

ASSESSMENT REPORT**Institution:** Tallinna Tervishoiu Kõrgkool *Tallinn Health Care College***Assessment committee:**

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Coordinator: Liia Tüür**Dates of the assessment visit:** December 2012, Monday 3 and Tuesday 4**Component assessment:**

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

RDC		x		
Service to society	x			

Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA: 06/01/2013

Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation: /23/01/2013

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

Date: 05/02/2013

Summary of the assessment:

The Tallinn Health Care College (THCC) has well-articulated statements about its mission, vision, objectives and basic values and has defined its role in Estonian society according to the Estonian Higher education system. The organisational structure of THCC is clear and apparently effective.

The educational objectives of the school are clear and in line with the demanded Outcome Based Educational needs. The Introduction of Outcome Based Education has led to improved integration of theory and practice. Nevertheless, more strategic attention is needed for systematic and continuous development of the curricula. Graduates are well prepared for the labour market and the labour

market is happy with the professional level of the graduates. Students and stakeholders involvement in different councils of the school is commendable. THCC offers a well developed student support system and access to modern technologies and educational resources .

Tallinn Health Care College has achieved fair results with research and development. However, development of a reasonable, feasible, achievable step-by-step plan for further developments in this area is recommended. The support system for research and development is in the right direction. On the other hand, more consideration is needed to recognize what kind of support is needed for applied research.

The assessment committee values plenty of positive developments and implementations of research and evidence based practice in the curricula. The involvement of stakeholders in the research projects is increasing and participating students are valued for their work.

THCC has strongly regional orientation in its activities and public oriented activities are well acknowledged by the stakeholders. The staff of the College is active in professional associations. More possibilities to connect public activities to research should be explored. Objectives for lifelong learning are well defined.

Assessment of sub-areas:

1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
<p>General comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tallinn Health Care College (THCC) has well-articulated statements about its mission, vision, objectives and basic values and has defined its role in Estonian society. • The defined goals at different levels are internally coherent and relevant in the context of Estonia and the Estonian Higher education system. • The organisational structure of THCC is clear and apparently effective and works in a democratic way. • THCC has well-functioning outward communication activities regarding staff and potential student candidates and is successfully engaging with the stakeholders through systematic outreach activities. • The strategic management process would benefit from a clearer process of prioritisation. • The system of quality assurance should become more visible and present in all day activities.

1.1 General management	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has defined its role in the Estonian society.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p>

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.

Tallinn Health Care College (THCC) has well-articulated statements about its mission, vision, objectives and basic values in the Development Plan for 2012-2016 and in the self-evaluation report. THCC has defined its role in Estonian society to be one of the two health care colleges in Estonia, providing professional HE for nurses (basic and specialisation) and midwives; and the only one providing education for occupational therapists, health promoters, assistant pharmacists, dental technicians and optometrists. The college is confident about its strategic role for the health care sector in Estonia. THCC has set goals to become a health promoting college, which is executed through a wide range of activities for the society in all regions across Estonia where the college has active presence.

THCC has went through a period of comprehensive and demanding self-evaluation process, which is described in the report and was expressed by the staff during the assessment committee interviews. The defined goals at different levels are internally coherent and relevant in the context of Estonia and the Estonian Higher education system. The college has recognised the importance of attracting learners beyond the age of 30 and from all regions of Estonia. A related action plan, including implementation activities, would not only benefit from prioritisation and higher level of specificity, but also from better integration with everyday general and quality management processes as a logical follow-up to the formal strategic planning exercise of the accreditation.

THCC has defined key results from its past activities and set mid-term targets in the self-evaluation report and in the Development Plan for 2012-2016. However, in the Development Plan about 65 different “results” in six categories have been defined, while the final selection of 12 key results described in the self-evaluation report would benefit from more structured approach to support priority setting for good leadership.

The organisation of THCC is described as flat, which is acknowledged by the staff of the college. In preparation and implementation of development and action plans wide involvement of staff, stakeholders and students is encouraged. Priority-setting is executed in a bottom-up manner and consensus is sought throughout the process. This is resulted in relatively high satisfaction rate with the leadership support by the staff and with the inclusive management by students.

The organisational structure of THCC is clear and apparently effective and works in a democratic way. The college has its responsibilities clear and staff members understand the institution's comprehensive role. Enthusiasm for innovations however requires the courage and skills to prioritize and demands high level of project management skills. The college has ten years of experience with quality management; in recent years several processes and respective responsibilities have been mapped. However, the practice of assuring quality on a day to day basis is not yet established in a robust manner.

THCC has well-functioning outward communication activities regarding staff and potential student candidates, which is reflected by high satisfaction rate among the target groups. The college is also successfully engaging with the stakeholders through systematic outreach activities in all regions of its active presence; this is highly acknowledged by the representatives of the target group. Feedback from all stakeholder groups (especially practical training institutions, especially the large hospitals; ministries; professional associations etc.) is actively collected using different approaches to compensate for low response rate sometimes. Needs for improvements (e.g. engagement of the alumni, making use of R&D activities for improved marketing and image-building) are well-acknowledged and response actions developed.

Commendations:

- Tallinn Health Care College (THCC) has well-articulated statements about its mission, vision, objectives and basic values and has defined its role in Estonian society.
- The defined goals at different levels are internally coherent and relevant in the context of Estonia and the Estonian Higher education system.
- The organisational structure of THCC is clear and apparently effective and works in a democratic way.
- THCC has well-functioning outward communication activities regarding staff and potential student candidates and is successfully engaging with the stakeholders through systematic outreach activities.

Recommendations:

- The strategic management process would benefit from a clearer process of prioritisation.
- The system of quality assurance should become more visible and present in all day activities.

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>Personnel management principles and procedures are functioning relatively well regarding academic sustainability of the THCC. However, the long-term personnel management is strongly attached to the model of state-oriented financing, which is confirmed annually and does not allow much independence or risk-taking. Most of the responsibilities are laid on the heads of chairs, who also lead curricula development and research in the respective domain. The college uses personal development procedures, such as annual development interviews regularly, but the link with the strategic level development plans could be strengthened at different levels of the organisation; especially now after the accreditation has been successfully concluded, there is room for cross-college strategic guidance on employee recruitment and development procedures rather based on competences than on domain knowledge. The College has made some efforts to attract international academic staff and intends to pursue such goal in the coming years, but so far limited financial resources have not enabled to execute this sufficiently.</p>								
<p>Since 2010 the teaching staff is appointed into office through an evaluation process based on an established procedure, which seems to take into account the applicants' prior teaching experiences and their achievements in research, development and creative activities; for the academic staff also student feedback is used, if available. New positions are filled through an open competition that for</p>								

academic positions has fluctuated between 2.0 and 5.5 per academic position in years 2008-2012. However, since there is no analysis, it's unclear if there is any imbalance between the curriculums in this respect.

Motivation policy is transparent and acknowledged as such by the College staff; broad approach is used starting from deep engagement into decision-making and investing into working conditions up to straightforward financial remuneration. Rules of remuneration basis are clear and their implementation seems to support the positive working atmosphere at the College. In recent years (since 2009) the employee satisfaction with the remuneration policies has increased and remained relatively high as compared to other higher education institutions in Estonia. However, this is easily influenced by the short-term fluctuations in the economic situation of the country and respective state financing of the college. Staff satisfaction with being recognized and career opportunities is showing a growing trend. While the increasing emphasis on R&D activities is relatively new and formal criteria for time-division between different tasks exist, there is some uncertainty about coherence between the time effort needed for R&D and its correlation with the remuneration principles. Personal development is heavily depending on the funding from EU structural funds, THCC's own investment into in-service training of the staff has increased in recent years remarkably, which may become a risk in the future.

Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information is regularly surveyed and the results are actively used in improvement activities. The staff motivation to continue working at the College did increase above 90% by 2010, no later information is available. In addition to routine survey tools the College apparently makes use of personal development interviews, conducted for each staff member by immediate superior annually. In the actual management structure, the effectiveness of management quality based on employee feedback is strongly dependent on the enthusiasm and capacity of the heads of chairs - it would benefit from cross-college strategic support and respective quality management procedures.

Participation of employees in various developmental activities (e.g. mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks), seems to be relatively high. Every chair is a member of respective international network, which facilitates the international collaboration both for the staff and student exchange. Chairs are relatively independent in planning their international cooperation for the staff and students, but necessary support is provided by respective vice-rector's office. College policy promotes balanced use of available resources for professional development between staff of different curricula programmes. Such approach is supported by analysis of individual needs.

THCC has incorporated the principles of academic ethics into different procedural documents. However, the panel felt discomfort on behalf of the staff when discussing the issue. The lack of violation cases on academic ethics grounds and not having clear examples of the college’s practical procedures in dealing with them implies that there is room for improvement for more open and straightforward management the matter.

Commendations:

- Personnel management principles and procedures are functioning relatively well however, the link with the strategic level development plans could be strengthened at different levels of the organisation.
- Rules of remuneration basis are clear and their implementation seems to support the positive atmosphere. The employee satisfaction with the remuneration policies has increased and remained relatively high.
- Employee satisfaction is regularly surveyed and the results are actively used in improvement activities.
- Participation of employees in various developmental activities seems to be relatively high.

Recommendations:

- Staff and management could benefit from a more systematic; competency based human resource policy in the future where cross-college competencies are incorporated.
- The college is encouraged to invest more of its own resources into financing staff professional development to balance the financial and content risk if relaying solely on EU structural funds.
- Staff should be more open to the possibility of violation of academic ethics (for example plagiarism) to have sound procedures how to manage and prevent such situations with high academic standards.

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.

THCC seems not to have any financial problems; future confidence in economic stability of the College is strongly laid on the need of the health care staff and respective state funding, but less on proactive risk management. The planning and management procedures regarding the financial resources and infrastructure are economically feasible and transparent. Principles of funding the core activities seem to have good routine processes in place - financial management is strongly attached to the model of state-oriented financing, which is confirmed annually and does not allow much independence or risk-taking. The link between strategic level and operational priorities and respective long-term strategic support by financial management could benefit from more coherent application of quality management procedures and prioritization. The advent of new outcome-based financing of Estonian higher education has been acknowledged, but not yet incorporated into clear financial strategy, e.g. towards more efficiency.

An adequate management information system is used although planning cycle seems to cover one year only. Therefore we would like to encourage the College to use an information system, which allows long term management at different responsibility levels.

The working conditions of the staff, and the learning and RDC conditions of students are according to modern standards and relevant new investment projects are underway. It also seems that the College is managing it two campuses (one in Tallinn and another in Kohtla-Järve) in a balanced and sustainable way, which the assessment committee acknowledges.

Commendations:

- The planning and management procedures regarding the financial resources and infrastructure are economically feasible and transparent.

Recommendations:

- The college should be encouraged to use an information system, which allows long term management at different responsibility

levels. The aim to come to more accurate financial planning is recognisable in THCC Development Plan for 2012 – 2016.

2 TEACHING AND LEARNING

General comments:

- Educational objectives of the school are clear and in line with the demanded Outcome Based Educational needs
- The College uses an effective student admission system where everybody seems to benefit from the entrance interviews
- Graduates are well prepared for the labour market and the labour market is happy with the professional level of the graduates
- Students and stakeholders involvement in different councils of the school is commendable
- More strategic attention is needed for systematic and continuous development of the curricula, not only focussing on the content but also on the didactical developments (teaching and learning methodologies) to achieve common agreement on didactical approaches as they are used in school and during the internships
- Student academic progress is effectively monitored
- The student assessment system is good and recently based on Outcome Based Education which has led to more integration of theory and practice
- The organisation of studies ensures students an opportunity to complete their studies within the standard period
- The student support system is well developed and working well
- Modern technologies and educational resources are used appropriately

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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Requirements:

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

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

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

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

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

Educational objectives of the school are clear and in line with the demanded Outcome Based Educational needs. Tallinn HCC measures the annual number of graduates, their employment of the graduates as well as drop outs. Students are competitive in the domestic job market, their international competitiveness is evaluated through the feedback from the students and alumni that have gone abroad to work. Also the curriculum meets the European and Estonian higher education's standards. The exact level of education, according to the EQF, should further be clarified and used as a basis for bilateral agreements. Especially in the perspective of benchmarking, equity in partners is relevant. The fact that many graduates find work in other European countries, shows that they're internationally competitive.

The number of student places is planned by lines set by the state and the numbers are discussed with different stakeholders annually. For some new programs (like 'Health promotion') there seems to be an imbalance between (state) objectives and real working places. This despite of attempts from the rectorate to promote Health Promotion and Public Health among students and among stakeholders. More discussion is needed on the area of the new professional Education Curricula about their need by the stakeholders.

The admission rules are equally understandable to everyone, the proportions between grades acquired before, entrance exam and entrance interviews seem to be fair. Entrance interviews seem to be an effective way to select motivated students.

The percentage of entrants in the age group of 41-50 has risen from 9,6% 2008 to 18,9 % in 2011. The assessment committee wants to encourage the college to attract new target groups and in the meantime develop an adequate support system for these new target groups. Since there is a plan to attract older people- maybe the support systems and facilities should change accordingly.

The student body (student council) is very strong and active and obviously contributes to the final results. The collaboration between

the council of the school and the students is very effective. Student members are in every council in the school.

The College provides equal opportunities to all applicants. Curricula and the learning, work and RDC environments are adjusted for learners with special needs, to ensure that each learner has an opportunity to study and develop. Learners with special needs have an opportunity to consult with the relevant chair which will identify the suitability of the profession and the conditions necessary for completing the studies. The assessment committee found out that there were only a couple of students with special needs that attended the school in the past years. More information about the opportunities for students with special needs should be provided by the school. The THCC Development plan holds the objective to improve the counselling system, including improved attention for special needs learners.

Commendations:

- Educational objectives of the school are clear and in line with the demanded Outcome Based Educational needs.
- Everybody seems to benefit from the entrance interviews.
- Strong position of and contribution by the student council.

Recommendations:

- The College should clearly define the EQF level of education to assure good international partnership.
- New target groups should be selected and an adequate support systems for these groups should be developed.
- The College should examine the biggest obstacles for people with special needs to attend school.

2.2 Study programme development	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	x	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:

A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market, and takes into account the strategies of the country and expectations of the society.

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

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

Tallinn HCC assesses the needs of the labour market and different stakeholders annually. The College takes into account international trends, social priorities, recommendations by the Training Committee for Health Professionals operating at the Ministry of Social Affairs, surveys by professional associations and the College's resources.

Different stakeholders are taking part in the development activities of the curricula and students are actively involved and their feedback from previous terms is taken into account.

The curriculum councils are directed by heads of chairs. The curriculum councils act as advisory bodies, making suggestions for developing curricula, the involvement of specialists in teaching, the sustainability of curricula in relation to personnel, and developing the teaching and learning environments. The curriculum councils discuss the results of feedback from students, alumni and employers and curriculum analyses. Curricula are updated every year by a member of the teaching staff who reviews and updates subject specifications. All professional HE curricula have been evaluated by experts and the results are taken into account in curriculum development. Although the council acknowledges the work that the curriculum councils do, there seems to be no systematic or continuous development of the curriculum in a higher level.

Continuous development of a curriculum is a general task for a HEI. This requires a strategic view on further educational developments. In the new didactical approach (teaching and learning methodologies), launched by the introduction of Outcome Based Education (OBE), we see bits and pieces of renewal of education (like parts of Problem Based Learning - PBL, changes in assessment in the direction of integrated, competency based assessment) but no coherence on a general level. The consequences of introducing OBE in the long run for assessments, student guidance, evaluation of clinical practice, integration of subjects etc., should be clear for everyone. Strategic planning of teaching and learning methodologies should be founded on a common shared view on didactical principles. More attention in this perspective is required for generic professional competencies (like reasoning skills, (international) communication skills, analytical skills etc.). This should lead to a common agreement on didactical approaches as they are used in school and during the internships.

Benchmarking (comparison with other institutes) is important and requires carefully chosen (international) partners on exact the same

level of education. Increasing the international cooperation and labour market opportunities for students and graduates, requires more attention for English language skills during the studies.

The committee values the relationship Tallinn HCC has with Tartu HCC; the partnership is seen as a 'positive neighbour watch' - it has led to good cooperation and exchange of staff to support each other.

The alumni stated that for the majority of the graduates it was relatively easy to find a fitting job. In addition, the majority felt really well equipped for the job. Alumni are annually approached to take part in an email based assessment. The findings of these quality control methods are well used by the college (and visible for the alumni).

Employer satisfaction with the quality and suitability of the graduates to labour market is analysed through direct communication as well as employer satisfaction surveys. During the site visit the assessment committee was convinced about the satisfaction for the employers to the quality of the skills of the graduates. The employers found the development to outcomes-based education very good. It had made them much clearer the competencies that the students have to obtain during practise placements and what to wait from the graduates. The employers were happy with the direct ways of communication as well as that the College always listened to their feedback and made corrections needed. The site visit supported the information in the self-evaluation report that in the leaderships skills of the graduates there is need for development.

Commendations:

- Graduates are well prepared for the labour market and the labour market is happy with the professional level of the graduates.
- Students and stakeholders involvement in different councils of the school is commendable.

Recommendations:

- More strategic attention to systematic and continuous development of the curricula, not only focussing on the content but also on the didactical developments (teaching and learning methodologies).
- To achieve common agreement on didactical approaches as they are used in school and during the internships
- More attention for higher level English language skills during the studies.

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: <i>Student academic progress is monitored and supported.</i> <i>Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.</i> <i>A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.</i></p>								
<p>Students' academic progress is monitored through the electronic Study Information System (SIS) that makes the information available and allows to monitor the academic progress and achievements of its learners. Learners can get academic and psychological counselling and tutor's help to adapt to the learning process- this support system seems to be satisfactory for both students and alumni, especially one on one interviews. The College Studies Handbook is given to all students and made available on the website- this provides the basic necessary information for each student. The rules for monitoring students' progress are transparent. The College provides full-time study in all curricula.</p> <p>Academic development could be supported by wider use of English language in the courses. Higher level English could be used for doing more research, understanding the professional literature better and for increasing the amount of mobility programs.</p> <p>Student assessment is renewed and this process is based on Outcome Based education. This brings more integration of practice and theory. The assessment in the College complies with the principles of outcomes-based assessment. Although this development is seen as a positive step, it should be seen as an important first step in a wider development of teaching and learning methodology (see chapter 2.3).</p> <p>The College dropout rates are continuously monitored. Various measures have been introduced, e.g., the entrance tests have been improved, the counselling of the first-year learners has been enhanced, assistance by course supervisors, tutors, etc. Students' assessment seems to work well and to be easily understandable for all. Assessment methods and criteria are established by a member of the teaching staff and he or she shall inform learners of them in the beginning of the module/subject in the SIS and the first lesson.</p>								

The College has had an effective system for recognising prior learning and work experiences since 2006, and it is regularly reviewed and improved. Although the assessment committee saw a clear view of the VÕTA system from the staff point of view, there still seems to be quite strict rules for applying- only the exact same classes can be taken into account not any of the acquired competences.

Commendation:

- Student academic progress is effectively monitored.
- Student assessment is based on Outcome Based education and has led to more integration of theory and practice.

Recommendation:

- More flexibility and accessible acknowledgements of acquired competencies would lead to a situation where both the institute and the candidates benefit from.
- The college and students would both benefit from raising the English level in school and thus create wider possibilities to study courses in English.

2.4 Support processes for learning	conforms to requirements	x	Partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
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Requirements:
The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.
A higher education institution provides students with counselling related to their studies and career.
A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.
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.

The organisation of studies ensures students an opportunity to complete their studies within the standard period. It is governed by the Academic Regulations and is based on outcomes-based curricula. The organisation of full-time studies ensures students an opportunity to complete the subjects in curricula according to the modal timetable. The organisation of studies allows on average 70 % of the graduates to complete their studies in standard period.

The student support system is well developed and working well. Learners have opportunities for consultations with the teaching staff. The College provides academic and career counselling, including for the entrants. The needs-based counselling process has been divided among members of the teaching staff, employees of the Department of Academic Affairs, the Academic Advisor, Heads of Chairs, the Educational Technologist, the Assistant for International Relations and psychologists. Learner satisfaction with academic counselling, the learning environment and the organisation of studies has been stable. In the interviews we also found that both the students and alumni are satisfied with the amount of counselling provided by the College.

The College participates in international cooperation networks, programmes and projects through which student and pupil international mobility is implemented. Recognition of studies in foreign institutions is based on the Lisbon Convention. Studies completed abroad are recognised fully as portions of the curriculum, thus assisting learners to complete their studies within the standard period. The College has entered into 57 bilateral agreements under the LLP/Erasmus Programme and 3 multilateral agreements within the Nordplus Programme. The percentage of learner mobility has had a growing trend over the years. Its mobility indicators are in line with the Estonian strategy for the internationalisation. The students seem to be satisfied with the amount of mobility programs and it seems to be easily accessible for all. For incoming students there are special tutors and support systems. Still the international students cannot take any classes from the school, they can only be in the hospitals for internships. For the internationalisation of the school, the incoming students should be more integrated to the College and there should be some elective classes for both national and international students.

Modern technologies and educational resources are used appropriately. The College has various technical and educational technology resources to better organise the educational activities and facilitate learning. The College has defined its goals for educational technology in its Development Plan for E-learning. The electronic Study Information System (SIS) ensures the students and teaching staff a better access to academic information. Learner satisfaction with the availability of information on changes in educational activities has been good and stable over the years. Students seem to have enough information about the educational activities through a number of web pages and SIS.

The College asks its learners for feedback in accordance with the Feedback Plan, which is extensive and involves all areas of the school. Learner feedback is one of the quality indicators of the educational process which is taken into account in improvement activities. Learner satisfaction with the learning environment and the admissions process, and the teaching staff satisfaction with the teaching and work environments are surveyed once a year. A survey on the admissions organisation is conducted among first-year students each year in September, and the level of satisfaction with the learning environment by learners of the second through the last courses is surveyed each November. Teaching staff surveys take place every spring. The results are presented on the intranet and bulletin boards, and are analysed by chairs, subject teachers and the College Council. Specific subject feedback is visible for only students who already attended it and heads of chairs. The results of the analyses are used in improvement activities, although these exact improvements seem not to be publicly displayed and might be missed by students.

Commendations:

- The organisation of studies ensures students an opportunity to complete their studies within the standard period.
- The student support system is well developed and working well.
- Modern technologies and educational resources are used appropriately.

Recommendations:

- More elective courses in English for incoming students.
- The improvements that come from student feedback should be available for all students and staff.
- Part of feedback from previous year should be visible for students before they start that subject.

3 RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)
<p>General comments:</p> <p>Research and development is relatively new for institutes for higher Education. In the perspective of the short history that Tallinn Health Care College has with research and development, the assessment committee can see that some results have been achieved. However, the assessment committee would suggest working on a reasonable, feasible, achievable step-by-step plan for further developments in this area for the upcoming years.</p> <p>The support system for research and development is in the right direction. On the other hand, more consideration is needed to recognize what kind of support is needed for applied research.</p> <p>The assessment committee values plenty of positive developments and implementations of research and evidence based practice in the curricula. Next to that, we see growing involvement of stakeholders in the research projects. The students are valued for their work in this perspective. More attention is needed to avoid plagiarism.</p>

3.1 RDC effectiveness	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	x	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
<p>Requirements:</p> <p><i>A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.</i></p> <p><i>A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market, and considers them in planning its RDC activities.</i></p>							
<p>THCC has defined its objectives for developmental activities as well as applied research in its Development Plan 2012-2016. The objective of development activities is to develop the fields that are necessary for public health and the society in general in cooperation with partners and also involving learners. Development activities are focused on the development of curricula, in-service training and retraining, and the development of cooperation with stakeholders. There are six defined results for the year 2016 in the Development Plan 2012-2016 in this sub-area.</p>							

In the Development Plan 2009-2012 there was as an objective to conduct only one applied research. The Tallinn HCC has recognised as its weakness in the Development Plan 2012-2016 the paucity of the applied research. In the Development Plan it is also stated that RDC activities will be defined and implementation thereof measured as well as that the methodologies of research and development will be standardised. In the THCC the distinction between developmental activities and the applied research was not clear for the staff. The assessment committee was not able to find a defined and observable applied research activities nor methodologies at the moment, since understandably they are still at development phase.

THCC measures the implementation of the objectives stated in the developmental plan. For measuring the implementation of the objectives reports are presented in the end of an academic year and are included in the annual reports. Publications by the teaching staff show a growing trend during the years of 2007-2011 from 52 to 85. However the College has not set any objectives for the amount or the quality (peer-reviewed) of the publications. In the assessment of implementation the previous Development Plan 2009-2012 it is stated that five applied research projects have been conducted and the new objective for 2016 is 14 applied research projects. No other measurable objectives are for the area of the applied research.

The THCC has defined future research directions in collaboration with stakeholders taking into account the development needs of society and the labour market (national health policies). The chairs have identified the needs of society and the labour market, defined its RDC objectives, and approved the themes of applied research, described them in the College Development Plan. The research directions for applied research have been approved by the relevant chair. The College cooperates with professional associations, employers and other HEIs to identify the development needs of labour market segments through ad hoc studies with the help of various programmes. For example, the translation of the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association (NANDA) Taxonomy. The assessment committee was convinced that in all the chairs there were research projects in planning phase. The research projects are prioritized by the chairs.

Commendation:

- Research and development is relatively new for institutes for higher Education. In the perspective of the short history that Tallinn Health Care College has with research and development, the assessment committee can see that some results have been achieved.

Recommendation:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment committee suggests working on a reasonable, feasible, achievable step-by-step plan for developing applied research for the upcoming years. 							
3.2 RDC resources and support processes	conforms to requirements		partially conforms to requirements	x	does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition
Requirements:							
<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>The College has effective support activities to achieve the requirements of developmental work, however the sufficient support system for applied research needs to be identified, planned and implemented. From the point of view of developing higher education and running curricula development projects the assessment committee can observe supporting procedures. The applied research is still quite limited, due to several societal reasons (lack of funding mechanism for HE institutions, no tradition of other health sciences research than medical etc.). The objectives and the direction of the development are right and will in due time lead to wider applied research.</p> <p>The Director of Finance and Administration is responsible for planning the financial resources. The financial and personnel resources are approved for a financial year and adjusted continuously as needed. The College finances its RDC activities using state budget funds in accordance with state-commissioned education requests; national and international programmes; support by various foundations; companies or other legal or private persons; and revenues from the provision of fee-based services. The College has had substantial outside funding from ESF for the development work during the last years. The RDC funding is about 10 % of the budget. RDC funding and the allocation of funding is reflected in the College budget as a sub budget. The strategy to attain funding for applied research has been defined; however recognition of the main funding possibilities could make the strategy more feasible and detailed implementation plan would support its accomplishment. The financial resources for applied research are at the</p>							

moment very limited.

Wide participation in international networks - IUHPE, ENOTHE, COHEHRE and EAEO - to ensure the competitiveness and sustainable development of specialties, as well as transparency, comparability and quality of curricula's was perceived by the assessment committee. Participation was also found on institutional level on different international and national networks of higher education; however participation to clearly research oriented networks especially on the areas of future research areas could support College in its endeavour in strengthening RDC profile. The participation in different networks (national, international, with Universities and other HEI's) supports the achievement of College objectives, expanding the international dimension and increasing the international visibility of the College.

The College has modern physical and technical resources also for implementing RDC. It was observed that to ensure the effective use of its infrastructure, the College allows the stakeholders to use its rooms. For example, field-specific training is carried out in the lab for dental technology, etc. Also the library and its collections are open to all interested persons. The new library will open in the near future. The College has used its own funds, national funds and assistance from the European structural funds to modernise its infrastructure. The RDC objectives and future trends of updating RDC infrastructure are defined in the development plan. However, the main needs have not been listed in detail. The assessment committee sees that THCC would benefit from making more detailed objectives and plans with observable and measurable outcomes for the further development of research support system.

Commendation:

- The support system for research and development is in the right direction.

Recommendation:

- More consideration is needed to recognize what kind of support is needed for applied research.
- The assessment committee recommends to develop a detailed plan with observable and measurable outcomes for the enhancement of the research support system.

3.3 Student research supervision	conforms to requirements	x	partially conforms to requirements		does not conform to requirements		worthy of recognition	
<p>Requirements: <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> <i>Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates.</i> <i>Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.</i></p>								
<p>In THCC all curricula contain a module of Research and Development Methodologies therefore it is possible for all the students to be included in research and project activities during their studies. The module Research and Development Methodologies has been developed during last years based on the feedback from students and teachers to be implemented on a wider time frame during the studies. The students are guided to choose the topics for the final thesis on the areas needed by the employers by outlining the research topics on the THCC web pages. In order to graduate from the THCC, students may choose to prepare a final paper or take a final examination. The College has developed the curricula as well as the implementation of the studies during last years to support the better development of research skills. The choice of final exam is accepted now only in a few curricula and the objective is that in the future all the students will prepare a final paper in order to include all the students in research or project activities. The annual International Week provides an opportunity for the presentations of students' creative works.</p> <p>Feedback system about the student satisfaction about the supervision has been developed during last years. Since 2008 the College sought feedback from chairpersons of committees for defence of students' final papers. The results of feedback has been analysed by curriculum councils and improvements have been implemented. Since 2011 the College has sought feedback on the supervision of final papers and on final examinations by a survey. According to the self-evaluation report the graduates have rated highly the competence of supervisors, their interest toward supervision and the receipt of substantive feedback (average score 4.5). As to the process of final examinations, the availability of information has also rated highly (4.2). The respondent activity has been relatively low and it is necessary to increase the respondent activity in the future.</p>								

Professionalism of the teaching staff for supervising the research papers has been ensured by complying in recruitment of the staff to the THCC qualification requirements. It has been agreed that the supervisors of final papers usually have master's degrees or equivalent qualifications. A supervisor may also have professional higher education with professional experience (preferably being an expert in his or her field) if the theme of the paper requires it. Senior lecturers direct the College research and development in relevant fields. For ensuring that the workload of supervisors is reasonably balanced, the workload is regulated by employment contracts, and the relevant principles are defined in the Procedures for Work Time Planning and Reporting. For example, members of the teaching staff have each been prescribed 50 working hours for the supervision of one final paper of a student. Work time planning of the teaching staff takes into account a balance of teaching, research and supervision, which can vary from year to year.

Prevention of plagiarism, procedures for dealing with it, and assessments of penalties for it are defined in the Academic Regulations and the Guidelines for Student Research Papers. Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it throughout their studies. The students are taught how to use materials by other authors in accordance with the rules of intellectual property protection (references, citations, summaries, etc.). The assessment committee was introduced that the students acquire basic knowledge in this area in a module of Research and Development Methodologies during the first year of their studies. In all student research papers and throughout the learning process, attention is paid also to ethical principles. The staff is convinced that plagiarism has not occurred, however more systematic procedures to guarantee this should be used.

Commendation:

- We see plenty of positive developments and implementations of research and evidence based practice in the curricula. Next to that, we see growing involvement of stakeholders in the research projects. The students are valued for their work in this perspective.

Recommendation:

- More attention is needed to avoid plagiarism.

4 SERVICE TO SOCIETY**General comments:**

- Tallinn Health Care College has strongly regional orientation in its activities
- The staff of the College is active in professional associations, it takes an active role in advisory and decision-making bodies and in shaping regional and national strategies
- The objectives for lifelong learning are well defined. Activities and planning strategies are appropriate and well-adjusted to the needs of the society.
- 40% of courses is provided in Russian language
- Public oriented activities are well acknowledged by the stakeholders and the people in the society
- The system for evaluation of public-oriented activities needs to be developed
- Stronger connections to research should also to be developed

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>Tallinn Health Care College has a system and traditions to popularize its core activities. Based on the Statutes of the College, the objective of the popularisation of College activities is to spread the professional and other knowledge, and through it to influence health behaviours in the population (self-evaluation report p. 57). The College has developed strategy for popularising its areas of activity for 2012-2016, where it has defined respective goals, targets, main activities, indicators and person responsible for the activity. Planned activities are comprehensive, realistic and assessment committee was convinced that staff and students were aware of them. The College aims to develop the system for evaluation and development the activities addressed to the society by the year 2016.</p>								

According to self-evaluation report (p.57) college conducts about 4 times per year public information events at basic and upper secondary schools and about 3 public information events for adults on topics related to subjects taught at the College. Activities carried out in the past are reported in annual financial reports and some information is also available on web page. Both staff and students convinced assessment committee that they actively participate in different activities oriented to public and stakeholders and representative of Ida-Viru County Government highly appreciated health promotion activities carried out in her country. College also participates in all major national and regional fairs to promote curricula and education possibilities.

Media coverage of the College activities is measured, although annual coverage numbers are quite small and annual variations are big. All information concerning future open door days, different public activities, participation in fairs is available on website where also electronic registration system is available. College measures visits of different parts of the website. There is no web-page in Russian, this is also considered as weakness in the SWOT analysis performed during the preparation of College Development plan. Although College produces materials in Russian to be distributed in fairs etc. the web page in Russian would be very useful as Russian community forms a big proportion of the College's target groups, studies with Russian background students are otherwise supported and web is generally very popular source of information.

The College has strongly regional orientation in its activities, they provide teaching nursing in different places. Stakeholders and employers (e.g. Vice-Mayor of Kuressaare, representative of Ida-Viru County Government) highly appreciated it. Representative of Ministry of Social Affairs emphasised that providing education in Ida-Viru ensures that majority of graduates of Kohtla-Järve remain working in health care facilities in that area, otherwise it would be very complicated to find people willing to work in that difficult part of Estonia.

According self-evaluation report (p. 57-58) the College is a unique competence centre being a cooperating partner to professional associations, it takes an active role in advisory and decision-making bodies and in shaping regional and national strategies. The College supports the participation of its staff and learners in the activities of professional associations. As a result employees participate as experts in public advisory and decision-making bodies contributing to the shaping of national and/or regional strategies; 49 % of the teaching staff (37 teachers) are members of professional associations and participate in their activities, which the College considers a good result; 4.2 % of learners are members of professional societies and all fields of the College are cooperating with professional associations. College employees participated in the 2009/10 academic year in 38 expert committees,

in 2010/11 in 53 committees. Head of Estonian Nurses Union highly appreciated collaboration with the College in strategic development of nursing area and philosophy of nursing science, planning necessary number of nurses for Estonia, promotion of nurses specialty, providing regional training and providing rooms for master studies in Tallinn in order to improve accessibility of modern nursing education.

Commendations:

- Tallinn Health Care College has strongly regional orientation in its activities, they provide teaching nursing in different parts of Estonia.
- Staff of the College is active in professional associations, it takes an active role in advisory and decision-making bodies and in shaping regional and national strategies.

Recommendations:

- The development of web-page in Russian would be very useful for target groups and students with a Russian background.

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.

The College bases its activities on the principles of lifelong learning which are expressed in its core values, mission and vision. The strategic objectives of lifelong learning are set out in development and action plans. The College has defined the objective as following: the College will offer in-service training courses in line with the needs of stakeholders and participant numbers will be

stable over the years. In order to ensure the quality of the content and organisation of in-service training, the College has developed the document The Forms and Procedure for the Conduct of In-service Training. According to that the objective of continuing education is to offer the possibility of acquisition and development of vocational, occupational and professional knowledge, skills and experience in the field of social care, health care and welfare and re-training based on the principles of lifelong learning. The target group of the continuing education is the alumni of the College, employers, professional associations, employees of businesses, organizations, persons seeking retraining, employees and lecturers of the College, external partners and individuals interested in the field etc.

The number of in-service training courses, participants and hours have decreased during last years. This is partially due to impact of recession and its financial impact to health care providers, but also due to fact that College has participated successfully in procurement of in-service training courses and had offered several large-scale courses which are counted as one entity.

The College prepares a plan for in-service training for a calendar year and ensures that the in-service training courses are provided in both of the study programme groups, and in the field of vocational education and training. Planning for in-service training is based on the needs of stakeholders and the capabilities of the College, and on an annual analysis of feedback. The plan for in-service training is reviewed at least once a year. Staff of the College convinced the assessment committee that all Chairs participate in in-service training and staff is motivated to provide training and develop new courses. The initiative for new courses comes from chairs and teachers but also from employers. For example employers asked for the course about hepatitis and this was developed. In the field of reading evidence based literature, a teacher found that there is very little literature available and offered a course. Interest of hospitals was very huge, three hospitals ordered it onsite. Each new course is developed with the aim that it could be offered within 3-4 years. Participants of the courses offer also topics for new courses.

40% of courses are provided in Russian language, the content is same as in Estonian courses and course materials are also often provided in Estonian.

The College measures satisfaction with the quality of in-service training regularly after each course. Participant satisfaction is high (4.25-4.95 on five point scale) and shows growing trend. Assessment committee was convinced that staff of the College puts a lot of

effort to obtain feedback from participants and uses it actively in developing further activities.

Commendations:

- The objectives for lifelong learning are well defined. Activities and planning strategies are appropriate and well-adjusted to the needs of the society.
- 40% of courses are provided in Russian language.

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.

Public-oriented activities are defined in the College Development plan. According to that college aims by the year 2016 to develop an action plan aimed at the general public which will include all curricula, and participant numbers will show a growing trend; in order to develop his or her entrepreneurial qualities, each learner will have an opportunity to be engaged in the College activities and public-oriented activities; the College will have analysed the possibilities to offer fee-based services and, based on the results, it will have prepared a service package; and the College will have developed a system for performance evaluation of its activities and their development.

The College has developed number of activities for the public (e.g. Open Houses, Week of Adult learner, excursions, counselling in the field of health and wellbeing, health checks, health promoting lectures, celebrating health days). Information about activities is available on web site, there is also information how to participate and register to activities.

Both staff and students convinced assessment committee that they actively participate in different activities oriented to public and

stakeholders. Public oriented activities, concerning especially those activities outside of Tallinn, are well acknowledged by the stakeholders and the people in the society. This was named as one of the most impressive characteristics of this institute.

Although general satisfaction with public oriented activities is high, the system for evaluation of public-oriented activities needs to be developed according to College development plan. Stronger connections to research should also to be developed.

The College organises conferences, seminars, workshops, etc., sharing its expertise and contributing to the welfare of the community. For example the College has organised an annual conference for care workers since 2009.

The College library is open to all interested persons. As of November 2011, there were 193 library patrons from outside the College. Various exhibitions are held in the library. For example, there were 16 theme exhibitions in the 2010/11 academic year. The College provides its premises free of charge for professional associations to conduct meetings and events. For example, the Estonian Nurses Union and Estonian Midwives Association use the College facilities for their events. The College provides its premises for carrying out health events. For example, Blood Donor Days, presentations of new health products, etc.

The College learners participate as volunteers in different major events. For example, the Estonian Song and Dance Festival. The College has a choir.

Commendations:

- Public oriented activities, concerning especially those activities outside of Tallinn, are well acknowledged by the stakeholders and the people in the society. This is named as one of the most impressive characteristics of this institute.

Recommendations:

- The system for evaluation of public-oriented activities needs to be developed.
- Stronger connections to research should also be developed.