

Decision Regarding the Assessment of the Personal Services Study Programme Group

Tallinn University

28/01/2015

The Quality Assessment Council of the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency decided to approve the assessment report by the Assessment Committee and to conduct the next quality assessment of the Personal Services study programme group in the first and second cycles of higher education at Tallinn University in four years.

Tallinn University submitted for evaluation under the Personal Services Study Programme Group the following study programmes:

- Recreation Management BA
- Recreation Management MA

Assessment Committee

Karen Petry (Chair)	German Sport University Cologne, Deputy Head of the Institute of European Sport Development and Leisure Studies (Germany)
Susan Capel	Brunel University London, professor (UK)
Hans Hoppeler	University of Bern, Professor (Switzerland)
Jan Te Kloeze	Chairman of the Foundation WICE-DSL: Wageningen International Centre of Excellence on Development of Sustainable Leisure (Netherlands)
Alexandra Raijmakers	University of Amsterdam, student (Netherlands)
Toomas Tõnise	Estonian Olympic Committee, Vice-President (Estonia)

The Committee's Comments on the Study Programme Group and the Study Programmes

Recreation Management BA/MA

Strengths

- *Both the University leadership and the Faculty are well aware of the challenges arising from demographic trends in Estonian society.*
- *Tallinn University applies an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, which is clearly reflected in the study programmes.*
- *Bachelor's degree programmes in Physical Education and Recreation Management support and complement each other. The teaching staff participate in international collaboration; there are also connections with entrepreneurs. The graduate employment rate is good.*
- *The teaching and learning environment and educational materials are excellent.*
- *The teaching staff is highly motivated, enthusiastic and professionally oriented. The students are also highly motivated and have good communication skills.*

Areas for improvement and recommendations:

- *Since both programmes are fully in Estonian, there is no opportunity to engage international students. Staff and student mobility in both directions should be increased; for example, provision of modules taught in English should be considered. Also, cooperation with international higher education institutions should be expanded.*
- *Developing a focus and infrastructure for research, and setting up specialised research groups should be prioritised. For this purpose, a full-time professor and/or a leading researcher needs to be involved, and opportunities for doctoral studies should be made available for staff and students. The teaching staff should be given more opportunity to participate in research (time and other resources).*
- *Both study programmes are very broad and lack any clear focus of specialisation. Fragmentation is increased by the use of different forms of study, affecting the workloads of teaching staff. To make optimum use of staff resources, synergies between full time studies, cycle studies and Open University studies need to be found. When planning the workloads of teaching staff, adequate time for research should also be provided for.*
- *A large proportion of electives in the study programmes scatter resources and may not be sustainable in view of demographic trends in Estonia. It is necessary to critically review the number, focus and orientation of the elective modules with regard to the resources available and the evolving needs of society.*
- *In the process of study programme development, overlapping between the BA*

and MA programmes must be avoided. In order to maintain high quality in the MA programme, no modules from the BA programme should be accepted in it (if they are assessed in the same way as in the BA programme).

- *It is necessary to clearly define the added value of the MA programme when compared to the BA programme and to enhance its attractiveness to students (including potential international students) by focusing on health-related study programmes (an MA in Recreation and Health) or on tourism and outdoor activity (an MA in Recreation and Leisure Services).*
- *The study programme should be better structured and include subjects related to management, entrepreneurship, economic knowledge and marketing theory. The assessment committee recommends a sharper focus on the fields of tourism and health, and that any such changes will also be reflected in the names of the study programmes.*
- *An optimal balance between academic and professional orientations in the study programmes should be found. Compared with some analogous international programmes, the orientation of current programmes is overly professional. In the near future, reinforcement of academic orientation, in order to be internationally competitive, is worthy of consideration.*
- *For further development of the Institute, it will be important to achieve synergies with other University activities in the areas which are focused on healthy and sustainable lifestyles.*
- *When the institute moves into another building, the present quality of infrastructure in all areas (teaching laboratories, etc.) should be maintained.*
- *It is necessary to develop an e-learning strategy and provide support for students, especially for those in cycle studies, to use available IT solutions.*
- *The system for evaluating teaching staff must be more transparent for both staff and students, and the anonymity of this system must be guaranteed.*
- *Low student populations and the continuing downward trend represent a serious risk and concern.*
- *Students need a better guidance system regarding, for example, the choice of subjects and internships.*
- *The collection of statistical information about graduates' employment and about reasons why students drop out should be improved.*
- *The assessment committee evaluating the Recreation Management programmes in 2005 pointed out a number of problems similar to current ones, such as a lack of adequate focus in the study programmes, and a lack of adequate research and publication activity by the teaching staff.*