

**Decision Regarding Assessment of the Arts Study Programme Group
Euroacademy**

29/09/2017

The Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to approve the report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Arts study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Euroacademy in seven years

On the basis of subsection 21¹ (2) 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 and Vocational Education (hereinafter referred to as 'EKKA') and point 41.1 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', 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 24.03.2016 Euroacademy and EKKA agreed upon a time frame to conduct a quality assessment of the study programme group.
2. The Director of EKKA, by her order on 17.02.2017, approved the following membership of the quality assessment committee for the Arts study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Euroacademy and the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'):

Judy Glasman	Chair of the Committee, Dean of School of Creative Arts, University of Hertfordshire; Vice Chair of Council for Higher Education in Art and Design, United Kingdom
Soledad Garcia Ferrari	Senior lecturer in architectural design, Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Sonja Spee	Manager of Quality Assessment and Educational Development in Art Education, Royal Academy of Fine Arts and Royal Conservatoire, Artesis Plantijn University College Antwerp, Belgium
Andres Tali	Freelance artist and graphic designer, Estonia

3. Euroacademy submitted the following study programmes for evaluation under the Arts study programme group:
 - Fashion Design (Prof HE)**
 - Fashion Design (Prof HE, taught in Russian)**
 - Interior Architecture (Prof HE)**
 - Interior Architecture (Prof HE, taught in Russian)**
4. Euroacademy submitted a self-evaluation report to the EKKA Bureau on 27.01.2017 and the assessment coordinator forwarded it to the Committee on 15.02.2017.
5. An assessment visit was made to Euroacademy during 28–29.03.2017.
6. The Committee sent its draft assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 24.05.2017, EKKA forwarded it to Euroacademy for its comments on 25.05.2017 and Euroacademy delivered its response on 1.06.2017.
7. The Committee submitted its final assessment report to the EKKA Bureau on 2.06.2017. That assessment report is an integral part of the decision, and is available on the EKKA website.
8. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the Committee's final assessment report along with Euroacademy's self-evaluation report to the Council members.
9. The Council with 9 members present discussed these received documents in its session on 29.09.2017 and, based on the assessment report, decided to point out the following strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations regarding the Arts study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Euroacademy.

Strengths

- 1) The higher education institution makes a good contribution to the development of Estonian creative industries through its students, graduates and its collaborations with entrepreneurs and the general public.
- 2) Euroacademy has recently moved into a bright and spacious building, which creates a pleasant learning and teaching environment for the students and teaching staff, and provides an opportunity to publicly display their work. There is sufficient studio accommodation, and the rooms for Fashion Design are well suited for practical learning. Students also have access to computer classrooms and studios outside normal teaching hours.
- 3) The study programmes focus well on the current labour market needs. In the study programmes, attention is given to development of entrepreneurial and collaborative skills. Alumni of the programme and employers are satisfied with the professional preparation and social skills of graduates.
- 4) The study programmes incorporate flexible and learner-centred courses which meet well the needs of working students.
- 5) Members of teaching staff from other faculties also contribute to the programmes, supporting the development of students' broad-based knowledge and professional skills. Euroacademy has developed new, innovative modules with interdisciplinary backgrounds, based on changing needs of the labour market and student feedback (Eco-design, Entrepreneurship in Fashion Design, and Entrepreneurship in Interior Architecture).
- 6) Practitioners in the field have been involved in development and delivery of the programmes. Regular meetings are held with stakeholders.
- 7) The general arts subjects provide support for the development of the students' drawing, colour and composition skills in both 2D and 3D formats.

- 8) There is a close collaboration between staff members and students. Euroacademy is in close contact with its alumni, in order to provide its students and graduates with good practical training and employment opportunities.
- 9) The Fashion Design programme allows for acquiring skills in fashion graphics, pattern-cutting and styling, which provide graduates with a number of options in the labour market.
- 10) Practical trainings are well organised and provide good insights into professional contexts for the students.
- 11) Students benefit from working in small groups under the supervision of experienced staff members who are focused on their students' needs and committed to teaching. Students appreciate that members of the teaching staff communicate personally with each of them.
- 12) Assessment of student work takes place in the form of exhibitions each semester in which all students participate, considered as good practice. With regard to final work, external committee members also participate in assessments.
- 13) Teaching staff members have opportunities for creative and practical self-development.

Areas for improvement and recommendations

- 1) The study programmes should be made more modern, creative and experimental, for example, by carrying out projects of this nature. It would be desirable to link them more closely to a contemporary cultural background and, with regard to specialist courses, to refer more specifically to an international context. The amount, content and direction of the general arts subjects should be reviewed and better integrated with the specialist areas of study.
- 2) Students' critical and design thinking should be encouraged within the process of teaching and learning by linking the theoretical and practical aspects of the study programmes. Students of both programmes also would like to have more practical workshops and better preparation for working with clients.
- 3) The number of students in the Arts study programme group at Euroacademy has dropped dramatically over the last four years (from 242 to 77). Effective measures must be taken to increase student numbers in the future.
- 4) Additional acquisitions into the library of journals related to contemporary art are recommended, and consideration should also be given to having the library open at the weekends.
- 5) To make more effective use of opportunities provided by the current building, resource allocations should be planned for the regular updating of learning aids.
- 6) A small 3D laboratory could be set up where different technologies and materials could be used for model-making which would develop students' 3D thinking. As student numbers grow, consideration should be given to providing 3D printing capabilities.
- 7) A wider selection of software in line with industry standards, such as Adobe Creative Cloud and Rhino, should be made available to the students.
- 8) Access to teaching and learning facilities must be provided to students and staff with physical disabilities.
- 9) Examination and assessment procedures should be reviewed to ensure that final decisions on student work are not made by just one staff member. Double marking across all subjects helps ensure the transparency of assessment procedures and an equal treatment of students.
- 10) Student progress and the feedback from different stakeholders should be analysed by academic year in a more regular manner and further activities should be planned on this basis, for example, in programme development.
- 11) The international staff and student mobility rates should be increased and international teaching staff should be involved in the teaching to a greater extent. For this purpose, the English language proficiency of lecturers and students should be improved. Comparisons between Euroacademy's study programmes and other Estonian and international programmes should

also be carried out, which would require collaboration between different art institutions of higher education and their students.

- 12) Research by the teaching staff should be more active and more clearly related to their teaching and creative work.
 - 13) Staff development should be planned in a more active manner. The study programmes should employ more full-time teaching staff who are younger, as well as part-time or full-time active designers, in order to ensure new generations of the teaching staff in the longer and medium term.
 - 14) Staff members should more actively share their best teaching practices, by introducing their effective and innovative teaching methods to one another.
 - 15) Teaching staff should have a better understanding of their personal responsibilities in the development of programmes.
 - 16) The process of assessing the teaching staff should be formalised and take into account the progress of students and their feedback, as well as the staff's self-development and programme development work.
 - 17) Students and staff of all subjects should more actively participate in the activities of professional networks and the art world in general.
 - 18) The study programmes should make better use of the enthusiasm and success stories of alumni, by involving them more actively in study programme development and inviting them to give presentations to the students.
 - 19) Student work should be made more visible to the public, alumni and employers.
10. Point 41 of the document, 'Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education', establishes that the Quality Assessment Council shall approve an assessment report within three months after receipt of the report. The Council shall weigh the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations pointed out in the assessment report, and then shall decide whether to conduct the next quality assessment of that study programme group in seven, five or three years.
11. The Council weighed the strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations referred to in point 9 of this document and found that the study programmes, the teaching conducted under these programmes, and development activities regarding teaching and learning conform to the requirements, and

DECIDED

to approve the assessment report and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Arts study programme group in the first cycle of higher education at Euroacademy in seven years.

The decision was adopted by 8 votes in favour and 1 against.

12. The Bureau of EKKA will coordinate a date for the next quality assessment of the study programme group with Euroacademy no later than 29.09.2023.
13. The Council proposes that Euroacademy will submit an action plan to EKKA with regard to the areas for improvement and recommendations pointed out in the report no later than 29.09.2018.
14. A person who finds that his or her rights have been violated or his or her freedoms 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 this decision is possible within 30 days after its delivery, by 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.

Maaja-Katrin Kerem
Vice-Chair of the Council

Hillar Bauman
Secretary of the Council