

Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Environmental Protection Study Programme Group Tallinn University of Technology

18/06/2015

The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the assessment report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Environmental Protection study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Tallinn University of Technology in five years.

Tallinn University of Technology submitted the following study programmes for evaluation:

- Industrial Ecology BSc
- Industrial Ecology MSc

Assessment Committee

Laurent Counillon (Chair)	University Nice-Sophia Antipolis (France)
Olav Aarna	Estonian Qualifications Authority (Estonia)
Kari Keinänen	University of Helsinki (Finland)
Rik Leemans	Wageningen University (Netherlands)
Adrian Stan	Timisoara Dental Students Association, Student (Romania)

The Committee's Comments on the Study Programme Group

Strengths

- *The interdisciplinary study programmes meeting the needs of the labour market make it possible to prepare environmental professionals who understand production processes and know how to analyse, understand and manage the environmental impacts of industrial activities.*

- *The BSc programme offers students a broad environmental education with adequate emphasis on industrial ecology as well as more general environmental courses and interdisciplinary courses, providing graduates with good employment opportunities.*
- *Feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders is quickly and effectively taken into account in the study programme development.*
- *Recognized researchers as well as foreign and visiting lecturers participate in delivering the study programmes.*

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- *Tartu College should develop a clear vision and strategic plan for the study programme group with regard to future developments of its teaching and research, graduate employability, teaching staff expertise and research directions.*
- *The role and responsibilities of the curriculum committee should be defined more clearly. Currently there is some overlap between the individuals who perform the functions of developing study programmes and of controlling their implementation. Regarding study programme development, responsibilities for the development, implementation and evaluation/control should be clearly separated to avoid conflicts of interest and to ensure the best quality.*
- *The objectives and learning outcomes of integrated internships within the BSc programme should be made more concrete and the guidelines specified. More opportunities for exposing students to potential work environments should be offered (e.g. job shadowing).*
- *Along with the acquisition of knowledge, the MSc programme should also emphasize the shaping of skills and attitudes.*
- *Students' international mobility rates are low. Tartu College should enhance the opportunities for students to participate in international mobility.*
- *Individual professional development plans for the teaching staff should be prepared to improve the quality of teaching and supervision and to ensure that the teachers are abreast of new developments in the fields of teaching and research.*
- *A system should be established to monitor the effectiveness and quality of external supervision of MSc theses, and a strategic plan should be developed to reduce potential vulnerabilities in education and research while being dependent upon other institutions.*
- *Literature listed in the syllabi is relatively outdated and should be brought up to date.*
- *Ensuring that teaching methods were relevant and up to date should certainly be a priority. It is important for the MSc Industrial Ecology programme that the College would specifically strengthen industrial ecology related research. The management could consider this in developing its next strategic vision.*
- *Tartu College of TUT should develop a database of its alumni within TUT's general database and also use social media to communicate with its alumni.*
- *Methods related to industrial ecology require data collection and analysis skills, which in turn require adequate academic preparation in statistics and mathematics; therefore the proportion of these subjects in the programme should certainly not be reduced.*

Further information:

[Assessment Report](#)

[Minutes of the Session of the Quality Assessment Council](#) (in Estonian)