

Decision Regarding Institutional Accreditation Tartu Art College

05/02/2016

The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher Education and VET decided to accredit Tartu Art College for seven years

The Assessment Committee decided to recognise the sub-area of the Service to Society assessment area entitled *Other Public-Oriented Activities* with the additional note, 'worthy of recognition'.

On the basis of clause 21 (3) 1 of the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act, subsection 10 (4) of the Universities Act, point 3.7.3 of the Statutes of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher Education and VET (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and point 48.1 of the document, 'Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation', authorised in point 3.7.1 of the above-mentioned EKKA Statutes; the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of EKKA (hereinafter referred to as 'the Council') affirms the following:

1. On 08.09.2014 Tartu Art College and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct institutional accreditation.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 09.07.2015, approved the following membership of the committee for the institutional accreditation of Tartu Art College (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

Paul Mitchell – Chair	Higher Education Consultant, Director, Mega Mitchell Consulting Ltd. (United Kingdom)
Emma Järvenpää	Student member, Leiden University (Netherlands)
Maren Schmohl	Vice-Rector, Merz Akademie, Academy of Applied Design, Art and Media (Germany)
Krista Tuulik	Technology Transfer Manager, Innovation and Business Centre, Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia)

3. Tartu Art College submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 07.09.2015 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 09.09.2015.
4. An assessment visit was made to Tartu Art College during 03–04.11.2015.
5. The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 17.12.2015, EKKA forwarded it to Tartu Art College for its comments on 17.12.2015 and the College delivered its response on 21.12.2015.

6. The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 21.12.2015. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
7. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the Committee’s final assessment report along with the College’s self-evaluation report to the Council members on 26.01.2016.
8. The Committee presented the following component assessments:

Organisational management and performance	Conforms to requirements
Teaching and learning	Conforms to requirements
Research, development and/or other creative activity (RDC)	Conforms to requirements
Service to society	Conforms to requirements

9. The Assessment Committee decided to recognise the sub-area of the Service to Society assessment area entitled *Other Public-Oriented Activities* with the additional note, ‘worthy of recognition’.
10. The Council with 11 members present discussed these received documents in its session on 05.02.2016 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding Tartu Art College.

Strengths

- Management of Tartu Art College is clearly structured and the College has defined its mission in Estonian society.
- The quality of education provided by the College is consistent with both student and employer expectations and enables the College to flexibly respond to the changing requirements of the labour market.
- The College has an effective communication system enabling the College to gather feedback from both its teaching staff and students about academic and other issues. The results of feedback surveys are used for improvement activities routinely. Because of this there is a strong culture of collegiality and mutual support within the College.
- Management of the College’s finances and other resources is well organised. The teaching and learning environment, infrastructure and students’ accommodation and recreational facilities are diverse and of high quality.
- The final work defence system is well developed; defence committees also include members from outside the College.
- The student dropout rate is low.
- Teaching staff and student mobility in both directions is exceptionally active.
- Through continuous dialogues with external and international stakeholders, the College is seeking a balance between traditional national art forms and current global trends.
- The College has built a strong culture of quality. Regular feedback is gathered from different stakeholders who also participate actively in study programme development.
- Tartu Art College has developed a concept for its applied and basic research. Students are motivated to participate in RDC along with their studies.
- The internationalisation process is effective; teaching staff are provided with good opportunities for international mobility. The teaching staff is actively engaged in their professional development and enthusiastically participate in the Erasmus training programmes.
- Public-oriented activities of Tartu Art College and their impacts on both local and international audiences are worthy of recognition. The College contributes significantly to the enhancement

of community welfare; for example, through student projects and voluntary work at the Tartu Children's Shelter. Creative works by students are of exceptionally high quality, are directly related to entrepreneurial enterprises, and have been exhibited in several local exhibitions and international fairs.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- Management should pay more attention to development of the staff evaluation system and conduct development interviews with the teaching staff once a year instead of every three years.
 - The impacts of professional development on the teaching staff should be monitored in a more systematic manner.
 - The College should continue to apply its cross-discipline approach to future planning and development to enhance flexibility in conducting instruction and to achieve efficient use of its resources. It is advisable to develop general study modules and structures to support interdisciplinary cooperation across departments and study programmes.
 - The College Development Plan should better support strategic development of teaching and learning. The development plan should define the performance indicators as well as qualitative and quantitative objectives in a more explicit manner.
 - It is recommended that the College conduct its alumni surveys once each year, and present the aggregate results not exceeding two to three years at a time.
 - The College Feedback and Monitoring System should be restructured; the system should be based on thematic areas identified in the Development Plan instead of a list of normative documents. Such approach would enable more effective application of the 'quality circle' (PDCA).
 - Since the College has an ambition to develop a master degree programme, it should clearly specify which basic research is to be launched. The research areas could be more generic and institution based, not person oriented. A plan for applied research should be prepared including measurable performance indicators together with the resources required for their achievement.
 - The Enterprise and Development Centre (EDC), established at the College, currently has no quantitative targets (projects, income). To boost EDC activities, it would be advisable to also set specific objectives in this area.
 - The College Development Plan should focus on building the College's image and publicising its activities in Estonian society in general, not just in the art world. When popularising its activities, the College should also make better use of social media to reach the target group of the younger generation.
11. If all component assessments are provided as 'conforms to requirements', the Quality Assessment Council shall conclude that the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment meet the requirements; and decide to accredit the institution of higher education for seven years.

12. On the basis of the foregoing, the Council

DECIDED

to accredit Tartu Art College for seven years.

The decision was adopted by 11 votes in favour. Against 0.

13. This accreditation will be valid until 5.02.2023, and the EKKA Bureau will coordinate a date for the next institutional accreditation with Tartu Art College no later than 5.05.2022.

14. The Council also decided to award the EKKA Quality Label to Tartu Art College for the period ending on 5.02.2023.
15. A person who finds that his or her rights are violated or his or her freedoms are restricted by this decision may file a challenge with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding. A judicial challenge to the decision may be submitted within 30 days after its delivery, filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

Tõnu Meidla
Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council