
7. Awareness and ongoing institutional debate about the tension and balance between traditional, national art forms and current, global trends and demands. Involvement of external and international stakeholders in this debate (seminars by international guests etc.)
8. Strong external involvement in curriculum development
9. Active quality culture in regards to gathering feedback from various stakeholders
10. In RDC a system is in place for involving students; students are motivated to take part in extra-curricular activities relating to RDC. For staff there is funding for RDC activities as a part of the salary fund
11. A large number of staff actively take part in in-service training in order to improve their professional abilities. Employees are exceptionally enthusiastic about participating in training through the Erasmus program, which underlines their international mobility. TAC is a very active promoter of internationalization including extensive staff mobility and this strong feature of TAC's provision was greatly valued by staff and students.
12. The number of public-oriented activities and events delivered by TAC and their impact on local, national and international audiences.
13. The exceptionally strong record of mobility for students and staff, both incoming and outgoing

Recommendations:

The Assessment Committee recommends:

1. That a greater degree of oversight for the staff appraisal scheme should be exercised by managers and the interval reduced from three to one or two years.
2. That the College continue its cross-discipline approach to future planning and development, as a mechanism for achieving flexibility in delivery of the curriculum and in the economic use of resources; in particular the Committee welcomes

- continuation of the development of overarching study themes and structures to support inter-disciplinary cooperation across departments and curricula.
3. That the College maintain the trend to increase the number of neutral experts in the examination boards, who do not have close ties to or relationships with the institution.
 4. That TAC use the Development Plan more as a tool for strategic development of teaching and learning (employ more key performance indicators, qualitative and quantitative targets).
 5. TAC might undertake the alumni survey every year (aggregate results of not more than 2-3 yearly cohorts).
 6. TAC might develop the *Feedback and Monitoring System* from a list to a plan structured according to different thematic areas. Divide/structure the section *Educational Process* of the *List of Normative Documents* into smaller subsections relating to specific aspects of the educational process (supports a more effective PDAC cycle). Structure *Feedback and Monitoring Plan* into coherent subsections to be mapped to issues identified in the Development Plan (enhance strategic PDAC).
 7. As TAC has the ambition to deliver a Master's programme, a well-defined and clear system of basic research could be put in place, as is now proposed by TAC; the research areas could be more generic and institution-based not person oriented. The list of applied research projects could be developed to sit within an applied research plan with measurable indicators together with allocated resources.
 8. The Enterprise and Development Centre (EDC) currently has a budget to support its core activities The budget covers or partly covers some RDC activities like publishing TAC's Proceedings, managing the Gallery Noorus, TAC's participation at the Stockholm Furniture Fair and the London Design Festival, TAC's fashion show and TAC's advertisement and PR costs which support RDC and service to society. In 2015 the budget was €45 000. However the EDC has no target for earned income. The Committee invites TAC to consider whether some defined targets could be put in place in this field. This would also add ambition and incentive to EDC's activities.
 9. TAC might consider the possibility of including an increased focus on the marketing of TAC's activities in society in their development plan, looking towards general profile raising beyond the artistic realm in order to raise their profile in Estonian society nationally. Also in order specifically to reach the target group of potential applicants/students, social media which are popular among the younger generation, could be used more extensively for popularising TAC's education and activities.
 10. TAC might want to consider implementation of a more systematic approach to monitoring the impact of in-service training for staff.

II Assessment areas and sub-areas

1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

General comments

1.0.0 Based on the documents received and on the wide range of written and oral evidence received, the Assessment Committee was impressed by TAC as a small specialised institution with a strong brand. Current students and graduates greatly value the support they receive from TAC in both their creative and professional development. The College is also greatly valued by alumni and employers. This is achieved through:

- a strong but consultative management structure
- maintaining careful and strategic financial planning and budgeting
- being alert to opportunities for cross-discipline working where this is appropriate
- focused investment in staffing (and staff professional development), buildings, the study platform and administrative IT
- keeping the curriculum under review, both to reflect the needs of society and to deliver an international dimension – a modern curriculum which includes entrepreneurial and other transferable skills
- a participative style of governance, decision-making and management across the College which in turn is reflected in an engaged staff committed to professional development
- good communication across TAC
- full engagement with students both formally and informally
- the setting up of a clear administrative structure to support RDC and interaction with society
- a dynamic approach to identifying and sustaining links with key partners, such as the National Museum.

Commendations

- A suite of thoughtful and comprehensive communication feedback mechanisms are in place across the College, for both staff and students. The Assessment Committee found ample evidence of actions taken in response to structured feedback. Informal feedback was also welcomed and responded to by the College's senior team in a purposeful way. This helped to promote a strong culture of collegiality and mutual support across the College's community. The Assessment Committee was impressed by the effectiveness of communication within and across the College.
- The effective management of the College's financial and other resources

- A large number of staff actively take part in in-service training in order to improve their professional abilities.
- Employees are exceptionally enthusiastic about participating in training through the Erasmus program, which underlines their international mobility
- TAC is a very active promoter of internationalization including extensive staff mobility and this strong feature of TAC's provision was greatly valued by staff and students.

Recommendations

- That the College continue its cross-discipline approach to future planning and development, as a mechanism for achieving flexibility in delivery of the curriculum and in the economic use of resources
- TAC might want to consider implementation of a more systematic approach to monitoring the impact of in-service training for staff
- The Assessment Committee recommends that a greater degree of oversight for the development interview scheme should be exercised by managers and the interval reduced from three to one or two years

1.1 General management	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

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 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 includes the members and other stakeholders in this work.

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.

Comments

1.1.1 The purpose of the College and its linkage to Estonian society is clearly defined by its Statutes, namely, to act:

.....as an internationally acknowledged institution of professional higher education, to offer high-quality higher education in art, design, conservation and restoration; to supervise and coordinate studies and creative activities; to conduct surveys, creative activity in the field of art and design; to develop the field of art, design, conservation and restoration; to organize continuing education and offer services for charge related to the aforementioned.

With the following functions:

- 1) *Carry out studies based on the curricula of professional higher education;*
- 2) *Ensure organisation of studies and work, which would allow for the students to acquire knowledge, skills and ethical beliefs necessary for life and work;*
- 3) *Create favourable conditions for the members of the institution of higher education to study, carry out applied research, engage in creative and development activities, develop themselves professionally, and communicate with other members of the teaching staff and students in Estonia and abroad;*
- 4) *Obtain the equipment, literature, inventory and other means necessary for studies, applied research, research studies and development;*
- 5) *Develop cooperation with Estonian and foreign institutions of education, research and development.*
- 5) *Organise continuing education in the field of art, design, conservation and restoration;*
- 7) *If possible, organise retraining in the field of art, design, conservation and restoration;*
- 8) *Organise exhibitions, conferences, seminars and other events;*
- 9) *Offer consultation in the field of art, design, conservation and restoration;*
- 10) *Compile and publish textbooks and methodological tools;*
- 11) *Carry out applied and research surveys and publishing the results;*
- 12) *Offer services for charge based on the main activity to the extent established in the Statutes.*

1.1.2 TAC therefore seeks to maintain art education in traditional specialties and in specialties relevant to Estonian culture and history and puts great emphasis on the balanced development of all seven specialties. The curricula of TAC are comprehensive,

consider the needs of modern society and the labour market, and ensure the competitiveness of graduates in the labour market, in creative activities and in continuing education. Regular feedback is collected from students, alumni, staff, internship supervisors, participants in continuing education, and other stakeholders. The results are analysed and taken into account when drawing up new action plans, and planning development and improvement activities.

1.1.3 The Development Plan for 2011–2015 is supported by an Action Plan for 2015. This sets out an integrated financial and managerial framework for developing Studying and Teaching, Research, Development and Creative Activity and Organisational Management during 2015. The outcomes of the 5 year Plan are currently under review. The Development Plan for 2016-2020 has yet to be formally completed, as the Performance Agreement with the Ministry of Education and Research for 2013-2015 is in the process of being signed off and a new agreement for 2016-2018 is still in negotiation. The new Development Plan for 2016-20 will then be confirmed by TAC's Board. However, key features of the emerging plan included:

- Continuation of TAC as a small, responsive and agile specialist institution
- Maintaining a balanced budget, increasing the volume of earned income, and (through the infrastructure provided by the Enterprise and Development Centre) increasing the volume of project based income
- A broader cross-disciplinary planning base, focusing on conservation/restoration, design and arts tracks in institutional development
- Further development of opportunities for staff to undertake professional development and enhanced strategies for motivating and rewarding staff
- Furthering deepening of the relationship with alumni
- Development of the curriculum to include an introduction to entrepreneurship, specific development of the Painting track (following closure of Painting MA programme at University of Tartu) and development of a joint international MA
- Keep under review admissions numbers to reflect the needs of the labour market
- A review of the efficiency of the admissions process, whilst at the same time retaining a drop-out rate of less than 8%
- To continue as a major player in staff and student mobility, including Erasmus
- To maintain and grow TAC's involvement in RDC at local, national and international levels and to grow relationships with key partners.

The Assessment Committee agreed that the broad approach to development planning was rational and built upon TAC's achievements and financial performance to date.

1.1.4 Leadership and management responsibilities are clearly articulated. The senior management of TAC consists of the Rector and two Vice-Rectors. The Rector is responsible for the overall management and development of TAC, and for ensuring the proper and efficient use of funding. He directly line manages the two Vice-Rectors and the head of the Management Office. The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs is responsible for the infrastructure for studies and research, including the Academic Affairs Office; she line manages the Heads of academic departments and the Head of the Academic Affairs Office. A second Vice Rector is responsible for the administrative and support structure and directly line manages the Enterprise and Development Centre, the Economic Affairs Office and the Library. Individual departmental or functional heads manage the activities within their area of responsibility. From its discussions with staff, the Assessment Committee established that there is a clear and well-understood management structure operating across the College. The quality of communication flows across the College was highly valued and commended by staff. Equally staff felt fully involved in the strategic development of the College through a series of consultative exercises, including a spring college meeting. This was supported by TAC's own extensive internal feedback surveys. From 2012 a monthly newsletter has been published for the staff, students and the Body of Advisers of TAC.

1.1.5 In regard to Governance, the **Board** of TAC is the highest collegial decision-making body; it takes strategic decisions concerning the College as an institution. The Board comprises the Rector, Vice Rectors, the heads of each unit of the academic and research structure, three representatives of the teaching staff, and four student body representatives. The Board meets at least four times per academic year. The **Rectorate** is the consultative body of the Rector, which includes all the heads of units of administrative, support, academic and research structures. The Rectorate meets once a month. **The Body of Advisers** is an advisory body that links TAC with civic society. It is made up of representatives of the economic and cultural community, registered professional and occupational associations, employers' associations and state and local Government agencies. From 23 April 2013, membership of the Body of Advisers has been extended to include representatives of the field of design, restoration, and entrepreneurship, to link the areas of study of TAC and the society more efficiently. Members of these bodies, including students were able to confirm that they were consulted in a purposeful way about College developments and strategies. They were able to make a meaningful contribution to developments and their views were taken seriously. Membership of the Rectorate by all heads of departments was felt to be a particularly helpful mode of both collaborative decision-making and of effective communication.

1.1.6 Quality assurance is embedded in the activities of the Board; this includes an annual review of its programmes, supported both by management information provision and effective student consultation mechanisms. The Assessment Committee heard from both

staff and students that they were regularly consulted about the operation and planning of the College and they were able to provide examples of how staff and student feedback had influenced College decisions. Employers were very satisfied with the quality of the College's graduates and alumni reported that their programmes of study had equipped them appropriately for their careers. The Assessment Committee agreed that the current QA system was adequate.

1.1.7 Students are very involved in the College's decision making processes and are represented at all levels. Students have their own representative body (Council) which represents their interests in College governance through membership of all major decision-making bodies. TAC has a very strong student feedback system. There is a strong formal feedback system based on automated questionnaires on all aspects of the student experience. Students can give and receive regular feedback. Students confirmed to the Assessment Committee that TAC takes student feedback very seriously into account. Students are involved in the management of TAC via participation in the Board and the Student Council activities. They are involved in all significant activities of TAC, starting from the drafting of the Development Plan. Furthermore, they can influence the awarding of grants and scholarships. The Student Council organizes various events, including tea parties with the Rector, where issues related to the College and students are discussed in a more casual atmosphere. In the last five years, motivational trips to Russia, Finland, Latvia, Sweden and Lithuania have been organized by the Student Council members. TAC has been a full member of the Federation of Estonian Student Unions since 2012.

Commendations

- A suite of thoughtful and comprehensive communication feedback mechanisms are in place across the College, for both staff and students. The Assessment Committee found ample evidence of actions taken in response to structured feedback. Informal feedback was also welcomed and responded to by the College's senior team in a purposeful way. This helped to promote a strong culture of collegiality and mutual support across the College's community. The Assessment Committee was impressed by the effectiveness of communication within and across the College
- The effective management of the College's financial and other resources

Recommendation

- That the College continue its cross-discipline approach to future planning and development, as a mechanism for achieving flexibility in delivery of the curriculum and in the economic use of resources

1.2 Personnel management	conforms to requirements	X	partially 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>Comments</p> <p>1.2.1 Staff are expected to subscribe to TAC’s core values. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics – ethical and caring attitude towards fellow students, colleagues, society, cultural memory and cultural heritage. • Professionalism– socially responsible thinking in preservation, development, and delivery of skills and knowledge. • Openness– openness to the new and innovative, to cooperation and to the changing needs of society. • Creativity – creativity in thinking and in the application of ideas and skills. • Continuity – consistency in the provision of professional art education, preserving and passing on cultural heritage, and recognizing the non- priority areas of art. <p>1.2.3 The majority of academic staff are qualified to at least Master’s level. Appointments are driven by the needs of the curriculum. For the selection and evaluation of the academic staff, TAC takes into account past activities in three areas: teaching, RDC activities, professional and development of the organization. Appointment competitions for academic positions have to date been held based on a 3–5 year appointment period. Appointments are however now being made on an open-ended basis; this has necessitated continuation of a thorough selection process and careful future curriculum planning. The age distribution is fairly</p>								

even. The average age of employees in 2014 was 46.53.

1.2.4 In personnel management, the biggest short-term challenge arises from amendments contained in the Professional Higher Education Act that came into force on 1 January 2015, according to which, faculty employment contracts will have an indefinite duration. Therefore, TAC is updating the faculty evaluation system to specify, *inter alia*, the various work areas of the teaching staff. Development of the teaching staff workload planning system will continue.

1.2.5 Staff interviewed confirmed that remuneration and employee motivation principles are clearly defined, were accessible to all employees and were being followed. The salaries are set according to the Salary Rules, based on the position type and salary grade. The minimum salary grade rates, the length of working hours and other conditions are fixed. Employee salaries are adjusted in line with national trends.

1.2.6 TAC is a very active promoter of internationalization: it participates in Erasmus, Dora, and the Nordplus programmes. In order to increase the mobility of students, lecturers and support staff, and to organize joint projects, TAC has concluded cooperation agreements within the Erasmus program with 45 partner universities in 16 countries. The College has also entered into cooperation agreements with the St. Petersburg Academy of Fine Arts and the St. Petersburg University of Cinema and Television. Through the Erasmus programme, the employees of TAC, including teaching staff, have most frequently visited partner universities in Finland, Germany and Spain. The students have most often studied and performed their internships in Finland, Portugal, Spain, France, and Austria. Through this programme, TAC has been visited the most by colleagues from Finland, Lithuania, and Spain. Foreign students who study in TAC are mostly from the partner universities in Lithuania, Finland, Spain and France. Some 31% of current staff have experience of overseas assignments. This strong feature of TAC's provision was greatly valued by staff and students who met the Assessment Committee.

1.2.7 Heads of structural units are expected to conduct a development interview with their employees at least once every three years. Vice-Rectors and the Rector carry out a development interview with the structural units' employees at least once every two years. The results are taken into account in overall human resources management, as well as in the planning of the career model of a particular employee. The in-service training of staff organized by TAC ensures their professional development. The results of the training have been good; however, it is not clear if TAC has a system for measuring these results on a regular basis.

Whilst the Assessment Committee was assured and found substantial evidence that staff personal development was actively

encouraged, the operation of the development interview scheme was somewhat informal and in some cases, patchy.

Commendations

- A large number of staff actively take part in in-service training in order to improve their professional abilities.
- Employees are exceptionally enthusiastic about participating in training through the Erasmus program, which underlines their international mobility
- TAC is a very active promoter of internationalization including extensive staff mobility and this strong feature of TAC’s provision was greatly valued by staff and students.

Recommendations

- TAC might want to consider implementation of a more systematic approach to monitoring the impact of in-service training for staff
- The Assessment Committee recommends that a greater degree of oversight for the development interview scheme should be exercised by managers and the interval reduced from three to one or two years.

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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Requirements:

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).

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

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.

Comments

1.3.1 In recent years, the College has maintained its state income in real terms, as the Estonian HE system moves to full state funding following discontinuation of tuition fees payable by students. TAC has received grants three times (in stage I, II and III)

from the EU measure 'Modernization of the educational infrastructure of professional higher education and teacher training' and its sub-measure. In addition to aid granted by EU regional fund programmes, the learning environment has also been improved using the EU Social Fund programmes Primus and BeSt.

1.3.2 The finances of the institution are well managed; the financial outturn for each of the last 11 years has been positive, achieved through the implementation of careful spending plans and the careful monitoring of expenditure. It has been possible to earmark some College income to support the physical improvement of the buildings and equipment. There are currently plans to improve the College's dining area. Development and spending plans are widely presented and debated across the College by the Rectorate (which includes Heads of Schools).

1.3.3 The College's three buildings have been modernised; they are well equipped and provide good workshop and study space for students. TAC has received a free gallery space (Gallery Noorus) from the City of Tartu. The Gallery comprises excellent exhibition space and is an important educational facility for students as a place for displaying their work to the public.

1.3.4 TAC makes good use of IT in support of both teaching and learning and administration through:

- The information management system **Webdesktop**, in use since 2009 to support College administration, by managing documents, time, resources and group work;
- **Study information system (SIS)**, in use since 2011 as a learning platform for managing information related to teaching, students and lecturers, and for academic notifications;
- **Feedback and monitoring system (TMS)**, collaboratively developed with other HEIs under the project 'Development of Quality Systems in Institutions of Professional Higher Education', providing a comprehensive feedback tool widely used for consulting staff, students and the stakeholders.

Commendation

- The effective management of the College's financial and other resources

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

General comments

2.0.0 The Assessment Committee has seen sufficient evidence in formal documentation and corroborated by interviews with many internal and external stakeholders to be assured that TAC conforms to all the requirements set out in the area of teaching and learning. As a small, specialized institution it fulfils its mission to “promote Estonian art, preserving cultural values ... (and) supporting entrepreneurship and creative industries” (SER, p.5). Although the focus on professional skills and qualification is strong, TAC states that academic development is equally valued and supported and the progression rate to Master’s degrees of its graduates supports this claim. There are processes in place for effective teaching and learning and developing the creative and professional skills of its students: from regulated processes of curriculum development to challenging, yet helpful, final examination processes by examination teams that include external and international examiners. The Assessment Committee has seen and heard ample evidence that TAC’s educational philosophy and culture is valued by students, alumni and the wider professional community and yields successful graduates well prepared to enter the market or continue their academic studies. TAC has managed to become a highly attractive place for incoming mobility, both for students and staff. TAC operates specialized curricula in 7 fields of applied arts, yet it is actively developing cross-department study areas and cooperation, which the Assessment Committee strongly supports. The Assessment Committee also supports plans to offer Master’s degrees. Its inclusion of external experts in the process of curricula development is seen as particularly helpful by the Assessment Committee. The majority of students progress along the prescribed curriculum and finish their studies in the standard period of time. The drop-out rate is below the rate prescribed by the Ministry. There is a well-developed culture of student support and a strong sense of community, even “family” at TAC, which is palpable even among alumni who left the College several years ago. The Assessment Committee has found several activities worth commending within in area of Teaching and Learning and has offered recommendations to support the ongoing development of TAC. The successful efforts to support and enhance mobility among staff and students are worthy of recognition.

Commendations

- Use of external examiner in final examination committees
- Strong external involvement in curriculum development
- Good feedback from external stakeholders on fulfilling market demands for graduate skills
- Exceptionally strong record of mobility for students, both incoming and outgoing

<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve more neutral experts in the examination boards who do not have close ties to or relationships with the institution • See Development Plan more as a tool for strategic development of teaching learning rather than maintaining standards (employ key performance indicators, qualitative and quantitative targets) • Continue development of overarching study themes and structures to support inter-disciplinary cooperation across departments and curricula • Alumni survey every year (aggregate results of not more than 2-3 yearly cohorts) • Develop <i>Feedback and Monitoring System</i> from a list to a plan which is structured according to different thematic areas • Divide/structure the section <i>Educational Process</i> of the <i>List of Normative Documents</i> in smaller subsections relating to specific aspects of the educational process (supports a more effective PDAC cycle) • Structure <i>Feedback and Monitoring Plan</i> in coherent subsections to be mapped to issues identified in the Development Plan (enhance strategic PDAC)
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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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<p>Requirements:</p> <p>2.1.1 A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.</p> <p>2.1.2 A higher education institution educates students so they are nationally and internationally competitive.</p> <p>2.1.3 The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.</p> <p>2.1.4 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.</p> <p>2.1.5 Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.</p>

Comments

2.1.1 TAC has clearly defined educational objectives both in quantitative measures, as prescribed in the Ministerial *Activity Support Directive* and in qualitative, vision-based ways in the form of curriculum objectives which are matched by appropriate learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment formats at programme and course level. TAC measures the implementation of its objectives in various ways. Maintaining educational standards and results are goals set in the development plan which is monitored annually by the Council. It also monitors graduation and drop-out rates; it tracks student/graduate involvement in applied research; it uses student and alumni studies and feedback as well the continuous and systematic feedback from employers, external stakeholders and experts of the field. TAC sees the involvement of external experts in graduation exams as a strong mechanism for validating the success of its learning and teaching arrangements, with which the Assessment Committee agrees. Alumni strongly valued the input they received from external examiners and found the defence of their final work in front of an unknown, mostly external team demanding yet rewarding and particularly helpful in developing their confidence as creative professionals by honing their presentation skills and the ability to relate to an unknown audience of experts. The Assessment Committee recommends the development of this commendable practice even further by involving more neutral experts in the examination boards who do not have close ties to or relationships with the institution. It notes that the institution already has produced a set of guidelines for external examiners.

2.1.2 The competitiveness and success of TAC graduates both nationally and internationally has been evidenced to the Assessment Committee in various ways (alumni surveys, records of success stories, statements by alumni and employers). TAC states it equally values professional and academic careers of its alumni and has provides statistics to show that indeed a considerable percentage of graduates move on to Master's programmes which TAC does not (yet) provide. Several former graduates are employed to as lecturers and teachers. Clearly TAC is successful in its educational mission.

2.1.3 The number of student places is agreed with the Ministry in accordance with social needs and the potential and goals of the institution. TAC has decided not to expand student numbers beyond the current size because it feels there is at present no demand for more graduates in the market, which the Assessment Committee supports. To remain in its current size suggests that the many benefits of a small, specialized institution (e.g. intensive student-staff contact, individual development and support of students) can be retained.

2.1.4 TAC has a very intensive admissions process, designed to match what the institution considers the best applicants to the different specialities. The institution is in the process of making changes to the procedure which have been thoroughly discussed among teaching staff across the departments. The Assessment Committee supports the development process and encourages TAC to experiment with various formats. In this case the practice of monitoring applicants’ satisfaction with the admissions process that is already in place could be developed further to evaluate the success of revised admission procedures and guarantee a successful enhancement of the admission process.

2.1.5 The institution has provision for students with special needs (some facilities have disability access, tutors are provided for students with learning difficulties). The strong engagement of teaching and administrative staff as well as the individual support given creates an environment to support many instances of special needs of students.

Students confirmed that they received timely and developmental feedback from teachers on their work. They were also well briefed on ethical issues, such as copyright and the consequences of plagiarism. They were appropriately aware of College appeals and complaints procedures.

Commendation

- Use of external examiner in final examination committees

Recommendations

- Involve more neutral experts in the examination boards who do not have close ties to or relationships with the institution
- See Development Plan more as a tool for strategic development of teaching learning rather than maintaining standards (employ key performance indicators, qualitative and quantitative targets)

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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Requirements:

2.2.1 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.

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

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

Comments

2.2.1 The portfolio of study programmes has remained unchanged in recent years. The Assessment Committee has been informed about plans to start an international collaborative Master's programme in the department of photography. The closing of the curriculum of painting at Tartu University will bring changes to the department of painting of TAC, which will be the focus point for the new development plan. The Assessment Committee advises that, should Master's degrees be developed, the programmes should focus on broader areas than the diploma curricula in order to offer substantial added value to the students and community. TAC has been granted the authority to grant professional qualifications as Conservator in three of its departments. Different groups of stakeholders (internally and externally) have confirmed TAC's view that the current portfolio of speciality departments and programmes are well balanced and meet societal and labour market needs. Alumni and employers praised the high standard of practical expertise gained during studies at TAC. TAC's programmes are valued by many applicants with prior professional or academic qualification. In its mission statement, TAC emphasises its aim to help to preserve Estonian traditions in applied arts as an important aspect of Estonian culture. However, the Assessment Committee has seen many efforts in various departments to incorporate modern aspects and technologies in its curricula, which it strongly supports. The Assessment Committee notes that efforts have been made to develop overarching study areas (restoration and conservation, design, art) for some of its departments/curricula and that the ongoing development of harmonizing these areas will be a focus point in the new development plan. It feels that this is a positive, forward looking step and encourages TAC to pursue the task of defining and developing overlapping areas and themes that link different departments; all forms of cooperation and exchange between departments were strongly appreciated by students and in general are appropriate to the demands of the context of a rapidly changing, multidisciplinary sector. It understands the tension arising out of the wish to maintain distinct, traditional art forms on the one hand and the demands to incorporate current, global themes and technologies that are not tied to specific national contexts and traditions and supports TAC's efforts to strike an appropriate balance between the two.

2.2.2 Study programmes are monitored and developed by curriculum committees which work according to formal statutes and

guidelines. External members are regularly included in the process of curricular development both informally and formally, as is alumni and student feedback. The Assessment Committee understands the difficulties of collecting relevant feedback from programmes with small numbers of alumni, but nevertheless recommends that alumni surveys are carried out every year (aggregate results of two or max. three cohorts) in order to have feedback in a timely fashion to be considered by the curriculum committees.

2.2.3. TAC surveys the satisfaction of students with the provision regularly and in various forms. The many informal feedback mechanisms which are to be expected in a small art college are complemented by a host of formal surveys and feedback forms. The Assessment Committee commends TAC on an active and “living” quality culture in this respect and the various ways in which it has developed its formal feedback mechanisms over the years, (including returning information about results of surveys to the people who were questioned) which is still not a common feature of all European art schools. It encourages TAC to continue its efforts to emphasize quality over quantity and to structure its current (list-based) *Feedback and Monitoring System* according to particular areas of interest to which several surveys are grouped. This could help making the survey methodology more systematic and geared towards answering specific questions which TAC considers of strategic interest.

Commendations

- Awareness and ongoing institutional debate about tension and balance between traditional, national art forms and current, global trends and demands. Involvement of external and international stakeholders in this debate (seminars by international guests etc.)
- Strong external involvement in curriculum development
- Lived quality culture in regards to gathering feedback from various stakeholders
- Good feedback from external stakeholders on fulfilling market demands for graduate skills

Recommendations

- Continue development of overarching study themes and structures to support inter-disciplinary cooperation across departments and curricula
- Alumni survey every year (aggregate results of not more than 2-3 yearly cohorts)
- Develop *Feedback and Monitoring System* from a list to a plan which is structured according to different thematic areas

2.3 Student academic progress and student assessment	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements:</p> <p>2.3.1 Student academic progress is monitored and supported.</p> <p>2.3.2 Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.</p> <p>2.3.3 A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.</p>								
<p>Comments</p> <p>2.3.1 The Assessment Committee is satisfied that the mechanisms in place to monitor and support students are well developed, varied and appropriate. The many advantages of a small institution with an engaged and caring staff (intensive student-teacher contact, individual tutoring and support of individual creative development) is supported and enhanced by various formalized procedures such as developing final projects as applied research. Students and alumni clearly value an atmosphere which stimulates their creative development and praise staff and the College for continuous, intensive support. A high percentage of students finish their studies within the regular completion time. The dropout rate of students leaving the college without a degree (average around 6/7% in last 3 years) is below the norm identified by the Ministry. The Assessment Committee is satisfied that the practice to dropping those students to part-time or external status who have not completed their courses according to the study regulations is in accordance with Estonian law and established practice within Estonian HE.</p> <p>2.3.2 The Assessment Committee has seen evidence that learning outcomes, assessment forms and grading criteria are published in the form of course syllabi. Students were aware of the requirements placed on them to pass courses and final exams</p> <p>2.3.3 TAC has a well-defined practice for the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) in place which allows for the accreditation of formal and informal prior learning. Commendably it had conducted training sessions for staff and teachers were well aware of the practice.</p>								

2.4 Support processes for learning	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	(student mobility)
<p>Requirements:</p> <p>2.4.1 <i>The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.</i></p> <p>2.4.2 <i>A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.</i></p> <p>2.4.3 <i>A higher education institution supports student international mobility.</i></p> <p>2.4.4 <i>Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.</i></p> <p>2.4.5 <i>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.</i></p>								
<p>Comments</p> <p>2.4.1 The Assessment Committee has seen evidence that the organisation of studies generally allows students to complete their studies within the nominal period of 4+1 years. The delivery of the programmes/curricula is organized in yearly cohorts which follow a prescribed schedule of classes. There are obligatory, optional and elective classes which allow the deepening and broadening of areas of studies. Despite the fact that many students are involved in large-scale cooperation projects with external partners, the Assessment Committee has not found that this hinders regular progression. Students confirmed that mobility periods do not interfere with progression since full credit is assigned to external study periods based on learning agreements that are drawn up prior to leaving to study abroad. Credit is also assigned to elective courses taken at other Estonian HE Institutions. Both graduation and drop-out rates fulfil and surpass the Ministerial performance agreement.</p> <p>2.4.2 Students value the many opportunities to interact with staff and the support they are given to develop their creative and professional skills. They attest that teaching and administrative staff are “always” open to their requests and that advice they receive on their studies is individual, sound and helpful to their development. Also, staff take care to provide opportunities to students for professional career development by offering internship placements and contacts in the professional world. The speciality departments are staffed adequately to provide support with the technical aspects of the studies in labs and workshops. While much of the counselling takes place in informal ways (as is to be expected in a small institution that values personal contact and relationships) the <i>List of Normative Documents</i> of TAC includes several guidelines and formal regulations for support services</p>								

and procedures, such as guidelines for receiving special support/scholarships or organizing internships. Students also valued the services provided by EAK for supporting projects done in cooperation with external partners, organizing mobility with the support of the Academic Affairs Manager or organizing public student events like fashion shows and exhibitions. The library, although small, provides advice on research as well as access to important national and international databases for research, some of them provided through cooperation agreements with the University of Tartu. Close ties to the Tartu Centre for Creative Industries offer valuable opportunities for graduates to develop business plans and to start their own business in its business incubators. In order to make the support structure even clearer and transparent to students, to create external visibility to services provided and to enhance the PDAC cycle the Assessment Committee suggests to dividing the section *Educational Process* of the *List of Normative Documents* into smaller subsections relating to specific aspects of the educational process, such as *Support Services* or *Counselling*.

2.4.3 International mobility of both students and staff is clearly one of the outstanding features of TAC. In 2013-14 some 9% of TAC's students were involved in outward mobility, compared with fewer than 1% nationally. TAC's student mobility rate is by far the highest of Estonian HEIs, a point of considerable pride for TAC, which the Assessment Committee finds is well deserved. TAC has developed a strong and far-reaching network of European partnerships and supports both study periods and internships abroad. It has set itself target figures to achieve in the next development plan and developed an effective counselling and administrative support structure to facilitate mobility. Students rightly value the many opportunities presented to them to gain international experience, especially because they are acutely aware that TAC is a small institution and Estonia a small country. They therefore would like to see even more international teachers contributing to their studies. TAC has also managed to attract a high rate of incoming students, which is commendable. Incoming students study according to an individual study plan across the yearly courses; they can attend some English-speaking classes or receive individual tuition in classes taught in Estonian.

2.4.4 The Assessment Committee found the physical resources and technical equipment adequate and well managed. Access to facilities and equipment was seen as sufficient by students. The College was able to improve its facilities and buildings in recent years and sees no need for further expansion of its premises at the moment. Departments have social spaces (kitchens/lounges) for students which alleviate the rather small cafeteria space that is available at the moment – the only area that is currently planned to be enlarged, subject to agreement with the Ministry. Students in general were happy with access and the support they receive in using specialized technical equipment.

2.4.5 The College has used a system and method of surveys that has been incorporated in an electronic information system which is

employed by several Estonian HEIs. The staff in TAC are actively involved in working groups for Quality Assurance with other professional colleges to further develop the feedback system. The SER provides an ample amount of survey and feedback data on all areas of the life of an HEI: the admission process, the organisation of studies, the availability of information, the graduation process/final examination, alumni surveys, teacher's satisfaction with particular processes and general staff satisfaction surveys. While the Assessment Committee had little context for the survey data stated in the SER as the full surveys were not provided, it saw and heard evidence that the surveys are carried out in a systematic, transparent way and that data is analyzed and fed back into the respective PDA cycles in an adequate and effective manner in order to support the further development of specific processes. While the Assessment Committee has no reason to doubt the eagerness and sincerity of TAC's wish to use its varied mechanisms of feedback for its ongoing institutional development it suggests a re-structuring of its *Feedback and Monitoring Plan* in coherent subsections which could, for example, be mapped to issues identified in the Development Plan. This would help establish a transparent overall management PDA cycle, avoid excessive or overlapping surveys and support the move towards a strategic approach of management.

Commendation

- Exceptionally strong record of mobility for students, both incoming and outgoing

Recommendations

- Divide/structure the section *Educational Process* of the *List of Normative Documents* in smaller subsections relating to specific aspects of the educational process (supports a more effective PDAC cycle)
- Structure *Feedback and Monitoring Plan* in coherent subsections to be mapped to issues identified in the Development Plan (enhance strategic PDAC)

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

General comments:

3.0.0 Creativity is an integral part of TAC's existence and in this field the College has achieved remarkable results. The delivery of exhibitions, workshops and other creative events in Tartu, Estonia and also internationally is part of the educational and

development process for students and staff.

The definition of applied RDC in the Estonian higher education system is still a recent issue. TAC has defined its own concepts of applied and basic research for itself, and has developed a system for supporting and delivering these activities. The main areas of research are directly related to teaching and learning activity in the institution. Since 2011 there is a document defining the main fields for applied research for the period 2012 - 2015 (a total of 11 themes). A named member of the professoriate is responsible for applied research at the institution and overall developments and results are monitored by the RDC Board.

The delivery of development activities is an obligation for all the speciality departments. Since 2013 there has been an administrative unit (Research and Development Centre) which supports the co-ordination and project management of interdisciplinary, cross -departmental projects. All the development projects in TAC are market driven, i.e. they have a customer and usually are also externally funded. TAC seeks to ensure a link between a contracted project and one of its main areas of teaching.

Commendations

- In RDC a system is in place for involving students
- Students are motivated to take part in extra-curricular activities relating to RDC
- There is funding for RDC activities as a part of the salary fund
- The system for defending of the final thesis is robust

Recommendations

- As TAC has the ambition to deliver a Master's programme, a well-defined and clear system of basic research could be put in place; the research areas could be more generic and institution-based not person oriented, as is now proposed by TAC
- The list of applied research projects could be developed to sit within an applied research plan with measurable indicators together with allocated resources
- The Enterprise and Development Centre (EDC) currently has a budget to support its core activities The budget covers or partly covers some RDC activities like publishing TAC's Proceedings, managing the Gallery Noorus, TAC's participation at the Stockholm Furniture Fair and the London Design Festival, TAC's fashion show and TAC's advertisement and PR costs which support RDC and service to society. In 2015 the budget was €45 000. However the EDC has no target for earned income. The Committee invites TAC to consider whether some defined targets could be put in place in this field. This would also add ambition and incentive to EDC's activities.

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3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.
A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.

Comments

3.1.1 TAC has defined its areas of applied research (11 themes all together) and basic (two areas) research. The majority of them reflect an outside demand, i.e. the projects are commissioned by an interested stakeholder from outside the institution (e.g. Inventory and Description of the Windmills was ordered by the Heritage Board). The main themes of applied research were defined in 2011. The outcome of an RDC project has to be a professional project, exhibition or publication. The results are monitored on an annual basis. The results of RDC activities by the academic staff are also recorded in the office management programme Web Desktop.

3.1.2 In December 2015 an overall review of the research (applied and basic) undertaken in the period 2012-2015 will be carried out. The Assessment Committee was informed that research will be continued in three broad fields. While assessing the outcome of basic research, TAC takes into account ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 3.1.

TAC has developed a system of publication for its own Proceedings (since 2003) and other published books and catalogues.

Commendations

- In RDC a system is in place for involving students
- Students are motivated to take part in extra-curricular activities relating to RDC

Recommendations

- As TAC has the ambition to deliver a Master’s programme, a well-defined and clear system of basic research could be put in

<p>place; the research areas could be more generic and institution-based not person oriented, as is now proposed by TAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of applied research projects could be developed to sit within an applied research plan with measurable indicators together with allocated resources 							
3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.</i></p> <p><i>A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.</i></p> <p><i>A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.</i></p> <p><i>RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.</i></p>							
<p>Comments</p> <p>3.2.1 The support system for RDC activities is in place. Staff employment contracts contain allocated time and compensation for RDC activity. There is a scheme for the allocation of a free semester in order to allow a staff member to carry out RDC activities. Most of the members of academic staff are creative professionals in their field and do not specifically measure the time dedicated to their creative work.</p> <p>3.2.2 The good facilities and infrastructure at TAC enable students and staff to participate in D&C projects. The library is sufficient and in order to provide additional opportunities there is an agreement with the academic library of University of Tartu enabling TAC students and staff to use its resources.</p> <p>A separate unit “Enterprise and Development Centre” was set up in 2013, with the main focus on assisting academic staff with project management and administration and also participating in public procurement tenders.</p> <p>Commendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is funding for RDC activities as a part of the salary fund 							

Recommendation							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Enterprise and Development Centre (EDC) currently has a budget to support its core activities. The budget covers or partly covers some RDC activities like publishing TAC's Proceedings, managing the Gallery Noorus, TAC's participation at the Stockholm Furniture Fair and the London Design Festival, TAC's fashion show and TAC's advertisement and PR costs which support RDC and service to society. In 2015 the budget was €45 000. However the EDC has no target for earned income. The Committee invites TAC to consider whether some defined targets could be put in place in this field. This would also add ambition and incentive to EDC's activities. 							
3.3 Student research supervision	conforms to requirements	X	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution includes students of all academic cycles 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>Comments</p> <p>3.3.1 Procedures for student research supervision are in place. Staff who have been involved in teaching and supervising the student do not act as members of the defence committee which examines the final work/thesis of the student. In addition the final defence committee includes practitioners from the labour market and an international member. The defence of creative work is carried out in a public space /gallery which enables full community participation.</p> <p>The final thesis/work of a student is considered to be part of the study process; when, at the beginning, its scope is declared to be also part of a research or development project then it is also considered part of College's R&D activity. When the final thesis/work is seen as part of a research or development project of the institution then an appropriately modified instruction and supervision process will apply.</p> <p>3.3.2 Large interdisciplinary projects involving academic staff and students are well managed and the participants are carefully</p>							

selected. Based on the interviews, more attention could be placed on the student's personal/sole input, as sometimes it feels that projects like that lose their importance for the individual student from an institutional point of view.

3.3.3 The students are well aware of academic ethics as during the first semester they are introduced to the subject of "Intellectual property" where the obligations and results of the theft of intellectual property are explained. In the subject "Oral and written communication" the theme of plagiarism is dealt with. The academic supervisors of the written final thesis check the thesis against plagiarism using the special open source programme.

Commendation

- The system for defending of the final thesis is robust

4 SERVICE TO SOCIETY

General comments:

4.0.0 One of the main goals of TAC is to bring art to the community. The Assessment Committee has observed the important role which TAC takes in promoting cultural life in Estonia, especially in the city of Tartu, by actively co-operating with the public, private and voluntary sectors. TAC actively organizes exhibitions, seminars, workshops and lectures, and takes part in national and international events. The Gallery Noorus, which TAC received from the city of Tartu premises on a free-of-charge lease in 2009, has become an established element in Tartu's cultural scene. The library, even though small, offers a good selection of literature and another space for public events. Furthermore, the evidence has shown that the in-service training of both employees of TAC and general public from outside the TAC is popular and effective. The Assessment Committee is impressed by TAC's contribution to Estonian culture and community.

Recommendations

- TAC may consider the possibility of including an increased focus on the marketing of TAC's activities in society in their development plan, looking towards profile raising beyond the artistic realm in order to raise their profile in Estonian society nationally.

- In order to reach the target group of potential applicants/students, social media could be used more. Various forms of social media, popular among the younger generation, could be useful for popularising TAC’s education and activities.

The Assessment Committee believes that the public-oriented activities of TAC (section 4.3) of TAC are **worthy of recognition**.

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	
<p>Requirements: <i>A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities. 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.</i></p>								
<p>Comments</p> <p>4.1.1 TAC has a clear approach to popularising its core activities. The interest or need for TAC’s service to society is measured regularly and is based on current issues and demands of the labour market. The core activities are popularised by using both advertisement papers (such as information booklets and pamphlets) and social media (such as Facebook page). The main goal of TAC is to bring art to the community and tie student projects together with society, and this goal is also noticeable in the popularisation of TAC’s activities; for example, the logo of TAC can be found in the commissioned work or co-operative projects undertaken by students, like in the Balbiino ice cream wrapper and the Christmas card of the Ministry of Education and Research among other things. This increases TAC’s visibility in society and highlights its activities. TAC also actively organizes exhibitions, seminars, workshops and lectures, and takes part in national and international fairs and other events.</p> <p>4.1.2 Numerous employees of TAC are members of professional associations, such as Tartu Artists’ Union and Estonian Artists’ Association. Some employees participate in the work of the Board of the associations like Estonian Textile Artists Association. Furthermore, the staff members are generally recognised as experts in their chosen field.</p>								

4.1.3 Both employees and students of TAC are involved with the activities of RDC (Research, Development and Creative activity). The information about RDC activities is annually collected and reviewed for further development. The research part of the activities includes articles, presentations and doctoral and Master’s theses. The research topics – which focus on applied research because of the character of TAC as an institution of professional higher education – range from very broad areas to very specific areas of research. Research projects of both students and staff are regularly published in the form of books and articles in different national and international publications, which contribute to art education in general. These projects are mostly found in the library of TAC, alongside other publications by TAC staff and students.

Recommendations

- TAC may consider the possibility of including an increased focus on the marketing of TAC’s activities in society in their development plan, looking towards profile raising beyond the artistic realm in order to raise their profile in Estonian society nationally.
- In order to reach the target group of potential applicants/students, social media could be used more. Various forms of social media, popular among the younger generation, could be useful for popularising TAC’s education and activities.

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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Requirements:

A higher education institution has defined the objectives regarding in-service training and measures their implementation. 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. Participant satisfaction with the quality of in-service training is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.

Comments

4.2.1 The objectives regarding in-service training for the general public are defined.

4.2.2 The Gallery Noorus offers a venue for lectures, seminars and workshops in connection with exhibitions. The library is another resource available to people from outside TAC. The recent addition of ESTER (the joint catalogue of large Estonian libraries) will possibly have a positive effect on the number of readers from the general public in the near future.

4.2.3 TAC offers continuing education to the general public in the form of preparatory courses for prospective students, traditional courses and bespoke courses. The need for such courses is based on current needs and issues in society. Based on the evidence (seen in the report and in discussions), the development of these activities is positive; the number of ordered courses and the range of educational courses is increasing. The satisfaction of the participants (from the general public) in continuing education is measured through feedback and post-project analyses. The information is used for planning improvement activities. The satisfaction level of the participants is generally good.

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

Comments
 4.3.1 The public-oriented activities of TAC are purposeful and contribute to the public image of the college. The activities are regularly evaluated and improved by using feedback. TAC’s activities are brought widely into the public arena, both nationally and internationally. The Gallery Noorus has found a permanent place in Tartu’s cultural life. The growing number of exhibitions indicates its popularity among the public. Also the library of TAC organizes numerous public events. Based on the evidence provided by the meetings with the people involved with TAC, TAC actively supports its teaching staff, students and alumni with their participation in

(speciality) projects which are not only educational for the participants, but also enriches the visual environment of the society in national and international level.

4.3.2 The Assessment Committee has seen evidence that TAC contributes extensively to the enhancement of community welfare in Estonia – especially in the city of Tartu – with the exhibitions in the Gallery Noorus and student projects (such as the design for Tartu’s city busses, the design of colour plan and furniture of three kindergartens and animal-shaped road blocks). In addition, TAC has successfully reached international audiences. For example the works of students from the furniture and textile departments were recently exhibited at the Stockholm Furniture Fair and London Design Festival. Moreover, numerous exhibitions with the works from TAC have been held abroad. The remarkableness of two previous achievements is highlighted by the fact that TAC is a small institution. The outstandingly high quality of TAC’s work, especially regarding student’s graduate projects, has been noticed and recognised. TAC has also taken part into voluntary work in Estonian society by donating posters and illustrations to the Tartu Children’s Shelter among other things.

The Assessment Committee believes that the public-oriented activities of TAC are **worthy of recognition**.