



TALLINN UNIVERSITY
Institutional Accreditation
Self-Evaluation Report

2021

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ABBREVIATIONS

A – autumn semester	ESSE – The European Society for the Study of English	P – practice
ADAPTER – Estonian business cooperation platform	EST – in Estonian	PARE – Estonian Human Resource Management Association
AKLB – Law English medium Bachelor's study programme	ETAg – Estonian Research Council	PhD – Doctoral studies
AKOB – Law Estonian medium Bachelor's study programme	EU – European Union	PHE – professional higher education
ALLEA – The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity	EUCEN – European University Continuing Education Network	PSPD2016+ – The Principles of Study Programme Development 2016+
ASIO – Timetable Information System	EVÖL – Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teacher	PÖFF – Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival
ASp – autumn and spring semesters	EXU – University Development and Cooperation Centre	R&D – research and development
ASTP – European Association of Knowledge Transfer Professionals	F – fail	RDC – research, development and creative activities
ASTRA – Estonian institutional development programme for research and development and higher education institutions	FTE – full-time equivalent	RPA – Recognition of Prior Learning Analysis Form
BA – Bachelor's studies	H2020 – EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020	RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning and Work Experience
BRD embassy – Embassy of Germany in Tallinn	HARNO – Estonian Education and Youth Board	SD4X – An Executive Level Course Programme for Service Design Executives
CEBNS – The Centre of Excellence in Behavioural and Neural Sciences	HBW – Health Behaviour and Wellbeing Doctoral study programme	SD – software development
CEFR – The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	HEI – higher education institution	SDN – Service Design Network
CEIS – Continuing Education Information System	HIK – Centre for Innovation in Education	SDT – School of Digital Technologies
CollabTech – International Conference on Collaboration Technologies and Social Computing	IA – institutional accreditation	SES – School of Educational Sciences
DataDOI – repository of University of Tartu for long-term safe preservation of research data	IATIS – International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies	SIS – Study Information System
DLG- Digital Learning Games Master's Study Programme	ICALT – International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies and Technology-enhanced Learning	SNSH – School of Natural Sciences and Health
EATE – Estonian Association of Teachers of English	ICT – information and communications technology	SOGOLAS – School of Governance, Law and Society
ECP – ECTS credit points	IGDA – International Game Developers Association	SP – study programme
EC-TEL – European Conference on Technology Enhanced Learning	INT – Integrated Bachelor's and Master's study programme	SPA – study programme administrator
ECTS – European Credit Transfer System	INTNAT – Integrated Natural Sciences Bachelor's study programme	SPr – spring semester
EKKA – Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education	IPR – intellectual property rights	SSP – Statute of Study Programme
ELP – European Language Portfolio	IT – information technology	St sch sem – standard scheme, semester
EMÜ – Estonian University of Life Sciences	L – lecture	TalTech – Tallinn University of Technology
ENAI – European Network for Academic Integrity	LIFE – Learning in Interdisciplinary Focused Environment	TLU – Tallinn University
ENERI – European Network of Research Ethics and Research Integrity	KAEIM – Educational Education and Leadership Master's study programme	TLU TEE – Tallinn University Project "Tallinn University as the Promoter of Intelligent Lifestyle"
ENG – in English	KPI – key performance indicator	TLUSR – Tallinn University Study Regulations
ENKK – European Modern Languages and Cultures Bachelor's study programme	MA – Master's studies	TUKO – Marketing and Communication Office
ENUCE – Estonian Network for University Continuing Education	MER – Estonian Ministry of Education and Research	UI/UX – user interface/user experience design
ERC grant – European Research Council	MI or mi – non-appeared	UNICA – Network of University from the Capitals of Europe
	NEDANTEN – Northern European Dante Network	Urkund – Plagiarism Detector
	NGO – non-governmental organisation	UT – University of Tartu
	OSKA – Applied Research Surveys on Sectoral needs for Labour and Skills	VR – virtual reality
	P – pass	W – workshop/seminar
		WD – document management system WebDesktop

INTRODUCTION

1.1

GOAL AND CORE VALUES

Tallinn University (TLU), the third largest public university in Estonia, is also the country's youngest university in legal terms. TLU was formed as a result of the largest-ever higher education institutions' consolidation process in Estonia, bringing together numerous educational, research and development institutions.

In its activities, TLU is guided by the [Higher Education Act](#), [Tallinn University Act](#), [Organisation of Research and Development Act](#), [Tallinn University Statutes](#), the [administrative contract concluded between Tallinn University and the Ministry of Education and Research \(EST\)](#), [Tallinn University Development Plan 2020–2022](#), and other legal instruments.

TLU is an innovative and comprehensive research, development, creative, educational and cultural institution, which offers tuition at all levels of higher education. The goal of the university is to support the sustainable development of Estonia with high-level, interdisciplinary and international academic activities. To this end, the university:

- 1) promotes, in particular, educational sciences, humanities, natural and social sciences and the arts, contributes to a healthy and sustainable living environment and develops digital competences based on the needs of society;
- 2) promotes teacher training and educational sciences as a carrier of continuity in teacher education and contributes to educational innovation;
- 3) promotes research in Estonia and Estonian-language education to support the preservation and development of the Estonian language and culture, and preserves the national cultural heritage;
- 4) develops its students into responsible, entrepreneurial and enterprising citizens and intellectuals who are well prepared to contribute to the establishment of a knowledge-based way of life, create significant added value for society through their activities and participate in social debate;
- 5) develops national and international co-operation and lifelong learning opportunities and provides services required by society.

THE MISSION OF TALLINN UNIVERSITY

is to support the sustainable development of Estonia through the implementation of research and research results, the development of intellectuals, and the promotion of social exchange and academic partnership. By promoting research carried out in Estonian and aimed at the development of Estonia, the university has integrated into the European educational and research life, and contributes to the development of Estonia as a country with smart economy and a smart society.

THE VISION OF TALLINN UNIVERSITY

is to be a leader and designer of intelligent lifestyle in Estonia and thereby support both the sustainability of the country and the self-actualisation of its people.

THE CORE VALUES OF TALLINN UNIVERSITY

are laid down in the Tallinn University Academic Charter. They are as follows:

- Openness: the openness of the university is expressed in the increasingly international orientation, participation in addressing the problems facing the Estonian society and forecasting relevant developments, as well as employer involvement in the university's decision-making processes. Openness is achieved through a careful positioning of the university's activities towards cutting-edge scientific thought, external evaluation of the university, promotion of national and international cooperation, and international openness of the university's internal environment.
- Quality: a dimension that characterises the activities of the entire university. At Tallinn University, quality is treated as an agreement encompassing current international standards and ideals in various fields. The quality of the fields of activity at the university and its indicators, methods of achievement and evaluation shall be agreed upon by the members of the university involved in the field, involving the relevant stakeholders and taking into account the trends in European higher education and research. All members of the university are responsible for the quality of their activity and its development.
- Professionalism: refers to the high level of professional and field-specific self-actualisation and continuous self-development of all members and alumni of the university. Professionalism is expressed in the university's graduates' excellent capacity to successfully adapt to the needs of the labour market, trained through science-based learning enhanced by practical tasks.
- Unity: is expressed through the cooperation of the members of the university in setting and implementing common goals, in the emergence of a sense of "us", which creates the basis for the formation of a common identity and a clear and distinctive image of Tallinn University. Unity is also expressed in the friendly, mutually respectful relationships of the university's academic and support staff and students, and in the willingness of the fields to cooperate for the development of an interdisciplinary academic environment.

The cornerstone of all core values is the academic freedom of academic staff and students.

1.2

HISTORY AND THE PRESENT

The development of the university has a long history punctuated by numerous milestones. Legally speaking, Tallinn University is rather young; its roots in teacher training, however, date back to the founding of the predecessor of Tallinn Pedagogical University, the Tallinn Teachers' Seminar, in 1919. The date of birth of Tallinn University is considered to be March 18, 2005.

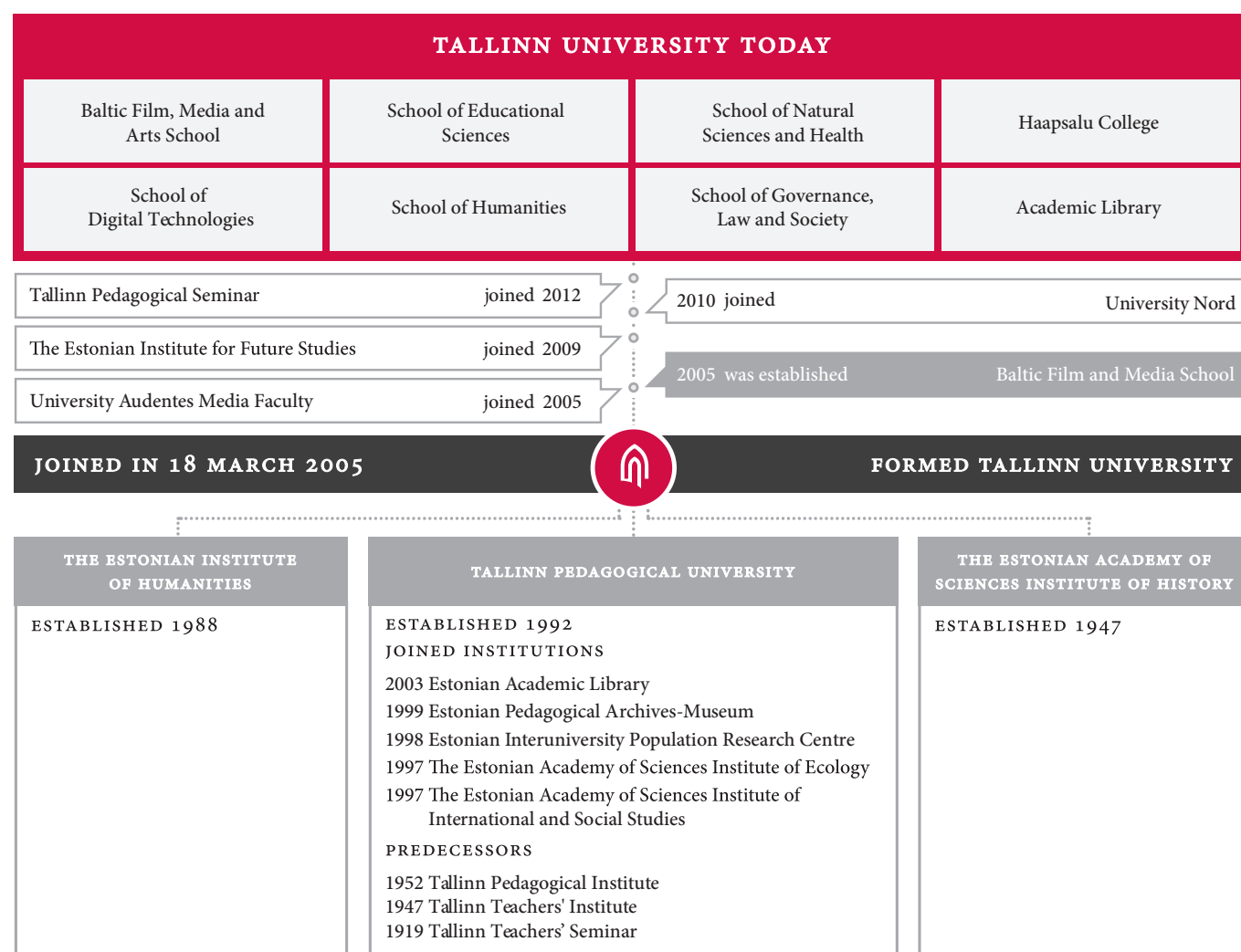


Figure 1: Tallinn University timeline

Figure 1 presents the entities joining the university and the time of joining. In 2019, Tallinn University celebrated the 100th anniversary of continuous leadership in the fields of teacher training and educational innovation, and in 2020, the university celebrated its 15th birthday.

By 2014, Tallinn University had 26 academic units. In order to enhance focus, increase management efficiency and employee satisfaction, improve economic sustainability, ensure more efficient and high-quality study activities, and develop interdisciplinary research and development and creative activities, the university initiated a reorganisation of its academic structure in September 2014. The structural reform was based on the new, simultaneously developed university

Development Plan for 2015–2020 with the main goal of becoming a leader in the field of intelligent lifestyle by concentrating resources and activities in five interdisciplinary focus fields integrating research and study:

- 1) educational innovation,
- 2) digital and media culture,
- 3) cultural competencies,
- 4) healthy and sustainable lifestyle and
- 5) society and open governance.

Each focus field is led by an academic unit, which carries the responsibility for the development of the field in collaboration with other institutes, university units and external partners.

The preparatory period for the structural reform lasted until 31.08.2015 and the new academic units began

functioning on 01.09.2015. The structural reform reorganised the previous 26 academic units into six schools and two regional colleges. Limited resources forced the closure of Rakvere regional college in 09.2019.

The most important activities of the period following the establishment of the university have been the formation of a unified identity of Tallinn University, enhancing the academic quality through international cooperation, concentrating resources to focus the activities and thus ensure the strong positioning of Tallinn University in Estonian higher education. The five focus fields outlined in the Development Plan 2015–2020 are also the university's strategic goals for the period 2020–2022. They are implemented through three operating principles: 1) interdisciplinarity, 2) internationality and 3) excellence and sustainability.

Today, Tallinn University is an innovative research and education hub that is held in high esteem in Estonia and enjoys broad international recognition. The slogan of Tallinn University “Thinking Unlimited” sums up and describes the history of the university: it refers to a progressive, bold, youthful, open, fresh, green, playful, free, dynamic and mobile character, which is equally characterised by high academic quality. The motto of the university is characterised by the coexistence of unique and forward-looking specialities that are not taught elsewhere in Estonia and a long-term tradition of teacher education and educational sciences. The slogan also brings together research and educational institutions affiliated with the university under a unified and comprehensive identity.

1.3 STRUCTURE

The structure of Tallinn University includes academic units with their sub-units, support units and the Academic Library. Figure 2 provides an overview of the structure of the university.

Today, seven academic units operate at the university:

- 1) Baltic Film, Media and Arts School
(until January 2021, Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School);
- 2) School of Digital Technologies;
- 3) School of Educational Sciences;
- 4) School of Humanities;
- 5) School of Natural Sciences and Health;
- 6) School of Governance, Law and Society;
- 7) Haapsalu College.

TALLINN UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

COUNCIL		SENATE		RECTOR
RECTORATE				
Vice-Rector for Research	Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs	Vice-Rector for Creative Activities and Cooperation	Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development	Head of Finances
ACADEMIC UNITS				
Baltic Film, Media and Arts School	School of Digital Technologies	School of Educational Sciences	School of Natural Sciences and Health	
INSTITUTION	School of Humanities	School of Governance, Law and Society	Haapsalu College	
Academic Library				
SUPPORT UNITS				
Academic Affairs Office	Conference Centre	Confucius Institute	Finance Office	
Archaeological Research Collection	Tallinn University Press	Open Academy	Personnel Office	
Estonian Pedagogical Archive and Museum	Information Technology Office	Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository	Management Support Office	
	Marketing and Communication Office	Research Administration Office	Property Management Office	
STUDENT UNION				

Figure 2: Structure of Tallinn University

The Schools provide education at the three levels of higher education, continuing education, and research, development and creative activities as per the study areas of the School. The College is aimed at supporting regional development by providing applied higher education and continuing education, as well as conducting research, development and creative work.

The academic unit structure includes 6 research centres and 3 development centres. The research centres focus on research, development and creative activities and bring together each unit's research teams. The development centres implement activities supporting the main activities of the respective academic unit within the university and for the provision of services externally.

The university has 15 support units established to support teaching, research, development and creative activities and/or to provide central support services necessary for the operation of the university or to fulfil the goals of serving society:

- 1) Academic Affairs Office;
- 2) Research Administration Office;
- 3) Open Academy;
- 4) Information Technology Office;

- 5) Property Management Office;
- 6) Personnel Office;
- 7) Finance Office;
- 8) Marketing and Communication Office;
- 9) Management Support Office;
- 10) Conference Centre;
- 11) Tallinn University Press;
- 12) Estonian Pedagogical Archives and Museum;
- 13) Jüri Lotman Semiotics Repository;
- 14) Archaeological Research Collection;
- 15) the Confucius Institute.

The structural composition of Tallinn University also includes the Academic Library, a Tallinn University unit that performs independent tasks aimed at the public. The main goal of the Academic Library is to collect, make available, digitise and preserve information resources, information necessary for research, development and teaching, and national cultural heritage, thus promoting the development of research, development and teaching and general improvement in education.

1.4 MANAGEMENT

On 20 February 2019, the national parliament, Riigikogu, passed Tallinn University Act, introducing a significant change in the management of the university. From 1 January 2020, the university has three governing bodies instead of two (the Senate and Rector): the Council, the Senate and the Rector. The Council involves more external members in the management of the university. The competencies, work organisation and legislation of the Council, the Senate and the Rector are provided in Tallinn University Statutes.

The Tallinn University Council is the governing body responsible for the long-term sustainable development of the university and for making major economic, financial and property decisions, ensuring the achievement of the university's goals. The Council consists of eleven members, five of whom are appointed by the Senate, one by the Estonian Academy of Sciences and five by the Minister of Education and Research. The current chairman of the Council is Taavi Laur. Each composition of the Council is set for five years by Government of the Republic on the proposal of the minister responsible for the field. Meetings of the Council are held as necessary.

The Senate as the academic decision-making body of the university is responsible for the research, development, creative and teaching activities of the university and their continued high quality, as well as for adopting the statutes of the university. The Senate is also responsible for the establishment, reorganisation and dissolution of academic units, their subunits and institutions. The Senate consists of the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Administrative Directors, Directors of Academic Units and the Academic Library, and representatives of academic staff and students as elected members. The Academic Affairs Committee and Research Committee are standing committees of the Senate formed to evaluate the drafts and matters submitted to and discussed by the Senate, to submit proposals for initiating the amendment of the legislation of the Senate relevant to their respective fields, and to establish formal positions. The Senate is chaired and its work plan is established by the Rector.

The Rector is the legal representative of the university, who is tasked with managing the daily activities of

the university based on the Development Plan 2015-2020, budget and other strategic documents. The Rector determines the number, areas of activity and competencies of the Vice-Rectors and Administrative Directors in the Rectorate. The Rector is responsible for the general condition and development of the university, the implementation of the budget and the lawful and efficient use of funds, and decides on issues related to the activities of the university that are not within the competence of the Council or the Senate. The Rector is accountable to the Council and the Senate. The Rector is elected by the electoral body for up to five years pursuant to the procedure provided in the statutes of the university. The electoral body is composed of all members of the Council and Senate, full professors of the university and student representatives elected by the Representative Council of TLU Student Union. From 15 May 2011 to 31 August 2020, the Rector of Tallinn University was prof. Tiit Land, and from September 1, 2020 to May 14, 2021, the Acting Rector is prof. Priit Reiska, who will also perform the duties of Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs during this period.

The Rectorate consists of the Rector, Vice-Rectors and Administrative Directors, who manage the areas of activity designated by the Rector and are responsible for the operation and development of the support units subordinate to them. Vice-Rectors' employment contracts are concluded for a fixed period equal to the term of office of the Rector or the Acting Rector, not exceeding five years. The Rectorate of Acting Rector prof. Priit Reiska is composed of the Vice-Rector for Research prof. Katrin Niglas, the Vice-Rector for Creative Activities and Cooperation dr. Andres

Jõesaar, the Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development prof. Helen Sooväli-Sepping and the Head of Finances Kurmet Ojamaa. The meetings of the Rectorate are scheduled on weekly basis.

The most recent position in the Rectorate is the position of Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development: in view of the university's goals and its ambitions for sustainable development, a part-time position of Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development was created in January 2020.

The academic units and the Academic Library are managed by the Council and the Director of the respective unit. The competence and bases of activities of the governing bodies of each academic unit are provided in the unit's statutes, which are established by the Senate. The Council of each unit consists of the Director, heads of subunits and heads of study areas; 1/5 of the Council consists of student representatives; each Council includes at least one representative of another academic unit, at least one non-university member and other persons as per the statutes of the unit. The Director manages the activities of the academic unit, is responsible for the effectiveness of the unit's teaching, research, development and creative activities, as well as the general condition and sustainability of the unit. The Council of the unit meets as needed.

The students of the university form the Student Union, which exercises students' right to self-government and independently decides and organises issues relevant to student life based on the interests, needs, rights and obligations of students. The legal status and bodies of the Student Union have been established by the TU Student Union Statute. The highest representative body of the Student Union is the Student Representative Council elected by the students and currently consisting of 10 members; the executive body of the Student Union is the three- to seven-member Board of the Student Union elected by the Council; and at the academic unit level, students are represented and student life is organised by the Student Councils. A Course

Representative is chosen for each study programme's each year's student intake. Student representatives belong to several university-level decision-making bodies: the Senate, councils of academic units, collegial boards of studies of academic units, the general meeting of MTÜ Dormitorium (the NGO managing student dormitories), the general meeting of Tallinna Ülikooli Spordiklubi MTÜ (the university's sports club), as well as participate in external student organisations such as the Council of the Federation of Estonian Student Unions and the General Meeting of the Federation of Estonian Student Unions. Both the Rectorate and the directors of academic units actively cooperate with the Student Union, maintaining a constant dialogue and involving students in various discussions, with the students also being involved in various university networks. All Tallinn University students who study at the university at the time of applying can apply as candidates for the Board of the Student Union, and all students of each unit can participate in the activities of the respective unit's Student Council.

Inclusive management is practiced at Tallinn University and the management hierarchy is kept flat. In order to involve members, exchange information, form common positions and better manage the fields, several university networks have been formed and meet regularly, including representatives of both support and academic units as per the needs of the network: 1) directors and the Rectorate, 2) heads of studies, 3) administrative heads, 4) research coordinators, 5) financial specialists, 6) programme coordinators, 7) marketing and communication specialists, 8) administrative assistants, 9) doctoral studies coordinators, 10) internationalisation coordinators, 11) study advisers and specialists, 12) Erasmus coordinators, 13) foreign language admissions specialists, 14) heads of support units and 15) professional development support network. In addition, each unit holds regular working meetings and network meetings. University-level working groups are formed to carry out development tasks.

1.5 LOCATION

The university's main address and campus are located in central Tallinn, Narva mnt. 25. The campus features 6 interconnected buildings: Terra, Mare, Nova, Silva and Astra, as well as Vita, completed at the beginning of 2020. The Latin names of the buildings symbolise the university's key values, the exact meanings of which are set out on [the page introducing the campus](#). The campus accommodates most of the university's teaching, research and creative activities. The university campus can be explored with the help of a [virtual tour](#).

In addition to the main campus, the following sites are also located in Tallinn:

- Tallinn University School of Natural Sciences and Health building at Räägu Street 49, accommodating movement, health and sport sciences.
- Tallinn University [Academic Library](#) Research Library, Rävälä 10. To ensure optimum availability, the library [Study Centre](#) is located in Astra building on the campus.
- Tallinn University Archaeological Research Collection, located in the Old Town at Rütli 8 and Rütli 10.

Accommodation services for students are offered in three different buildings in Tallinn: Siidisaba Str. 4 and Västriku Str. 8 dormitories are located near the study building of the School of Natural Sciences and Health, and Karu Str. 17 dormitory is located in the immediate vicinity of the campus.

The university also operates outside the capital and Estonia. Haapsalu College, Tallinn University regional unit, is located at Lihula mnt. 12, Haapsalu. The School of Governance, Law and Society at Yrjönkatu 29c in Helsinki, Finland has courses three times a month in the framework of framework of the English-language Law study programme of the School of Governance, Law and Society.

1.6

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS AND WRITING THE REPORT

On 5 February 2020, a working group preparing the self-evaluation report of TLU institutional accreditation and the time schedule of its activities were approved by the Rector's order. Adviser of Management Brita Laurfeld coordinated the process of institutional accreditation and preparation of the self-evaluation report, and the Study Management Senior Specialist Kersti Papsen coordinated the preparation of self-evaluation reports of the study programmes to be assessed.

The working group included 16 people. Members of the working group agreed jointly on a more detailed action plan, time schedule, deadlines, principles for the preparation of the report and divided responsibilities by areas between the working group members. To coordinate the work of the group, accumulate the materials and prepare the report, a joint web folder was created. All the members of the working group, administrators of the study programmes to be assessed and people involved in the preparation of the report had access to this folder. Preparation of the self-evaluation report of a study programme was the responsibility of the administrator of the relevant study programme.

As a result of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic which paralysed the normal functioning of the university and demanded attention and quick action from the members, the planned time schedule could not be followed and deadlines were changed in the course of

the process. The initial deadline for the submission of the report agreed with the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (16.12.2020) was postponed for a month by agreement of the parties (15.01.2021).

Employees were informed of the preparation of the report and the IA process in the weekly information letter of the university, these were also introduced and given an overview of in work networks and at the units' meetings and seminars. Input to the preparation of the self-evaluation report was received by involving other university members and experts outside the working group. Expert assessment of the completed self-evaluation materials and proposed changes were provided by many in-house specialists.

The Rectorate introduced the IA process and the final report in the university Council and in the Senate. The report is available to all university employees on the Intranet and a relevant notice has been sent on the matter as an information letter. The report has been sent to the Student Union through the Student Union list for consultation.

1.7

AGGREGATE DATA

1.7.1 HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The number of Estonian students in higher education has decreased significantly over the last 10 years. While there were 69,000 students in Estonia in 2010, the number of students in 2019 was 45,000. The decrease in the number of students has occurred as a result of closures and mergers of higher education institutions, mergers, increased focus of teaching as well as limited resources. Similar trends are evident at Tallinn University (9,000 students in 2010, 7,000 in 2020). Comparing the number of students by higher education levels, it can be seen that in Estonia as a whole the largest decrease has taken place at the first higher education level, where the volume of professional higher education has decreased by 50% and Bachelor's studies by 40%. In Master's and doctoral studies, the decrease has been smaller (5% and 20%, respectively). The volume of professional higher education at Tallinn University has increased as compared to 2010, although the number of students has stabilised in the last five years. The increase is grounded in the professional higher education study programmes taken over as a result of mergers, but also in the opening of new professional higher education study programmes (e.g., Film). The volume of Bachelor's studies has decreased by 41% in step with the Estonian average, including a decrease of 16% in the last five years. The reason for the decrease is the conscious consolidation of study programmes and the reduction of study places due to limited resources. The volume of Master's studies has slightly increased over the decade (7%), whereas increasing the share of Master's studies relative to the total number of students has been one of the goals set for the university admission process. Tallinn University has one 5-year integrated Bachelor's and Master's study programme (hereinafter INT): the primary school teacher study programme. The programme includes approximately 180 students per year, with 30 students

being admitted annually, an average of 16 students dropping out, and 26 students graduating. As the students graduating from the study programme are awarded a Master's degree, the data for the programme is presented in the report with Master's level data. The decline in the number of doctoral students at TLU has occurred primarily in the last two years, last year the funding for doctoral studies was changed.

A large-scale national higher education reform was carried out in 2013, instituting higher education free of charge for students studying at Estonian-language study programmes in state and public higher education institutions. At these institutions, tuition-based study is allowed only in English-language and part-time study programmes (the number of the latter is limited by MER in contracts under public law). In 2010, 49% of all Estonian students paid tuition; by 2019, 19% of all students will be charged tuition. In 2010, 60% of TLU students paid tuition; in 2019, the respective proportion was 24%.

Over the years, the share of mature students (over 25 years of age) has increased in Estonia and the number of younger students has decreased (61% of students at TLU were under 25 years of age in 2010, 41% in 2019). Due to the age distribution, Estonian students in general, as well as the student body of Tallinn University in particular, are characterised by a higher-than-average involvement in work and family life (according to feedback surveys, 73%–88% of first and second year students work during their studies in the recent years). The age distribution and employment status of students during their studies influence the internationalisation of students, their progress and drop-out rates, as well as their graduation after the nominal period of studies.

The number of international students in degree studies has increased every year in Estonia (except in 2020

Table 1. Aggregate data on the study process at Tallinn University¹

		2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
<i>Number of study programmes open for admission</i>	PHE	6	6	6	5	6
	BA	39	40	38	38	38
	MA, incl. INT ²	57	60	61	59	57
	PhD	14	14	15	14	13
	TOTAL	116	120	120	116	114
<i>Number of students</i>	PHE	433	401	417	381	393
	BA	4431	3968	3717	3660	3682
	MA, incl. INT	2582	2578	2666	2644	2730
	PhD	356	327	329	308	296
	TOTAL	7803	7274	7129	6993	7107
<i>Number of international students</i>	PHE	1	1	1	1	1
	BA	383	400	401	444	382
	MA, incl. INT	207	247	334	401	357
	PhD	46	47	58	63	61
	TOTAL	637	695	794	919	801
<i>Number of matriculated persons</i>	PHE	165	112	147	107	142
	BA	1359	1334	1180	1251	1152
	MA, incl. INT	998	907	1010	994	911
	PhD	51	41	55	31	36
	TOTAL	2573	2394	2392	2383	2241
<i>Number of dropouts</i>	PHE	72	64	33	55	31
	BA	1073	819	645	542	434
	MA, incl. INT	410	344	353	331	240
	PhD	52	47	33	37	33
	TOTAL	1606	1274	1064	965	738
<i>Number of graduates</i>	PHE	99	79	98	88	88
	BA	1143	1089	835	811	720
	MA, incl. INT	623	608	600	703	597
	PhD	19	24	24	18	19
	TOTAL	1876	1800	1557	1620	1435
<i>Proportion of students graduating within the nominal period of studies³</i>	PHE	71%	46%	56%	58%	65%
	BA	40%	47%	51%	49%	45%
	MA, incl. INT	50%	53%	52%	54%	56%
	PhD	11%	10%	17%	23%	15%
	TOTAL	47%	47%	51%	49%	50%

¹ The aggregate data of the study process are presented similarly to the methodology of national statistics (data as of 1 November, data for the period 2 November–1 November.) More detailed and academic unit data are available on the university's external website.

² The following data present data on the Bachelor's and Master's integrated study programme (INT) data along with the Master's degree data. TLU has one 5-year INT program with a total of approximately 180 students.

³ A nominal-time graduate is a student who has completed the studies within nominal duration of the study programme plus 1 year for study programmes with a nominal duration of less than 4 years, and 2 years for study programmes with a nominal duration of at least 4 years.

due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic). The same holds for Tallinn University, mainly on the second and third level. Most of Tallinn University's international students study in the fields of business, administration and law, and the number of international students in the fields of humanities and arts as well as education has grown steadily. Increasing the proportion of international students has been one of the goals of TLU.

The number of matriculated students in Estonia has been relatively stable at 13–14 thousand students in the last five years. Admissions to TLU have seen a slight downward trend. In particular, there has been a conscious reduction in study places on Bachelor's level. In 2020, TLU made a difficult decision regarding the admission of international students. It was not possible for the university to ensure new nationally established requirements within the short period of time allocated, and thus fewer international students were matriculated than expected.

Interruptions of studies have decreased in Estonia as a whole during the last 5 years (decrease of 22%), while

interruptions in TLU have decreased by more than 50%. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that the spring of 2020 was exceptional and the number of deletions from the matriculation register was lower than usual. We consider the main reason to be the fact that the university granted extraordinary academic leave during the pandemic.

The number of graduates has decreased in recent years in proportion to the overall number of students: in 2015, there were over 10,200 graduates in Estonia, with 9,000 graduates in 2019. The number of TLU graduates has also decreased by the same amount, while some progress has been made in the proportion of students graduating during the nominal period of studies.

Table 1 provides an overview of the aggregate data of the study process of Tallinn University by study levels in the academic years of 2016/2017–2020/2021. More detailed data, including at academic unit level, is available on the [university's webpage](#).

1.7.2 EMPLOYEES

Table 2 presents the aggregate data on Tallinn University staff in 2015–2019. More detailed data is available on the [university's webpage](#).

Table 2. Aggregate data on Tallinn University academic and support staff

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>All employees (FTE)</i>	850	838	830	816	813
<i>Total number of academic staff calculated on a full-time basis (as of 31.12)</i>	420	409	393	395	392
<i>junior research fellows</i>	20.2	16.5	18.9	25.2	28.6
<i>teachers</i>	18.7	18.3	15.5	14.7	18.6
<i>assistants</i>	1.91	1.91	-	-	-
<i>research fellows</i>	31.8	23.1	32.5	39.5	39.0
<i>lecturers</i>	174.5	162.6	147.7	130.2	135.1
<i>research track associate professors</i>	47.9	55.9	55.3	51.8	47.2
<i>teaching track associate professors</i>	72.2	77.9	71.3	77.8	74.3
<i>research professors</i>	5.7	3.4	3.8	3.0	2.0
<i>professors</i>	47.2	49.7	48.4	51.4	46.8
<i>Members of academic staff (women/men)</i>	508	509	485	499	503
<i>of which men</i>	201	209	195	205	206
<i>of which women</i>	307	300	290	294	297
<i>average age</i>	47	48	48	48	47
<i>percentage of members of academic staff with a doctoral degree or equivalent (of all academic staff) calculated on a full-time basis.</i>	48.85	59.80	61.46	60.87	58.62
<i>share of foreign academic staff (%) (of all academic staff) calculated on a full-time basis.</i>	9.01	11.31	10.67	12.42	13.11
<i>Total number of members of administrative and support staff calculated on a full-time basis (as of 31.12)</i>	336	344	357	346	350
<i>in academic units</i>	154	170	179	175	170
<i>in support units</i>	182	174	178	171	180
<i>Number of Academic Library employees calculated on a full-time basis (as of 31.12)</i>	94	85	80	76	71

MAIN CHANGES CARRIED OUT FROM THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

The most important change since the time of the previous institutional accreditation, which has systematically impacted the functioning of the university, is the structural reform undertaken in 2015 (see [Ch. 1.2.](#) and [1.3.](#)). The structural reform has helped to streamline the management of the university, focus activities, and optimise the duties of personnel, strengthened interdisciplinarity in RDC activities and studies, reduced the duplication of studies, and improved the university's financial sustainability. The Tallinn University Act adopted in 2019 has taken the university's management model and financing principles to the same bases as other public law universities.

In personnel, duplicating functions and positions have been concentrated, reducing the number of full-time employees, including support staff. The positions of research coordinators, administrative heads, heads of studies, financial specialists, marketing and communication specialists, continuing education and training specialists, and internationalisation coordinators have been created in academic units and work organisation has been agreed with the relevant support units in order to facilitate co-operation between the central services and academic units for the purpose of developing the respective areas. In order to engage the members and improve the cooperation culture, including to share the best practices, work networks have been established (see [Ch. 1.4.](#)) and pan-university development activities are conducted with the involvement of employees.

The university has upgraded the management information systems which support data-based management culture and allow fast access to comprehensible data.

For instance, the university's reporting environment has been created and upgraded. The university is currently developing a data warehouse which concentrates data from various information systems and contributes to the preparation, monitoring and analysis of the budget. The budget information system will be interfaced with the personnel programme Virosoft, which will allow a more precise planning of labour expenses both in the main budget and the project budgets (see [Ch. 3.2.3.](#)).

The thoroughly changed organisation structure and management and financing principles posed new challenges for the university, as a result of which the processes of activity planning, reporting and internal assessment have been improved and, among other things, risk management has been implemented. The results of risk assessments have been among the bases for directing the university's improvement activities and processes.

Together with the streamlined academic structure, the university has concentrated its activities and resources (Development Plan 2015–2020; 2020–2022) into five focus fields (see [Ch. 1.2.](#)), which has allowed integrating and strengthening the university's research and study areas, improved the efficiency of RDC activities, and increased interdisciplinarity. A cooperation fund has been established for the purpose of increasing and promoting studies-related cooperation between academic units. Furthermore, co-operation between academic units is, as a priority, supported from the university's Research Fund the aim of which is to promote the university's R&D activities. In order to support interdisciplinarity, interdisciplinary subjects and modules have been created in study programmes.

In 2015, five TLU centres of excellence started work, aimed at supporting the interdisciplinary co-operation of research and creative groups in achieving remarkable research and creative results, increasing the efficiency of external co-operation, and increasing the competitiveness of the university (see [Ch. 3.11.](#)). The resources of both the university's Research Fund and the EU structural funds are invested in the development of the centres of excellence. The university's RDC Strategy takes into account the foci of the national and the EU funding periods, which is proven, for instance, by the ERA Chair teams working at the university. Goals are established and support is provided also for applied R&D activities. In order to strengthen cooperation between researchers and enterprises, business cooperation platform EXU has been created and launched. For the purpose of strengthening the RDC area, the support system has been streamlined, the support for writing and applying for projects has been improved, and the necessary IT solutions have been developed. The career model implemented in 2019 has created better time-based opportunities for the academic personnel to dedicate themselves to research and increased flexibility in specifying the duties of academic employees. The proportions of study and research are balanced and a share of research in work duties and workload is ensured in all academic positions (see [Ch. 3.6.1.](#) and [Ch. 3.11.](#)).

TLU has an indefinite right to conduct studies in all study programme groups and at all levels, except for doctoral studies in the area of arts, where the primary right of teaching was applied for (expert re-evaluation to take place in 2021). Since 2015, admission is not opened for study programmes in which the number of students studying for a nominal period of studies is below 10 (excluding doctoral study programmes). Minimum rates are applied in determining the number of study places in study programmes opened for admission (BA 22 and MA 16 study places).

In order to ensure the uniform quality, interdisciplinarity and internationalisation of study programmes, the requirements, supervision and internal assessment system established for the development of study programmes in the TLU Statute of Study Programme have been updated (see [Ch. 3.7.](#)). The learning outcomes of the amended and new study programmes are being consistently updated. Study programmes are reviewed every year in the course of the internal assessment, using the updated student feedback system as the basis (see [Ch. 3.8.](#)). Sharing good teaching and learning practices is more systemic than before (e.g. in the network of the heads of studies on a pan-university level, in the units' collegial boards of studies, etc.).

A study information system has been introduced (SIS2), which allows the learners and the teaching staff to carry out the necessary procedures in the study information system more conveniently (including to provide study-related feedback, submit applications, etc.). The average time spent on graduation has decreased and the share of graduating in the nominal period has increased (see [Ch. 3.10.](#)). The justification of/reasons for taking an academic leave and deletion from the matriculation register is regularly monitored and the impacts thereof are explained to the students. The prevention of deletion from the matriculation register is a measure applied on both the pan-university level (e.g. the study support action plan, coordinating the study counsellor network) and the academic unit level (e.g. counselling, communication).

Doctoral study places are distributed on the basis of the university's focus fields and additional doctoral study places are created within the framework of the centres of excellence and the RDC projects. Since the admission of the academic year of 2019/2020, a large share of the doctoral students is involved in RDC projects, which has increased the efficiency of supervision of and support for doctoral students. Every doctoral student is ensured either an early-stage researcher salary or the TLU doctoral scholarship which together with the doctoral allowance ensures that doctoral students receive an income in the extent of the average Estonian income and thereby an opportunity to dedicate themselves to the completion of their doctoral thesis (see [Ch. 3.11.](#)). The requirements related to the progress review of doctoral students have been specified, making it clearer and more convenient for both the doctoral students and the academic units. The general progress review framework leaves an option to establish more specific requirements for doctoral students depending on the needs of the study programme.

All the doctoral study programmes and doctoral students are engaged in the work of inter-university doctoral schools. The doctoral study counselling competence has been increased and the positions of doctoral study coordinators have been created in academic units. Since 2017, a doctoral study counsellor network is operating under the leadership of the Division of Doctoral Studies of the Research Administration Office (see [Ch. 3.11.](#)).

There are resources for encouraging the mobility of doctoral students (e.g. Dora) and a sub-measure of the university's Research Fund has been created to support it. The short-term mobility of doctoral students is working well and the factors obstructing the long-term mobility have been studied and measures have been developed

on the basis thereof. For the purpose of supporting long-term mobility, foreign supervisors are being involved, long-term partnership agreements are being concluded, doctoral students are being linked to international projects, all the doctoral study programmes are being linked to doctoral schools, and mobility opportunities are being consistently presented. The organisation of studies has been updated, which has made the doctoral students to use their nominal period of studies more efficiently. Reaching the stage of defending a doctoral thesis is among other things facilitated by the new and more flexible minimum requirements for doctoral

theses established by the Universities Estonia, in line of which the TLU legal acts have also been amended (see [Ch. 3.11.](#)).

The mobility requirement and self-development of academic employees as an activity entailed in the fulfilment of duties has been regulated in the TLU Employment Relations Rules since September 2015. Employment relations related to post-doctoral studies have also been regulated since that time. The new career model highlights these aspects even more clearly.

SELF-EVALUATION OF TALLINN UNIVERSITY ACROSS STANDARDS

3.1

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The strategic management of TLU is based on the legislation regulating higher education in the Republic of Estonia and the strategic development directions specified in the relevant national development plans. The TLU management system supports development planning in accordance with the university's mission, vision and core values as well as national goals, decision-making, implementation and improvement of basic and support processes, regular evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of activities and stakeholder involvement.

3.1.1 PLANNING AND EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

The aim of the university's development planning is to shape the university's mission, vision, core values and goals based on national and international development trends. As required by the university statutes, the Rector has established the University Development Planning and Reporting Procedure, which sets out the principles for the development of the university's Development Plan, unit development plans and action plans, and evaluation of results.

The strategic goals and key results of the university are defined in the Development Plan of the university. Strategic goal-setting and development plan preparation are based on the analysis of the operating environment, the analysis of the implementation of the previous period's Development Plan and the administrative contract, national legislation, regulations and development plans, contracts under public law concluded between MER and TLU (2015–2018; 2019–2021), national higher

education and labour market research results¹, feedback and recommendations from external evaluations and stakeholder feedback and expectations. Among other things, the joint quality agreements concluded between Estonian universities are followed²: the Quality Good Practice Agreement (EST) concluded in 2011 and the Doctoral Studies Quality Agreement (EST) concluded in 2020. The Rector approves the schedule and starting points for the preparation of the Development Plan.

Together with the 2015 structural reform, the most important strategic goal of the university was to

¹ *National research in the field of higher education* (EST), e.g., alumni research, interruptions of studies and dropping out in higher education, graduates' success in the labour market, international student survey Eurostudent, lifelong learning and teacher research, etc., and *labour market research* OSKA.

² *Universities Estonia joint quality agreements aimed at strengthening the quality of, and competition in, Estonian university education.*

develop interdisciplinary research-based focus fields in order to position itself more strongly as a research and educational institution at the national and international level. To this end, the latest Tallinn University Development Plans 2015–2020 and 2020–2022 have supported the strengthening of focus fields and adherence to consistent operating principles, which are: 1) the university is interdisciplinary in its activities, 2) the university is international and 3) the university demands excellence and sustainability. The creation of the position of Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development brings additional focus to sustainability, and the areas of teaching and research will be developed based on the TLU Sustainable Development policy.

The implementation plan of TLU Development Plan defines the sub-objectives, activities, responsible persons and key indicators. TLU Development Plan is approved by the Senate and adopted by the Council. The process of preparing the university's Development Plan begins one year before the end of the current Development Plan. The strategic goal of Tallinn University for 2020–2022 is to further develop interdisciplinary research-based focus fields based on the mission and vision through established operating principles. The current Development Plan was drawn up for three years in order to bring the strategic management of the university more in line with the period of election of the Rector, providing the new Rector with a better opportunity to shape and manage the university's development. The next Rector is elected for the period 15.05.2021–14.05.2026. According to the Rector's election schedule, the Rector will be elected on 01.02.2021 and appointed on 17.05.2021.

The objectives of the university Development Plan are implemented through the development plans³ and sectoral strategies of the academic units and the Academic Library prepared for the period of the development plan (TLU R&D strategy 2019–2021; TLU international studies strategy and TLU digital learning strategy are being prepared). The development plans of academic units and the Academic Library are adopted by the Council of each unit and approved by the university Senate. Based on the Development Plan and key indicators of the university, the development plan of an academic unit defines the mission, vision, and goals of the unit and the activities necessary for achieving them, planned resources and responsible

persons. In order to align and implement the strategic goals, the academic and support units and the Academic Library prepare action plans for each financial year. The staff and students of each unit are involved in the preparation of the development plans and action plans of the respective unit, along with members of other units for joint activities. The objectives laid out in support units' action plans also support, among other things, the objectives of the action plans of academic units. Support units' action plans are approved by the Rector, vice-rector or administrative director, depending on the subordination of the support unit, unless otherwise provided in the statutes of the unit. The objectives laid out in the units' action plans, in turn, function as input for the planning of the tasks of the staff.

For each financial year, each unit provides an overview of the achievement of objectives and activities by submitting an activity report. The activity report includes, inter alia, an extract from the unit's sectoral performance indicators, along with an evaluation provided by the head of the unit. The activity report of each academic unit and the Academic Library are evaluated by the council of the unit and support unit activity reports are approved by the Rector, vice-rector or administrative director as per the subordination of the unit.

The execution of the university's development plan and strategic objectives is analysed in the framework of the university's annual report⁴. The activity reports of the units provide part of the basis for the preparation of the annual report. The university's annual report is an overview of the most important achievements and results of the previous financial year and the execution of the administrative contract and performance agreement. It analyses the most important trends in the operating environment, the execution of the goals laid out in the university's Development Plan, along with key indicators and result indicators (where appropriate, a comparison with other universities is presented), with the members of the Rectorate also providing evaluations of the performance of their areas of responsibility. The Rectorate presents the annual report of the university to the members in a public presentation, after which it is submitted to the Senate for review and feedback and to the Council for adoption. After the submission and the adoption of the annual report, the Council evaluates the performance of the Rector's work. The university's annual report is a public document freely available on the university's website. The list of the university's key indicators and the results (2015–2019) can be found here.

3 *Development Plans of Academic Units (EST): Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, School of Digital Technologies, School of Educational Sciences, School of Humanities, School of Natural Sciences and Health, School of Governance, Law and Society, Haapsalu College.*

4 *Annual Report 2019; Annual Report 2018; Annual Report 2017.*

For the purpose of unified reporting, the university uses commonly accepted sectoral indicators, along with clear principles for their collection and presentation. The reporting system to support reporting and data-based management decisions has been developed since 2013. The current university reporting environment has been in use since 2018 and is constantly under development. The last development of the reporting environment took place in December 2020. The reporting environment is interfaced with other university databases and the indicators are grouped into five areas: indicators of research, development and creative activities, study indicators, financial indicators, staff indicators and organisational indicators. Quarterly data is comparable by year and unit, as well as across the university as a whole. The statistics collected in the reporting environment are used in the preparation of the activity reports of the units and the annual report to assess the performance of their objectives and processes, as well as to prepare any analyses necessary for making management decisions. A new information and control system, Tableau, is currently being developed and piloted, enabling faster data analysis across various university information systems and supporting the display of data on the university's website.

The goals and activities of the university are also guided by a three-year administrative contract between the university and MER (EST), concluded with the aims of supporting the conduct of studies at the level of higher education and agreeing on the rights and obligations, responsibilities and procedure for allocating activity support to the university from the state budget. The obligations specified in the administrative contract are also taken into account in the management of the special-purpose activity support appropriations provided for academic units for each financial year⁵ (hereinafter the unit grant), which sets the amount of activity support allocated to each unit, along with the respective performance indicators. The unit grant consists of three components: core funding, indicative funding and performance funding. Units' main funding is tied to the university's overall development goals and the obligations laid out in the administrative contract.

5 Tallinn University Regulations of Economic Activity §10

The allocation of indicative funding will take into consideration the need to manage the long-term increase or decrease of units' teaching activities in the interests of the university as a whole, to compensate for possible permanent changes in the cost of studies, and to account with possible optimisations in the activity of units. And the performance funding component draws on the performance indicators agreed between the Rectorate and the Director of the Unit, which are based on the university's key indicators and development activities. The national performance funding performance indicators for higher education institutions serve as one of the bases for determining performance indicators⁶. The unit director provides the Rectorate with an overview of the achievement of the objectives and performance indicators agreed in the allocation, which is the basis for the formation of the allocation for the unit for the next financial year. The objectives of the unit allocation also serve as an input for the action plan of the academic unit.

The national priorities and goals are integrated into the university's activities by taking into account the objectives of the administrative contract, national and international development plans and strategies, and the participation of university staff as experts in policy and strategy, councils and decision-making bodies and networks.

The results of the successful management of the university and processes and the achievement of the goals set in the Development Plan for teaching and research activities are also reflected in the inclusion of TLU in the world university rankings. TLU is represented in two world-famous rankings: the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and QS World University Rankings, and is also ranked in regional and sectoral rankings.

6 Specifications of performance indicators to be taken into account in performance funding, their proportions and the bases for calculating performance funding, and the rate and procedure for calculating performance grants for doctoral studies (EST).

3.1.2 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Stakeholder involvement in the management of the university takes place through decision-making bodies, advisory bodies and networks (see [Ch. 1.4](#)), and ad hoc working groups are formed according to needs and topics.

In 2019, the Riigikogu enacted [Tallinn University Act](#), which changed the management structure of the university as of 01.01.2020 to provide the university with three governing bodies: the Rector, the Council and the Senate. Until then, the university-level body bridging the university and society was the university Advisory Board, whose members (11–15 members) were appointed by the Government of the Republic. The Advisory Board took decisions of an advisory nature within its competence. The work of the Advisory Board came to an end with the formation of the [University Council](#). The Council of Tallinn University has 11 members, of which five members are appointed by the Senate, one member is appointed by the Estonian Academy of Sciences and five members are appointed by the minister responsible for the field. The current Council also includes two members of the former Advisory Board, one of whom serves as the Chairman of the Council. The Council is a decision-making body responsible for the long-term and sustainable development of the university and for making important economic, financial and property-related decisions, thus ensuring the achievement of the university's goals. The involvement of external parties in the management of the university has become significantly more substantial through the work of the Council, and regular sessions have been agreed on a monthly basis for the entire academic year at the request of the members of the Council.

Members external to the university are also involved in the councils of academic units and research centres and in study programme development. The university's centres of excellence and large-scale R&D projects have international advisory bodies that help guide the development of university research as well as its better connection with society. Two ERA Chair action projects have, inter alia, set and met important objectives for promoting university-level strategic development, such as helping to establish the necessary research management principles (IPR registration, technology transfer, analyses of research application areas, launching new R&D projects) and facilitating managerial capacity building of TLU research staff or building cooperation models with high-profile external partners in multidisciplinary science, and stakeholders in the cultural industries in Estonia, and around the globe. [The cooperation platform EXU](#) (Enterprise x University, see [Chapter 3.11](#)) advisory board includes

representatives of employers, whose role is to help the university identify potential points for strategic cooperation with companies (see [Chapter 3.11](#)).

Prior to the establishment of the Council, the highest collegial decision-making body of the university was the [Senate](#), whose competence and composition changed with the change of the management structure in 2020. As of September 2020, the Senate also includes the directors of academic units and of the Academic Library, and due to the increase in the composition, the number of student representatives in the Senate also increased⁷. Matters related to the Development Plan and financial and economic activities moved from the competence of the Senate to that of the Council. The Council has a one-time veto right on the decision to adopt the statutes of the Senate, and the Senate has a one-time veto right on the decision to adopt the development plan or budget of the Council.

In order to cultivate an open and data-based management culture, information on the work of the governing bodies is shared with the members of the university. Decisions, regulations, directives and orders of the Rector and managing bodies of the university are public and accessible through the university's document management system WD, unless they are subject to access restrictions (e.g., personal data, etc.). In addition, board minutes are available for in-house use. A separate newsletter on the decisions of the Senate sessions is distributed to the employees, and the topics and decisions of the agenda of the meetings of both managing bodies are presented to the networks.

The principles of inclusive management are applied to form a unified identity and motivated staff, and the management hierarchy is kept flat. Both staff and students are involved in the development of university regulations and, more broadly, the principles concerning the basic processes of the university. The main methods of involvement are the formation of working groups involving various stakeholders, public presentation and discussion of materials, as well as the collection of suggestions for improvement among networks and staff. The members (also external) of the university are also included in the development of the Development Plan of the university, the development plans of the units and action plans. In addition, the Rectorate meets with all units and the Student Union at the beginning of each academic year to provide a mutual overview of the most important topics and goals for the starting academic year.

⁷ Student representatives make up 1/5 of the Senate. [Tallinn University Statutes](#)

Table 3. Staff satisfaction with management in 2017–2020 (on a 7-point scale)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Satisfaction with general management	4.3	4.5	4.7	5.2
Management decisions are constructive*	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.7
Transparency and fairness of management decisions	3.8	4.1	4.4	4.8
Unit management	4.8	4.9	5.2	5.4
Study area management	4.6	4.7	4.8	5.1

*The question was added to the questionnaire in 2020

Staff satisfaction with management has improved year by year (Table 3). The results of satisfaction surveys provide an input for planning improvement activities and preparing action plans. Based on the survey results,

for example, management processes have been analysed and streamlined, and a development programme to improve unit management and strategic planning has been created for managers.

STRENGTHS

- The university has defined its strategic goals and a system for the uniform alignment and implementation of these goals.
- A reporting environment supportive of data-driven management. Common sectoral indicators, principles for their collection and presentation.
- A strong academic structure created by the structural reform, which supports the implementation of the focus fields of the Development Plan.
- Inclusive management and flat hierarchy.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Passionate participation in the design of higher education and research policies (incl. cooperation with the MER and ETAg) in order to ensure a stable development environment for the university.
- Connecting the action plans of academic units and support units more adequately in order to execute the strategic goals of the university more efficiently.
- Approval and implementation of sustainable development policies for a more extensive advancement of the area of sustainable development.

3.2 RESOURCES

3.2.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The budget of Tallinn University is created on the basis of the strategic goals laid out in the university's Development Plan and on their implementation. In the 2015–2020 budget period of the university, the budget has been prepared based on, for example, the goal of 1.5-fold increase in the average salary, strengthening of focus fields and priority development of research. The principles of preparing the university budget are established in the Regulations of Economic Activity. A budget is prepared for all income and expenses of the university in compliance with the requirements provided for in the Higher Education Act and other legislation. The income and expenditure summary of the university budget forms the consolidated budget, which reflects the main sources of income and categories of expenses of the university. The revenue reflected in the consolidated budget is divided into revenue from education, revenue from research and development, and other revenue. Revenues of the university have increased by more than 21% in the period 2015–2019 (Figure 3). Revenue from educational activity makes up the largest part of the university's revenue base; however, its share has decreased over the years (67.8% in 2015, 59.8% in 2019) and the share of research and development revenues in the university budget has been increasing (28.8% in 2015, 38.2% in 2019).

The main reasons for the change in the proportion of revenues are: a) insufficient volume and overly slow increase of state-allocated activity support, and b) the university's increased capacity to diversify revenues. Tallinn University has been able to adapt well to changes in the external environment. As such, we have strengthened our financial position and achieved greater financial stability.

The supplementary budget for 2020 confirmed the amount of total revenue at 41.3 million euros, of which revenue from education amounted to 24.8 million (60%), revenue from research and development to 15.6 million (38%) and other revenue to 874,000 euros (2%).

The expenses set out in the consolidated budget are divided as follows: 1) academic units, 2) support units, 3) central activities of the university and depreciation of fixed assets, 4) funds and 5) reserve fund. A core budget has been prepared on the basis of the consolidated budget, reflecting academic and support units central activities and funds, the capital budget and the reserve fund by detailed income and expenditure items. The budget for 2019 was distributed as follows: 57.8% academic units, 28.6% support units, 4.4% Academic Library, 4.5% by depreciation and impairment of fixed assets, 1.8% by funds and 2.9% jointly by the Rectorate, the Student Union and the financial performance (surplus or deficit).

In 2019, revenues increased by 1.9 million euros as compared to 2018. At the same time, expenses increased by about 1 million euros, with a significant increase in⁸ the expense of labour expenses. Figure 4 shows the distribution of expenses of academic and other units in 2015 and 2019⁹. The distribution of expenses suggests that the majority of the costs of academic units are labour costs, whose share has increased over the years.

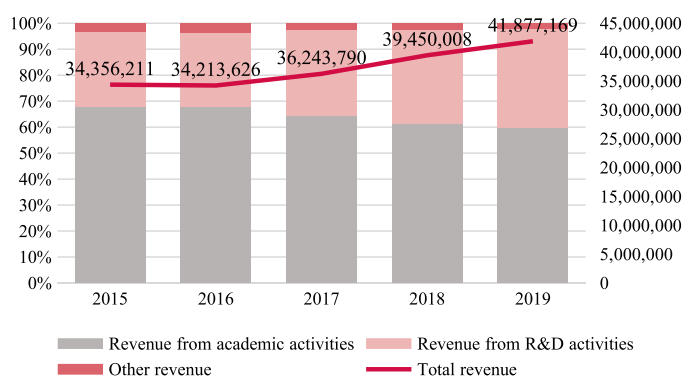


Figure 3. TLU revenue distribution 2015–2019 (% and in euros)

⁸ Tallinn University annual report for 2019

⁹ Budget expenditures will be presented as of 2019, as the expenditures for the 2020 budget will be published after the preparation of the annual report.

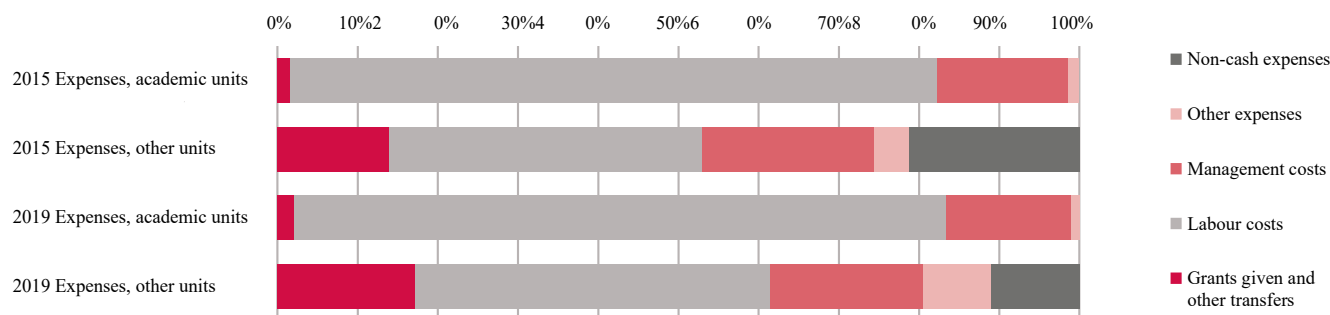


Figure 4. Distribution of expenses of TLU units in 2015 and 2019 (%)

The total amount of expenses on academic units approved in the supplementary budget of 2020 was 24.92 million euros, which was distributed as follows: 1) grants and other transfers 597,000 (2.40%), 2) staff costs 20.65 million (82.88%), 3) management expenses 3.26 million (13.08%), 4) other expenses 410,000 (1.65%). The total expenditure of other units in the supplementary budget for 2020 was 18.27 million euros, divided as follows: 1) grants and other transfers 3.0 million (16.61%), 2) staff costs 8.44 million (46.16%), 3) management expenses 4.2 million (22.92%), 4) other expenses 775,000 (4.24%), 5) non-monetary expenses 1.84 million (10.07%).

Since 2020, the budget of Tallinn University has been prepared on an accrual basis. The objectives of the transition to a fully accrual-based budget were: 1) greater consistency between the budget and financial accounting; 2) greater consistency of the budget with the public chart of accounts; 3) greater compatibility between operational and project budgeting; 4) increased intuitive accessibility of the budget structure and 5) improved budget structure.

The main changes in the revenue and expenditure structure for the accrual-based budget were: 1) the budget does not reflect the receipt and repayment of loan principal and acquisition of fixed assets; 2) depreciation of fixed assets was added to the budget; 3) the transfer of grant revenue to partners are not reflected in the university revenue; and 4) the salaries and special benefits of teaching staff employed under agreements with legal entities under the Law of Obligations are now reflected in payroll expenses and not in management expenses as in previous years.

From 2021, an information system for budget drafting and monitoring will be introduced, which is an important development in the university's budgeting activities and strategic planning.

MER will enter into a three-year administrative contract (EST) with the university, establishing, among other

things, the procedure for allocating activity support based on the mission, goals and tasks of the university and the needs of the state (see [Chapter 3.11](#)). The university's activity support is divided into three main categories: a special-purpose appropriation for academic units, a central fund appropriation and a reserve fund appropriation. The principles of distribution of the special-purpose appropriation for the activity support of academic units and the performance indicators related to the distribution have been established by the order of the Rector (see [Chapter 3.11](#)).

The financial and economic position of Tallinn University is good and the outlook is stable (Figure 5). Despite the positive developments and the increase in working capital, the university is expected to face several important challenges in the coming years. The share of labour costs in Tallinn University accounts for about 63% of revenue¹⁰. At the same time, the share of labour costs exceeds 80% for academic units. The high level of labour costs reduces the university's flexibility to respond to changes in the external environment. To alleviate the situation, efforts are being made to increase the university's total revenue, both in absolute terms and in relative terms (income per employee). The university's total revenue base per employee is also one of the key indicators in the Development Plan showing a trend of improvement: in 2015, 42,504 euros and in 2019, 52,195 euros per employee. Particular attention will be paid to expanding cooperation with the business sector and to the continued growth of the volume of RDC projects (see the results in [Chapter 3.11](#)). Along with the diversification of the revenue base, these measures will enable efficient cost management, including the control of further growth in the share of labour costs.

The diversification of the revenue base and the reduction of dependence on state budget revenue will focus on real estate investments related to real estate

¹⁰ [Tallinn University annual report for 2019](#)

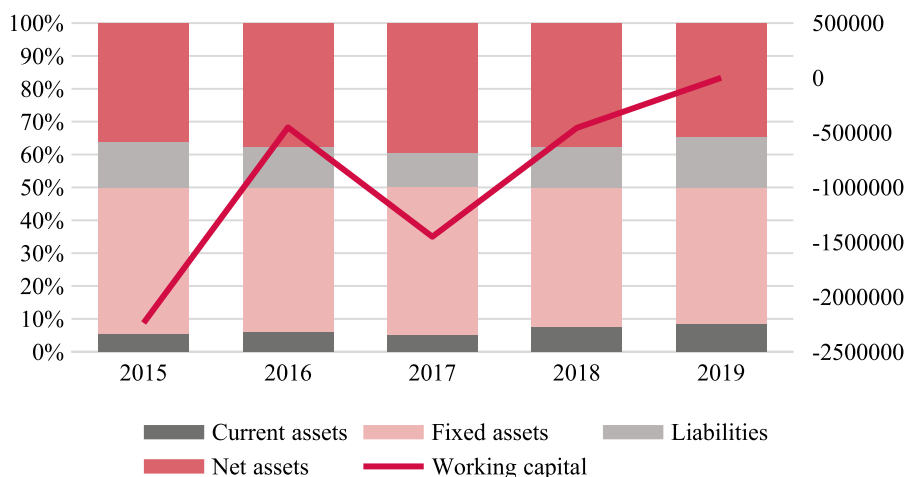


Figure 5. TLU balance sheet and working capital in 2015–2019

on the university's balance sheet, adding value to the university's real estate and providing the university with low-risk long-term stable income. Projects of this kind will help to increase the university's diverse contribution to the provision of public services and cooperation with the business sector.

The university's accounting and financial reporting procedures are established by [the Internal Rules of Accounting Procedure \(EST\)](#). Pursuant to the [State Budget Act](#), Tallinn University annually submits a financial plan to the MER regarding its operating

income, operating expenses, debt and liquid assets for the current financial year, the preceding financial year and the following four financial years.

The University Council adopts the budget and budget implementation report, the annual report and the financial plan. The Council submits the budget for review to the Senate, which shall have the right to veto to be used within 14 calendar days of the adoption of the budget. The Council also decides on the acquisition and transfer of real estate and its encumbrance with restricted real rights, as well as any borrowing.

3.2.2 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The goals and activities of Tallinn University's Human resource management and staff development are based on the goals and activities of the university, which, among other things, result from the Development Plan. The composition of staff of the university is formed on the basis of the tasks agreed in the statutes of the university and in the statutes of the units, with the heads of units establishing the necessary academic as well as administrative and support positions. The positions of tenure system professors as academic leaders in their field are established as a result of a thorough discussion in the Senate. The duties of employees are agreed in the employment agreement and the job description, and the duties of academic employees are additionally regulated by [Employment Relations Rules](#) (see also [Ch.3.6.1.](#)). The performance of tasks is reviewed and goals are set, among other things, in development interviews with each staff member's immediate supervisor, which are based on good practice for development interviews the results of which can be stored in the Intranet.

The university values the development of its staff, offering development opportunities to the employees

(Table 4). The university's Development Plan sets the focus in the field of staff development on the professional development of lecturers, the creation of an international organisational culture (incl. foreign language learning) and digital competences and mental health.

The Personnel Office organises trainings on general employment-related skills, including English language courses and trainings and meetings tackling the issues of intercultural communication based on the internationalisation goals laid out in the university's Development Plan. Training and meetings are organised for new employees for an improved induction experience. To improve cooperation across units, seminars of the Rectorate and directors of academic units and seminars of support units are organised. The Open Academy supports the establishment and development of co-operation links of academic units with various organisations and the development of the relevant competence at the university. Many development activities are carried out by university employees. The academic staff development system is described in the chapter concerning academic staff (see also [Ch.3.6.](#)).

Table 4. Number of employees who participated in staff development activities of main development areas in 2015–2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Digital skills	278	358	218	176	195
Teaching and supervision skills	114	89	42	219	400
Language learning and cultural knowledge	288	316	254	132	214
General employment-related competencies	564	732	761	389	666
Sharing best practices	12		4	14	52
Research, including ethics and communication				13	44
Mental health				6	24

Table 5. Employee satisfaction with opportunities for self-improvement (on a 7-point scale)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
All employees	5.05	5.13	5.21	5.13
Academic staff	4.87	4.98	5.03	5.15
Administrative and support staff	5.30	5.32	5.46	5.11

Units with specific training needs may also organise relevant training on their own behalf. The individual training needs of employees are also decided within the unit in cooperation between the employee and the head, e.g., in the context of a development interview. University staff can also participate in university degree courses if it is professionally necessary.

Information on development activities is distributed to staff via the [training calendar](#) (EST), weekly information sent by e-mail and monthly newsletter; information for academic employees is located on a separate [website](#) (EST), and personal invitations are sent depending on the target group of the training.

Employee satisfaction with self-improvement opportunities has been on an upward trend over the years (Table 5).

In 2019, a network for supporting the professional development of employees was formed in order to make the university's staff development activities more comprehensive and systematic. The principles of the university's staff development were agreed within the network in 2020; they will be introduced at the university in 2021 and implemented thereafter.

The principles and procedure for the [remuneration of employees](#) are regulated by the TLU Remuneration Regulation. The performance of the principles and procedure of remuneration is assessed by the Salary

Committee, which meets as necessary, but at least once a year. The Remuneration Regulation classifies the positions at the university into salary scales based on the complexity of the position's duties, responsibilities and the extent of cooperation, as well as the requirements set for the person filling the position. The amount of the employee's remuneration is agreed with the employee by the head of unit based on the salary scale and the minimum rates of remuneration established at the university, taking into account the work performance and the competitiveness of remuneration. No salary maximums have been set at the university.

The remuneration of academic staff is analysed annually in comparison with other Estonian public universities and the remuneration of administrative and support staff in comparison with the salary market of Tallinn and Harju County¹¹. The analyses are available to the heads of units who make remuneration decisions. The average basic salary of academic staff, the growth of which is a key indicator for the university, has increased every year (1513.9 euros in 2016 (as of 31.12.16), 2063 euros in 2020 (as of 30.09.20) and exceeds the average gross monthly salary in Estonia¹² (the average gross monthly salary is 1441 euros (as of 09.2020)). Comparing the

¹¹ Remuneration for non-academic positions is analysed in a comparison of the [Fontes salary survey](#) sample.

¹² <https://www.stat.ee/et/avasta-statistikat/valdkonnad/tooelu/palk-ja-toojoukulu> (EST)

Table 6. Employee satisfaction with the remuneration and correspondence of remuneration with the contribution in 2017–2020 (on a 7-point scale)

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total employee satisfaction with remuneration	-	3.60	3.69	4.10
academic staff	-	3.30	3.45	3.97
administrative and support staff	-	3.94	4.01	4.34
Total employee satisfaction with the correspondence of remuneration with the contribution	3.76	4.13	4.22	4.52
academic staff	3.29	3.88	3.98	4.37
administrative and support staff	4.32	4.47	4.52	4.77

remuneration of academic staff with other Estonian public law universities (data from 2019), TLU ranks 3rd among universities in terms of the average total salary of academic staff. TLU is the salary leader in the remuneration of teachers; however, teaching track associate professors, research track associate professors and junior research fellows are paid below the average across universities¹³. An analysis of the remuneration of non-academic positions shows that the more complex the work, the wider the gap between the salary paid at the university and the salary paid in the salary market. In 2019, the minimum salary rates for both academic and support staff were raised, and the next increase in the minimum salary rates for academic staff will take effect in 2021.

So far, however, the results of the annual employee satisfaction survey show that satisfaction with pay and the correspondence of salary with the employee's contribution is lower as compared to other indicators studied in the survey (Table 6), although the results show an upward trend.

Employees cite high workload as the main reason for dissatisfaction with pay, partly due to staffing and extensive bureaucracy. In 2019 and 2020, the workload of academic staff was analysed and improvement activities are planned in the system of calculating and planning the workload of academic staff (see Ch.3.3.).

In addition to the basic salary, academic staff are paid a performance fee for research and development or creative activities and for supervising doctoral¹⁴ theses. Employees can be paid a bonus for outstanding work achievements.

The university also offers a number of benefits to the employees. For example, the duration of annual leave is 35–56 calendar days¹⁵, an employee on a certificate of incapacity for work receives a sickness benefit starting on the second day of illness¹⁶, which is not normally required by law, a single allowance is paid in the event of death in family or other accidents¹⁷, etc. For health purposes, employees can visit an occupational health doctor for check-ups, compensation is paid for spectacles, cheaper physical exercise opportunities are provided at the TLU Sports Club and externally, massages are available on site and starting in September 2020, a psychologist has been available to address mental health issues.

Persons having rendered remarkable services to the university are recognised by being appointed Honorary Doctor of Tallinn University, Honorary Professor of Tallinn University, Honorary Member of Tallinn University and Honorary Member of academic units of Tallinn University. Once a year, the Rector recognises¹⁸ the university staff and people from outside the university having rendered services to the university with the TLU Badge of Merit, and awards the university staff as well as partners for their long-term work and contribution to the development of the university and other important services to the university with a TLU certificate of appreciation. Each academic year, employees are recognised for their outstanding teaching, supervision and teaching development results in degree studies. In order to motivate high-level

¹⁵ Based on the Rector's directive "Procedure for granting holidays at Tallinn University".

¹⁶ Based on the Rector's directive "Payment of Sickness Benefits".

¹⁷ Based on the Rector's directive "Benefits Procedure" and the Rector's order "Establishing the Amount of Funeral Benefits".

¹⁸ Based on the Senate regulation "Awards and Honours at Tallinn University".

¹³ <http://statistika.ern.ee/tootajad/> (EST).

¹⁴ Based on the Rector's directive "Principles for motivating effective research and development or creative activities and effective teaching by research employees".

research and creative work, recognition is awarded for the most outstanding publication, textbook and creative project at TLU. Each year, the Vice-Rector for Research and the Vice-Rector for Development hold a reception to appreciate productive research and outstanding creative activity. A monthly Letter of Appreciation is prepared and sent to the members, listing the work anniversaries and recognition received by the employees for the previous month both at their own university and abroad. The Rector organises an annual reception for major work anniversaries. University awards and national awards (EST) are published on the university's external website.

In addition to university-wide recognition, employees are also recognised within academic units; for example, the School of Humanities has established a separate recognition system.

The above-mentioned annual employee satisfaction survey has been conducted since 2012. Employee

satisfaction with their work and the organisation of work, their structural unit, support services and university life as a whole are surveyed. In 2020, employees were also asked about their satisfaction with working in an emergency situation (SARS-CoV-2 pandemic) and the experience gained. Survey results are analysed in detail at the academic and support staff, unit and university level, and compared with the results of the previous year. A summary of the survey results is prepared and more detailed open answers (incl. recommendations and suggestions) are sent to the heads of each respective unit and the Rectorate. Summaries of results are sent to employees by means of an information letter and are available on the Intranet. The results of the survey are analysed in the units and the Rectorate and also discussed in the Senate, and the results provide the basis for improvement activities and optionally also the key indicators of the university (Annex 2 of the Development Plan implementation plan).

3.2.3 MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIAL RESOURCES

Most of the university's teaching and RDC activities are concentrated on the campus (the location of the university is described in the introduction: see Chapter 1.5), which supports co-operation between units while providing cost-effectiveness and efficiency. In January 2020, when the new Vita study building and creative building were completed, the oldest and youngest buildings of the university were connected, merging the campus into a single architectural ensemble. The courtyard area, which was previously used as a parking lot, has been redesigned and is now part of an active urban space and open to all pedestrians. The renovation of the interior of the campus and the courtyard have been designed to enable outdoor gatherings, which have been successfully implemented during the university's ceremonies. The renewal of the buildings has also taken into account universally designed accessibility principles for people with special needs and visually impaired persons (voice commands for lifts). To support a sustainable lifestyle, the campus will be outfitted with bicycle parking spaces as per the Tallinn University mobility plan.

Students are offered accommodation in three student dormitories (see Ch.1.5.). Different standards and prices are available. There are currently 795 accommodation places, including 3 rooms for students with special needs. Due to the students' desire for

increased privacy, the three-bedroom rooms have been converted into two-bedroom rooms in all dormitories. Recent developments include the conversion of a floor previously used as a hostel into student accommodation at the Räägu student dormitory, and the renovation of the second floor at Västriku, with all rooms adapted for single use.

Since 2020, the focus of the university's investment strategy has been on improving the development and interaction of information systems. The goals of the development of information systems are set in the Development Plan of the university and the sub-goals are described in the annual action plan of the IT department, the achievement of which is analysed annually in the activity report. In order to achieve the goals of the Development Plan, the Rector formed a working group for the development of IT systems, which analysed the needs of key IT systems in 2020, set priorities in cooperation with the Rectorate and prepared an information systems development plan for 2020–2022. Priority is given to the development of IT systems related to the field of RDC (e.g., IT solutions supporting doctoral studies, infrastructure solutions for secure storage and preservation of scientific data, IT solutions supporting administrative activities in the field of RDC). In order to support the data-based management culture, new management information

systems, Andmeait and Tableau, are being created and piloted to compile and display data from other data systems of the university (e.g., NAV, SIS, Virosoft). Recent developments also include the implementation of a secure e-platform for the election of persons and the development of a new LIFE (Learning in Interdisciplinary Focused Environment) web environment to support interdisciplinarity (see Chapter 3.7.). The “My job overview” section has been created on the intranet with the goal of providing a one-stop overview of employee tasks, content, scope and results, to be used for planning work and related changes and for academic staff attestation and candidatures. In addition, the study information system SIS has been transferred to a new platform with modern, more secure and user-friendly technology.

The sources of funding for teaching and research infrastructure include the unit budget, the university’s

investments budget and projects budget, with a combination of funding sources frequently used. The development of RDC infrastructure is also supported by the university’s research fund. An action plan was drawn up in 2020 for a more systematic development of the RDC infrastructure. Where possible, cross-use of infrastructure is preferred for research and teaching. Academic units are responsible for the availability and timeliness of teaching aids. Acquisition of study literature takes place in cooperation between the academic unit and the Academic Library. The necessary teaching aids are constantly updated.

The units draw up a procurement plan for each financial year. Procurement planning, preparation and coordination are organised centrally. The organisation of public procurements in TLU is guided by the Public Procurement Act and Tallinn University Procurement Rules.

3.2.4 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Marketing and communication at the university is managed by the Marketing and Communication Office (TUKO). A TUKO network has been formed for inclusive management and implementation of goals and activities, which meets weekly on a regular basis. The network includes TUKO employees and marketing and communication specialists from all academic units, the Student Union, the Academic Library and the Open Academy. Tallinn University communication management is targeted by target groups and covered with the respective information channels. As a rule, the university’s external and internal communication is bilingual and it is monitored on a daily basis.

Communication management and marketing activities support the implementation of the goals laid out in the development plans of the university and academic units. For each financial year, a detailed action and marketing plan complete with a budget is prepared for the implementation of study programmes and other objectives. Study programme marketing prioritises teacher education programmes, English-language programmes and preferred programmes selected by academic units. The selection of preferred study programmes takes into account the agreements arising from the administrative contract with the Ministry, the study programmes in the area of responsibility and the admission statistics of previous years. One of the activities related to the marketing of study programmes is, for example, the annual Open Doors Week education fair held at the university campus to introduce learning opportunities. In 2021, the fair

will be held virtually, in both Estonian and English in parallel.

The main information channels for internal communication are e-mails, internal and external web environments, and various information media on campus such as information boards, signs and indoor television. Table 7 provides an overview of the information letters sent by the university, their objectives and frequency.

For internal communication, the Intranet provides another important internal channel in addition to the newsletters. The Intranet publishes member-only information such as notices, information on support services, documents, etc. It also includes platforms relevant to the performance of management functions such as the job overview environment.

The information on the university’s webpage is presented by segment: information about the university, admission, studies, research, business, training and media. Popular web publications include the sectoral and thematic blogs of academic units and the blog of the Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development, launched in 2020. Communication with international media is mediated by the TUKO Communication Manager, and the most important messages are coordinated with the Rectorate.

Employee satisfaction with marketing and communication activities has improved every year (Table 8), reflecting the effectiveness of marketing and communication activities among the members.

Table 7. Overview of TLU newsletters

Mass e-mail: the newsletter	Language	Content	Frequency	Target group	Comments
Nädalainfo and the Weekly	EST ENG	Announcements and news, including management decisions and the work of the Rectorate.	weekly	Membership	Readership is systematically monitored using the Sendmaily platform. If necessary, urgent/priority messages are also sent separately.
Internal newsletters for academic units	EST ENG	Announcements and news concerning the work of the unit, including management decisions	as necessary, but not less than once a month	All employees of the unit	Various information letters reflect the important activities of the unit's employees, including research achievements, events and deadlines, information on application rounds, etc.
Trainings newsletter	EST	Overview of trainings for all units	monthly	Partners and networks, companies and organisations, individuals	Prepared by the Open Academy.
Student newsletter	EST ENG	Student Union activities, scholarships and competitions, surveys, information about current events at the university, events for students, discounts, offers (including job offers), etc.	weekly	Students	The Student Union is responsible for the newsletter sent to Estonian-speaking students, with the TUKO internal communication specialist preparing the English-language student newsletter.
Study newsletter	EST ENG	Topics related to the studies	monthly	Students	
Partner newsletter	EST	News concerning the target group, including announcements from units, information on trainings and Enterprise x University.	monthly	Partners, networks and alumni	
International partner newsletter	ENG	Key news and announcements of the university, overviews of events	quarterly	Partners, networks and alumni	The head of international relations and the international marketing senior specialist are involved in the preparation.

While partner and alumni relations are mostly managed and developed by academic units and the Open Academy, TUKO is tasked with central recognition and communication. From 2020, a new customer database of alumni contacts has been introduced, allowing additional data to be added to the contacts and segmented. Alumni activities and success stories are consistently reflected in various university

communication channels; for example, news and personal stories are published in the university's [Media Hub](#) web environment, which reflects university life, membership activities and events. Alumni are part of the university's annual admission campaign, used to illustrate the quality of our studies and the actualisation of our specialities in the labour market.

Table 8. Employee satisfaction with the university's image and the information environment (on a 7-point scale)*

	2017	2018	2019	2020
TLU's reputation as an employer	-	-	4.5	4.8
Proud to work at TLU	-	5.1	5.3	5.5
The image of the university in the media	4.5	4.5	4.2	4.9
Information flow in the unit	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.2
Satisfaction with the English information space	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.5

*questions have been changed in the survey; a dash indicates later additions to the survey

STRENGTHS

- A strong financial and economic position.
- Well functioning remuneration and motivation system.
- Information and data systems support the management of the university, purposeful action and functioning of processes.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Modernisation of the workload calculation system corresponding to the new career model and the creation of a supporting IT-system.
- Modernisation of a bilingual information and work environment for supporting and integrating international members more efficiently.
- Improving the professional development support system for employees in order to better support their professional development.

3.3

QUALITY CULTURE

Quality management at TLU is based on development planning and reporting in accordance with the mission, vision and core values of the university, improvement-oriented process management, self-evaluation, internal assessment and a university structure, regulations and documentation conducive to them. Quality assurance activities are defined in the university regulations and integrated into the daily life of the university, rendering quality a natural part of the work culture. Quality is a dimension that characterises the entire activity of the university, with achieved goals and the satisfaction of the stakeholders forming its output. Quality assurance is a shared responsibility of the entire university: all members of the university are responsible for the quality of their activities and their development, and contribute to quality assurance together.

The (quality) management of the university's main processes and support processes is based on the basic values set in the [TLU Academic Charter](#) (openness, quality, professionalism, unity, academic freedom) (see [Ch.1.1.](#)) and the principles set out in the [Tallinn University Development Plan](#) (internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, excellence and sustainability). Academic freedom includes the delegation of management and responsibility to the academic units, with the exact "playing field" being based on the legal framework of the university and the goals laid out in the university Development Plan and agreed between the Rectorate and the heads of academic units. The management of the processes takes into account the [quality assurance standards and guidelines of the European Area of Higher Education](#).

Process management and administration are regulated by the university's sectoral regulations, which are available to all university employees in the WebDesktop document management system. Guidelines specifying the organisation of work are available for employees on the Intranet. The head of each university unit is responsible for the proper administration of the unit; the administration is organised by an employee of the unit tasked with the respective activities. The documentation of the activities of the university and the related work organisation are regulated by the [Tallinn University Rules of Administrative Procedure](#). Drafting and updating regulations and guidance material is an ongoing process. The draft general regulation to be

established by a directive or order is first submitted to the relevant units and staff for opinions and/or coordination, thus involving the membership of the university in the process. The basic document for document management is the [list of documents of Tallinn University \(EST\)](#), which is used to ensure the systematisation and preservation of documentation reflecting the activities and operations of the university. The university performs public functions and ensures therefore, in accordance with the Public Information Act, access to its public information. This function is provided by the [public view of the document register \(EST\)](#) on the university's website. Requests for information can be submitted for documents not available in the register.

The university's quality assurance policy is aimed at continuous improvement. The performance of processes and set goals are evaluated regularly (Table 9 and Table 10) and the results are used in improvement activities.

The process of planning and reporting on the development of the university has been described in the chapter on strategic management (see [Ch. 3.1.](#)) and financial and personnel management has been described in the chapter on resources (see [Ch.3.2.](#)). In order to monitor, evaluate and analyse the processes, the Development Plan lays out key indicators ([Annex 2 of the Development Plan implementation plan](#)), sector-based performance indicators in the reporting environment and their collection principles (see [Ch. 3.1.](#)).

Table 9. University internal evaluations

Internal evaluation	Frequency	Use of results
<i>University annual report</i>	Annually according to the completion of the financial statement	Evaluation of the achievement of the goals, key and result indicators of the university Development Plan, evaluation of the effectiveness of the processes. Input for process and regulatory development.
<i>Audited accounts</i>	Annually according to the established schedule (April-May)	Evaluation of the university's performance in the financial year. Assessment of compliance with the financial rules for the appropriate use of university funds. Budget planning for the next financial year and input for improvement activity planning.
<i>Report on the administrative contract concluded with MER</i>	The performance of the contract is discussed annually in the university's annual report, and at the end of the agreement, a report is submitted to the MER	Evaluation of the execution of state-set goals and university obligations. Input for establishing units' special-purpose appropriations and goals. Basis for negotiating the next administrative contract with MER. Input for compiling the university annual report.
<i>Results of risk assessment analysis</i>	According to the work plan and need	Identification and prioritisation of risks and critical problem areas that hinder the achievement of the university's goals, prevention of the realisation of risks, input for improvement activities.
<i>Internal audit report</i>	According to the work plan and need	Input for the university process development and improvement activities.
<i>Results of university-wide thematic or process-based analyses</i>	According to the work plan and need	Input for the university process development and improvement activities.
<i>Unit activity report</i>	Annually, at the beginning of the year as per the schedule	Evaluation of the fulfilment of the objectives of the university and unit development plan and the functioning of the processes. Input for compiling the university's financial report. Input for university and unit-level improvement activities.
<i>Study programme internal evaluation reports</i>	Annually	Mapping of the functioning of studies and the study programme, strengths and development activities. Input for study programme development and improvement activities (see Chapter 3.7.).
<i>Results of stakeholder feedback surveys</i>	As per target groups and surveys, continuous	Evaluating the organisation and operation of processes, mapping the expectations of stakeholders. Input for improvement activities and regulatory development. Carried out in the course of staff career development discussion and evaluation of academic employees.
<i>Results of evaluation of academic employees</i>	According to the attestation schedule	Assessing employee performance and conformity with professional requirements, supporting the development of academic staff, and mapping career and training needs. Input for employee performance interviews, determining their training needs and job assignments, including workload management.
<i>Results of employee performance interviews</i>	In agreement with the respective head	Assessing the execution of the employee's goals and activities for the previous period, input for setting the goals and activities for the next period, including mapping the need for self-development. Basis for workload planning for academic staff. Input for staff development and unit improvement activities.
<i>Results of doctoral students' progress reviews</i>	Annually	Feedback on the doctoral students' performance and input for better planning of the doctoral students' studies and research, as well as for the development of doctoral studies.

Risk assessment and auditing are part of the university's quality assurance and internal evaluation system. Risk assessment can be an input for the organisation of internal audit, and the results of each can be used to develop processes and plan improvement activities. Risk assessment distinguishes between strategic risk, financial risk, operational risk, reporting risk, personnel risk, external risk, reputational risk, IT risk.

Systemic risk management activities were initiated in 2015, when a risk assessment was carried out on the issue of internationalisation, which is one of the overarching activity principles in the Development Plan. Based on the assessment results, several changes were made at the university, e.g., the bilingual information and work environment and staff language learning opportunities were improved, international continuing education opportunities were developed, more student mobility opportunities are planned in study programmes, the quality of counselling for research projects was enhanced and project management was systematised.

An assessment of the risks hindering the achievement of the goals of the university's Development Plan 2015–2020 was performed in 2017, with the results providing the basis for the internal auditor's work plan and improvement activities. The assessment considered a high lecturer workload as the greatest risk, potentially leading to a decrease in the quality of teaching and learning. A workload calculation analysis was performed on the basis of the results of the risk assessment in 2018, and the lecturer work hours per 1 ECTS were increased in 2019 as a result (to 20 hours from 18 hours). The results of the analysis were also an important input for the development of a new career model. For example, according to the new career model, lecturers' research tasks form a significantly higher proportion of their workload than previously: research formed at least 20% of the workload for lecturers and at least 25% for teaching track associate professors in the framework of the old model, while in the new model the share of research is 30–40% of the workload for lecturers and 10–40% of the agreed workload for senior lecturers. In addition, in 2020, the development process of a university-wide workload planning and accounting system was initiated. At the moment, the first stage of development (application of nominal divisions of study

programmes in SIS) is being completed and the second stage (ordering courses and teaching staff from other units) is underway. The third stage of the development, the launch of the workload planning and calculation system, is planned for the end of 2021.

In addition, an audit of invoices submitted through SIS took place in 2017, an audit of the work organisation of the marketing and communication area and TUKO took place in 2017–2018, an audit of the functions of the Academic Library took place in 2017–2018, and an audit assessed the efficiency of the processes and cooperation in the processing of projects of the academic units and support units of Tallinn University in 2018–2019. In addition to audits, the quality assurance and internal evaluation system includes university-wide analyses. For example, a control activity was carried out in 2017 and 2019 regarding transactions performed with related parties in order to assess the compliance of transactions with market conditions, relevant legislation and university requirements, and a personal data protection compliance assessment was carried out in 2019. Based on the results of the personal data protection analysis, challenges and improvement activities have been prioritised in order to better bring the personal data protection aspect of Tallinn University processes in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.

Until January 2020, the university employed an internal auditor who managed risk assessments and internal audits on the basis of a work plan approved by the Rectorate. As of 2019, the internal audits carried out had provided a very detailed overview of the quality of various university processes, and the analyses and evaluation results provided a substantial input for the improvement activities that are currently underway. In the future, internal audits will be organised as needed.

The university's external evaluations are an integral part of the university's quality assurance system (Table 10), providing feedback on the compliance of the university's operations and process management with relevant legislation and the goals of the university and/or activities. The results and recommendations of external evaluations provide the basis for the university's development planning and improvement activities.

Table 10. University external evaluations

External evaluation	Frequency	Use of results
<i>Results of the university's institutional accreditation</i>	According to the institutional accreditation schedule (at least once in 7 years)	Evaluation of the functioning and purposeful management of processes and compliance with legislation. Input for strategic goal trends and improvement activities.
<i>Results of external study programme evaluations*</i>	According to the performance of external evaluations	Assessment of the study process and its compliance with legislation, standards and developments. Input for the improvement of the study process and organisation as well as the development of study programmes.
<i>Results of thematic evaluation in the field of higher education (see Chapter 3.5)</i>	According to the performance of external evaluations	Situation mapping and comparison with other higher education institutions according to the evaluation topic. Input for the university process development and improvement activities.
<i>Results of regular scientific evaluation (see Chapter 3.11)</i>	According to the performance of evaluations	Compliance of university RDC processes and/or certain fields of science with relevant legislation. Input for improvement activities in RDC and doctoral studies.
<i>Results of targeted scientific evaluation (see Chapter 3.11)</i>	According to the performance of evaluations	Compliance of university RDC processes and/or certain fields of science with relevant legislation. Input for improvement activities in RDC and doctoral studies.
<i>Other external evaluation reports, e.g., project audits, etc. (see below)</i>	According to the performance of external evaluations	Analysis of the relevant field as per the audited topic, in some cases a comparison with other universities. Input for the university process development and improvement activities.

* Until September 2019, the external evaluation system also included a separate external evaluation based on study programme groups, which is now part of the institutional accreditation process.

The results of the external evaluation of the field of higher education and the results of the evaluations of R&D activities are available on the university's website.

In addition to external evaluations of university management, higher education and research (Table 10), continuous and regular external quality monitoring is performed through audits of financial reporting and accounts, project- and programme-based reporting to the respective donors and participation in audits carried out by the State Audit Office (e.g., higher education funding audit in 2017, planning and implementation of major projects in the public sector in 2019, and availability of educational support services in 2020).

The implementation of quality management principles and practices is supported by the structure of the university, which has been designed with a view to the successful execution of the university's goals and the smooth implementation of processes. In 2015, the university underwent a structural reform (see Ch.1.2.). The impact and results of the structural reform were evaluated in 2017, including assessing the achievement of the goals of the reorganisation of the academic structure and defining the main challenges facing the

university. The evaluation indicated that the goals have largely been achieved (e.g., the share of RDC funding in university revenues has increased, duplication of teaching has been reduced, the share of MA and international studies has increased, the number of students per academic staff has decreased, support activities have been optimised, economic sustainability of units has improved). Some targets that were not yet fully met at the time of the analysis have now been achieved, including an increase in the basic salary (see Ch.3.2.2.). By the time of the analysis, an increase in the funding for study activities per student had been achieved in certain units, but had not been achieved to the desired extent in the university as a whole (1722 euros in 2017 and 1861 euros in 2019 (both as of 31.12)).

The most significant challenges identified provide the basis for planning improvement activities. For example, the roles of staff responsible for support processes in academic units (heads of studies, administrative heads, research coordinators, etc.) have been streamlined and harmonised, networks have been set up to support a culture of mutual learning and sharing of best practices, RDC support processes and marketing and

communication management have been streamlined. These analyses indicate that the work and management processes are not uniformly well developed across units and study areas, which suggests a need for future improvement measures towards effective support processes and the effective functioning of study areas. Options for the redesign of study areas will be planned in the process of preparing the next development plan.

The Rectorate considers the current quality assurance system to be well-functioning. Process improvement takes into account best practices and mutual learning

takes place both internally and with external partners. The employees of the university belong to various national and international networks, advisory and decision-making bodies and professional associations, which are taken into account in the workload calculation and evaluation of the academic staff members. You can read more about the mutual learning culture among the members of academic staff in the chapter on academic staff (see [Ch. 3.6.](#)); more information about administrative and support staff participating in networks can be found in [Ch. 1.4.](#)

STRENGTHS

- The university has a functioning internal evaluation system; the principles of quality management are integrated into key processes.
- The members of the university are involved in development planning and management decisions.
- The parties involved in quality management are familiar with their roles and take responsibility for quality assurance.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Improving the risk management system, including ensuring the needs-based organisation of internal audits, for identifying critical problem areas that hinder development and planning improvement activities.
- Improved integration of various information and data management systems for enhancing management effectiveness.

3.4

ACADEMIC ETHICS

3.4.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS OF ACADEMIC ETHICS AT TALLINN UNIVERSITY

The activities of Tallinn University are grounded in the European value space. In 2009, the Rector of the university signed the Magna Charta Universitatum (EST), which has become one of the most important basic documents shaping the principles and values of universities. Based on the Magna Charta, the Tallinn University Academic Charter (2012) formulates the principles of our university's education philosophy and the basic values of our academic culture: academic freedom and openness, quality, professionalism and unity. The university develops society as a whole and understands its role as a shaper of attitudes and values and a developer of a knowledge-based society.

As a research-based university, TLU honours the principles agreed upon in the Estonian and European academic codes of ethics (incl. ALLEA) and the university's representatives participate in networks driving ethical development activities (ENAI, ENERI). An important development is the establishment of the Estonian Code of Conduct for Research Integrity Agreement (2017), which TLU helped to design and which was signed by 20 Estonian research and development institutions, ETAg and MER. The university undertook an obligation to more systematically support the observance and promotion of good research practice among the members of the university on the basis of shared basic values. The final report of the 2020 study "Creation of a National System for Monitoring and Supporting Research Ethics in Estonia" (EST) published by the Estonian Research Council provides important input for further ethics-related development activities at Tallinn University.

In order to systematically develop and implement academic integrity at the university, the Rector formed the TLU Ethics Working Group in 2019 with the following goals:

- 1) mapping the areas of the university's activities in which ethical issues or risks arise (incl. research ethics, unequal or unethical treatment, disputes, academic fraud);
- 2) analysing current practices;
- 3) assessing development needs in the field with consideration to national and European regulations and agreements;
- 4) developing proposals for optimal solutions, taking into account the resources of the university.

One of the outcomes of the working group is the vision document titled "Support System for the Implementation of Academic Integrity at TLU" (EST), which was approved by the university Senate in December 2020. It describes the main components of the TLU academic integrity support system and provides a basis for the systematic implementation of the support system at the university. The document systematically presents references to the university's regulations that set out the procedures and processes for good academic practice in force at the university.

In parallel, the Tallinn University Agreement on Academic Integrity is being finalised, which, in addition to good research practice, also addresses the principles of good practice in the areas of learning, teaching, management and other academic activities, and thus creates a comprehensive framework for interpreting different aspects of good academic practice. The good practice agreement is complemented by various guidance materials and other tools to support the practical implementation of good practice.

3.4.2 GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE AND RESEARCH ETHICS

Advice on academic integrity and research ethics is offered to the members of the university by the staff of the Research Administration Office as well as the research coordinators and assistants of the Schools, and relevant training is provided. Positions of research ethics advisers are planned to be created in four major research areas, forming a university-level network of research ethics advisors.

In order to promote research and implement good practices, the Ethics Committee of Tallinn University was established in 2019, tasked with evaluating the data protection and ethical aspects of research and creative projects carried out at the university, as well as providing ethical evaluations of academic practices. The establishment, competence and organisation of the committee are regulated by the Statute of the Ethics Committee of Tallinn University (EST), and the submission of applications and the approval process

are regulated by the Ethics Committee's procedure for applications for research evaluation. If processing a submitted application is not within the competence of the Ethics Committee of Tallinn University, the researchers are referred to the Human Research Ethics Committee of the National Institute for Health Development (EST), the Estonian Bioethics and Human Research Council or the Data Protection Inspectorate.

A Research Administration Office lawyer provides advice on matters related to intellectual property, and the Rules on the legal protection of intellectual property at Tallinn University have been created. The data protection specialist and the Tallinn University Academic Library advise on the collection, management and storage of research data. When applying for state research grants, the ETAg guidelines (EST) are followed in ethical matters.

3.4.3 ACADEMIC ETHICS IN TEACHING

According to the Tallinn University Study Regulations, all members of the university are required to follow the values formulated in "Estonian Code of Conduct for Research Integrity", to be aware of their legal rights and to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the Higher Education Act, the university statutes, regulations in force at the university and their individual agreements with the university. According to the Statute of the Study Programme, study programme administrators are responsible for ensuring that study programmes include subjects that enable the students to develop academic writing skills. During the annual internal evaluation of study programmes, the administrators provide an overview of the observance of academic good practice and copyright protection in teaching and learning. The university has zero tolerance for any academic fraud. To prevent academic fraud, the university has created an atmosphere that supports learning and values academic honesty. A plagiarism working group active at the university in 2017–2019 suggested that all study programmes should include subjects involving academic writing each semester, thus also involving lecturers in related monitoring and feedbacking every semester.

In addition to top-down measures, the university values highly the involvement of students in ethical development activities and supports bottom-up

initiatives. Thus, the Good Learning Practice is authored by the students themselves (through the Board of the Student Union), students have researched plagiarism and ethics issues in the framework of their dissertations, and the teams of LIFE projects on good academic practice have always filled up (e.g., a project on research ethics and plagiarism (EST) in Autumn 2020, and a copyright-related project in 2019). Material on ethics and plagiarism was created for the university's website by students who participated in LIFE projects in 2019, a compass of research ethics will be created in autumn 2020 and a plagiarism survey will be conducted among students. A course on research ethics for doctoral students has been developed and implemented in the framework of the doctoral school. Relevant training is also offered to doctoral thesis supervisors.

The university has the right to use a plagiarism detection system (Kratt in 2012–2020, Urkund in 2017–...) to check the written works created by students during courses, and the verification of all final theses has been obligatory since 2015. Information on the protection of personal data and copyright related to the use of the Urkund system is published on the university's website. An indicative dissertation defence scheme has been prepared for administrator use; a content page on ethics and plagiarism with instructions and additional materials is located on the university's intranet for supporting the

lecturers (includes academic discussion as a possible tool to identify the authorship of the work, which is important for identifying the most common type of plagiarism). University-level and academic unit-based trainings on plagiarism, Urkund and research ethics are regularly offered, along with opportunities to participate in discussions (experience café, events organised by the administrators' network). The requirements for referencing and formatting student work, including the severity levels of plagiarism in each respective field, are established by the council of each academic unit. The process of handling contestation of plagiarism-related matters has briefly been described in [Chapter 3.9](#).

Tallinn University collects and analyses statistics related to plagiarism detection, which are summarised in Table 11 below.

The low incidence of plagiarism cases identified in theses indicates the under-reporting of cases for various reasons. The topic is considered highly relevant and improvement activities are being carried out: 1) the principles of central collection of statistics will be updated (in addition to theses, we plan to start collecting information on plagiarism detected in course assignments to identify and correct undesirable behavioural patterns of students at an early stage; collecting data from academic units into a single database, e.g., SIS); 2) Urkund usage statistics are monitored; 3) regular training of lecturers on up-to-date information about plagiarism is carried out; 4) students are being involved in prevention and information activities.

3.4.4 EQUAL TREATMENT OF MEMBERS

Employees can now turn to their immediate supervisor, the head of unit, the Personnel Office or the Ethics Committee for advice on good academic practice or for dealing with suspected violations (including discrimination). Students have the opportunity to contest decisions and actions involving the suspicion of unequal treatment in accordance with the procedure established in the Study Regulations (§30). For example, in the academic year of 2019/2020, 9 appeals related to unequal treatment were filed by students (to directors and the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs), and a violation was identified in one case (a student was allowed to retake an entrance exam). Matters unrelated to contesting a decision or action (e.g., student relations) can be addressed to the staff of the academic unit (study counsellor, head of studies, director) or the Academic

Affairs Office for advice or to handle a suspected violation.

The creation of the position of a Commissioner for Equal Treatment in early 2021 has been agreed in the vision approved in the Tallinn University Academic Integrity Support System in order to further improve the promotion of equal treatment, including promotion of gender equality and the prevention of related violations. The Commissioner will also advise researchers, where necessary, on taking into account the aspect of gender and other principles of equal treatment in research projects.

Processing members' complaints, including the development of a system for the collection of statistics on complaints, has also been part of the activities of the

Table 11. Statistics related to plagiarism detection at TLU in the academic years of 2015/16–2019/20

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Number of graduates	1910	1876	1800	1557	1620
Number of cases of plagiarism detected during the defence of theses	6	7	15	5*	6
Number of lecturers using Urkund (since 2017)**	N/A	N/A	104	317	363
Number of written papers checked with Urkund**	N/A	N/A	845	4,452	5,953

*including 2 cases in which the press identified plagiarism in the theses of politicians retroactively after their graduation from TLU (cases from 2002 and 2016 respectively).

**data cannot be provided as KRATT does not release usage statistics.

TLU working group for ethics and of the preparation of a framework document on the implementation of good academic practice. According to the proposal, the Commissioner for Equal Treatment will also deal with disputes arising from suspicions of unequal treatment. Students will also be able to involve the Commissioner if the case cannot be dealt with on the basis of TLU Study Regulations.

The Ethics Committee is also invested with the competence to resolve disputes. The chairperson of the Ethics Committee and the Commissioner for Equal Treatment may propose to the Rector the establishment of committees to handle specific cases. Any suspicion or complaint of a breach of good academic practice is handled on the basis of the following principles: impartiality, fairness, transparency, protection of participants and timeliness.

STRENGTHS

- Active participation of TLU employees in national-level working groups and international networks dealing with ethical issues.
- The university conducts systematic development work in the field of academic ethics and students are involved in the design and implementation of good academic practice.
- Membership awareness of matters related to ethics has increased.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Continuing the collaborative development process for achieving agreements on academic integrity, which cover all the important areas of activity of the university.
- Implementation of a support system for academic integrity approved by the Senate, e.g., a common procedure for handling complaints and infringement cases, creation of the position of a Commissioner for Equal Treatment.
- Planning of various improvement activities for preventing cases of plagiarism among students, e.g., modernisation of the statistics collection system and involvement of students in prevention and information activities.

3.5

INTERNATIONALISATION

Internationalisation is one of the principles of activity defined in Tallinn University Development Plan (2015–2020; 2020–2022) with the aim of creating internationally competitive research community and carrying out research projects in international cooperation, as well as incorporating English language based studies into study activities, increasing the mobility of students and international experience of staff and establishing international reputation. The results are measured by using key indicators. The importance of internationalisation is also emphasised in TLU University Research and Development Strategy 2019–2021.

In addition, goals related to internationalisation are taken into consideration when determining allocations for specific purposes of the activity support, agreed upon between the Rector and the academic unit for the financial year. The effectiveness of internationalisation and the achievement of its goals are analysed in the Annual report and in activity reports of academic units.

The years 2015–2020 were a period of rapid growth and development for internationalisation at the university. It has been supported by the national financing model (EST)¹⁹; EU mobility programmes, where the funding to TLU has increased by approximately 35% over the last five years (Table 12); and by higher education programmes of several countries (scholarships, cooperation projects etc.). The university also provides support from the internationalisation fund and scholarship fund to further encourage student and staff mobility and international cooperation.

Starting from 2015, a more strategic approach to international cooperation has been applied, as a result of which the network of TLU partners now includes some

highly rated international universities (the number of bilateral agreements is approx. 40), enabling students and staff to participate in mobilities and apply for scholarships worldwide. TLU is the member of various international networks, which helps to enhance the development of cooperation in the fields of education and research. When choosing new partners, attention is put on cooperation that would involve several focus fields and different areas of activity to support the principle of interdisciplinarity, which is defined in the Development Plan. Academic units are also members of international specialised networks where, in addition to international cooperation, focus is on the development of studies, improvement of the quality of education and research and on joint projects. Within the period of 2015–2020, visibility at the international scene has improved significantly. TLU now features among the world's best universities in international university rankings.

The importance of gaining international learning experience (see Chapter 3.7.) has been enhanced through TLU Statutes of Study Programme since 2016. In 2018/2019, TLU participated in a national thematic evaluation Teaching and Learning of International Students in Estonian HEIs. Based on the results of the evaluation and taking into consideration the changes in

¹⁹ Components of performance funding: the proportion of international students and number of mobilities.

Table 12. EU funding measures directly supporting student and staff mobility (euros)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Erasmus+ KA103	562250	513250	625750	593000	1013800	578700
Erasmus+ KA107	30160	34626	133712	207626	270991	215388
TOTAL	592410	547876	759462	800626	1284791	794088

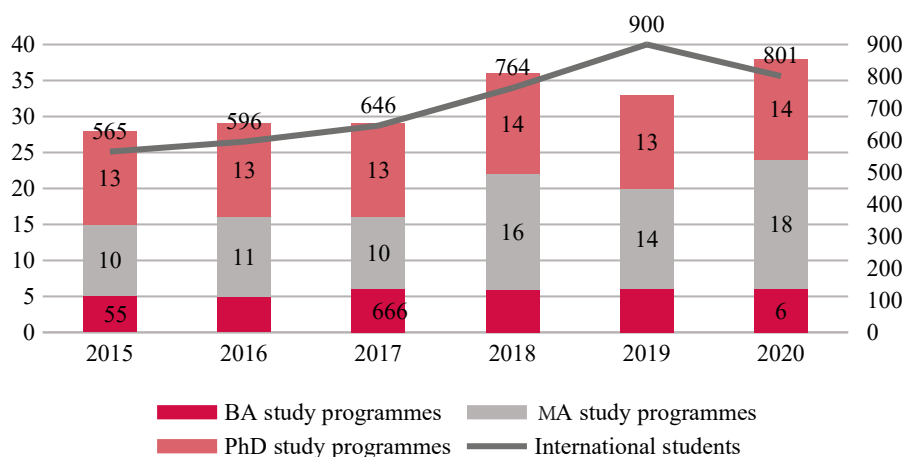


Figure 6. Number of TLU study programmes where the language of instruction is not Estonian and the number of international students in 2015–2020 (as of 01.11.2020)

national policy (e.g. draft legislation of 2020 amending Aliens Act and other acts (EST)), TLU has started to lay more emphasis on maintaining internationality of the area of studies and on the improvement of quality. In 2019, the development of TLU Strategy of International

Learning was initiated; however, changes in national policy and SARS-CoV-2 pandemic have hindered the process. The Strategy is expected to be approved at the beginning of 2021.

3.5.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE BASED STUDY PROGRAMMES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

One of the goals of the Development Plan is to have at least one international study programme per each focus field. The goal has been achieved: admission was opened on 38 English language based study programmes in Academic Year 2020/2021 (Figure 6, all Doctoral study programmes are bilingual), including 5 joint MA study programmes with other universities²⁰. Table 13 presents by academic unit the number of study programmes where the language of instruction is not Estonian during admission for Academic Year 2020/2021. International study programmes form approximately 30% of all TLU study programmes – 10% more than in 2015 (21.4%).

The number of international students has increased together with the number of study programmes (Figure 6), as has the proportion of international students in the TLU student body (2020 – 11%; 2015 – 7.3%), which was set as a strategic goal in the present and previous Development Plan. The decrease in the number of students in 2020 is the result of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic since entry to the country was restricted. In addition,

studies were not started on two study programmes where the language of instruction is not Estonian.

The number of graduates from English language based study programmes and their proportion in the total number of graduates has seen a steady increase during the last four years (Table 14). It follows the overall tendency in Estonia.²¹ Even though the proportion of international students graduating within the nominal period of studies is remarkably higher than the university's average (49.6% in 2020), it still requires on-going attention.

One of the key indicators of internationalisation is the satisfaction with the quality of English language based studies which has been relatively high throughout the years: according to TLU feedback the level of satisfaction is 4.13–4.21 (2017–2019) on a 5-point scale and according to International Student Barometer of 2019, 85.5% of the students who answered the questionnaire were satisfied with their studies.

²⁰ *Interaction design, KinoEyes, Literature, Visual Culture and Film Studies, Adult education in Social Change, Cinematographer (Viewfinder)*

²¹ T. Kreegipuu. *Välisüliõpilased Eesti kõrghariduses, Haridus- ja teadusministeerium (EST)*, p 6.

Table 13. Number of English language based study programmes by academic unit in Academic Year 2020/2021 (as of 01.09.2020)

	School of Natural Sciences and Health	School of Governance, Law and Society	School of Digital Technologies	School of Humanities	School of Educational Sciences	Baltic Film, Media and Arts School
BA	-	3	-	1	-	2
MA	1	3	4	3	2	5
PhD	4	4	1	3	1	1
<i>incl. joint study programmes</i>	-	-	1	1	1	2

Table 14. Number and proportion of graduates from English language based study programmes in 2016-2020, as of 01.11.2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of graduates	115	144	169	177	229
Proportion of international students in the total number of graduates	6.1%	8.0%	10.9%	10.9%	16.0%
Proportion of international students graduating within the nominal period studies in the number of students who have been matriculated.	57.0%	52.0%	64.1%	62.5%	62.2%

Table 15. Number of TLU students who participated in studies abroad and number of international exchange students in 2016-2020 (as of 01.11.2020)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
No. of students who participated in studies abroad	138	175	185	211	131
<i>incl. BA and professional higher education</i>	87	95	99	97	62
<i>incl. MA and integrated studies</i>	41	60	73	38	44
<i>incl. Doctoral students</i>	10	20	13	76	25
<i>incl. no of TLU students who participated in traineeship abroad</i>	32	48	68	27	16
No. of international exchange students	357	345	391	343	341

Table 16. TLU international staff (number of people) (as of 01.05.2020)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
International academic staff (contractual)	35	39	32	32	34
International researchers (contractual)	11	16	18	28	32
Number of international members of staff (other contractual forms)	32	53	81	96	101

Table 17. Mobility of academic staff (as of 01.05.2020)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Incoming academic staff	33	40	33	51	30
Outgoing academic staff	147	178	219	249	134

3.5.2 INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY OF STUDENTS

Students are offered a variety of possibilities to participate in studies abroad ([Partnersmap](#)) and information is made available at different levels (internationalisation coordinators at academic units, Academic Affairs Office). Despite continuous efforts made to introduce the possibilities of studies abroad and various support measures (the university offers additional needs-based support from the internationalisation fund and scholarship fund to students who wish to go on studies abroad), increasing the proportion of students who have participated in mobility is one of the biggest challenges of internationalisation and the situation is still not satisfactory (Table 15). The increase in the international mobility of Doctoral students is mostly the result of correction of data collection. Sudden drop in 2020 was caused by SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, which led to many students cancelling their mobility.

TLU feedback shows that 90% of the respondents are aware of the possibilities of studies abroad, but only 10% of the respondents have applied for studies abroad. The main reason for not applying was the inability to combine studies abroad and daily life, i.e. working while studying. A national survey conducted among [alumni of higher education institutions](#) (EST) outlines that the main reasons for not going on studies abroad are related to financial expenditure, being away from friends and family and the lack of courses that would correspond to those of the student's study programme. A study conducted at TLU during Academic Year 2018/2019 revealed that in 92% of the cases all the courses passed abroad are taken into account in completing the TLU

study programme. Total recognition was not received only in cases where the course taken in the foreign university did not correspond entirely to the learning outcomes provided in the study programme (e.g. traineeship). However, such courses were still taken into account as part of a TLU course (i.e. the student was required to complete some of the learning outcomes at TLU). In addition, a few students had not asked for the recognition of their studies abroad at TLU. To be able to count studies abroad as much as possible towards the completion of the study programme, the process of creating and confirming the Learning Agreement and the procedure in [TLU Study Regulations](#) for transferring courses were changed. Furthermore, changes have been introduced to study programmes in order to incorporate studies abroad in a targeted manner – as of 01.11.2020, 11 BA study programmes and 6 MA study programmes include the so-called mobility windows²² and their creation continues.

The number of international exchange students has been stable within the last years. The goal for the coming years is to balance the number of incoming and outgoing students and increase the number of TLU students participating in traineeship abroad. The restrictions on mobility in 2020, growing environmental awareness and students' increasing interest in short-term mobilities have challenged the university to develop international learning experience, including internationalisation at home, virtual mobilities and short-term group mobilities.

²² Examples: Law, European Modern Languages and Cultures Self Evaluation Reports.

3.5.3 INTERNATIONAL STAFF AND STAFF MOBILITY

Internationally competitive research community and increasing the international experience of staff are among the goals established in the Development Plan. The number of international researchers and other contracted international members of staff, who also participate in studies, has increased considerably (Table 16). The large proportion of international staff is a strength also pointed out in the [worldwide university rankings](#) (QS World University Ranking 2019 and 2020). 18.7% of the supervisors of Doctoral theses defended during the period 2015-2020 have been from foreign universities; 12.1% of the supervisors of Doctoral theses not defended yet are working at foreign universities.

The university has created possibilities for international staff mobility and for professional development at foreign universities (increased funding in EU programmes, university's own resources²³). When applying for academic positions, candidates who have international experience are given preference, whereas the mobility requirement is included in the description of academic positions. Additionally, attention is drawn to the importance of professional development and international experience during career development interviews and some academic

²³ e.g. internationalisation fund; expanding the network of partners.

units²⁴ have introduced a system where participation in international mobility is a component taken into consideration when determining performance-based pay. The mobility numbers of incoming and outgoing staff have exhibited an upward trend (until the beginning of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic when all the planned mobilities had to be cancelled), thus giving an indication that the measures applied by the university to promote mobility among staff have been effective.

In 2019, the university started a series of internal trainings for all university staff. It is held approximately once a month and each session focuses on one country and its culture (all in all, 11 sessions tackling different cultures have taken place with 154 employees participating). This training does not only contribute to the improvement of cooperation among staff but also helps to understand international students and improve their learning experience. The university also regularly offers its staff English language courses at different

levels (566 employees participated in English-language courses during 2015-2020). Language learning groups are opened to suit the needs of employees; the last years have seen a growing interest in conversation courses or courses at a more advanced language level. Employee satisfaction surveys conducted annually among university staff indicate a growing satisfaction with the level of internationalisation at TLU (2018 – 4.84 points, 2020 – 5.10 points, on a 7-point scale). The university contributes actively to the development of English language information space – newsletters and notifications sent by the university are in Estonian and English. Events held at the university are usually in two languages, online events have synchronised translation to enable the participation of all university staff and students. Satisfaction surveys clearly indicate the increase in the satisfaction of international staff as regards the general management of the university, cooperation among different academic units, as well as the possibilities offered by the university. However, the uniform development of international activities at academic units and the strategic selection of partners continue to be a challenge.

²⁴ e.g. the School of Educational Sciences procedure for performance-based pay of research establishes that a mobility that lasts for two weeks or more is taken into consideration when calculating the points for performance-based pay.

STRENGTHS

- International study programmes in all focus fields and students' awareness of the possibilities of studies abroad;
- International staff and active use of mobility options by staff;
- Worldwide network of strong partners and extended possibilities for funding mobility.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Developing more appropriate measures for students (short-term mobility, blended mobility, virtual mobility etc.) to support mobility;
- Constant analysis of how inter-institutional agreements are fulfilled to balance the numbers of inbound and outbound mobility;
- Making agreements to determine strategic development trends for internationalisation at academic units with the aim to ensure uniform level of quality of internationalisation at academic units.

3.6

ACADEMIC STAFF

3.6.1 CAREER MODEL, RECRUITMENT AND TASKS OF ACADEMIC STAFF

On 01.09.2019, the updated Higher Education Act entered into force, one of the aims of which was to support the modernisation of career models in higher education institutions and research institutions in order to motivate young people to choose the profession of a researcher. A university-wide working group was formed during the preparation of the amendments to the act in order to develop a concept of a new career model appropriate for TLU. To this end, the predominant career model, established in the 1990s across all universities, was analysed and international practice was examined. Several public and Senate discussions were held. The new model was introduced with the Employment Relations Rules on 01.09.2019. Current employees will be transferred to the positions laid out in the new career model by means of evaluation by 31.08.2024 (the description of the evaluation procedure is presented below).

The basic part of the new academic career model is formed of the career paths of a lecturer and researcher, which are compatible with each other. Starting an academic career from the position of a junior research fellow (as of 30.09.2020, 39 employees have been hired as junior research fellows on the basis of the new career model), the position of lecturer can be assumed after the doctoral degree defence. The lecturer career level balances the proportions of teaching and research, and mobility to the higher level of either the lecturer's or researcher's career path or a transfer to the tenure path is expected. In order to ensure the goals laid out in the TLU Development Plan and high academic capacity in the university's focus fields, the career model is constructed around a tenure system for professors with permanent job security, financed from the Tenure Fund. Professorship positions are formed and liquidated by the Senate. The transition period to the new career model is expected to involve filling 55 tenure system positions,

of which 26 positions can be filled by the promotion of current professors through evaluation, and 29 will be filled through a public competition. As of 01.01.2021, 4 employees have moved to the position of tenure system professor through evaluation and 8 tenured professor positions have been filled through public competitions; in autumn 2020, 5 more professors received positive evaluations and may become tenure system professors in 2021 after the approval of the respective decision by the Senate. Organising public competitions creates an opportunity for successful young researchers from Estonia and abroad to enter the system, supporting, among other things, the goals of the university's Development Plan to increase the number of academic staff, increase the proportion of foreign academic staff and improve the ratio of academic staff to students. As of 30.09.2020, about 40% of the academic staff have been transferred to the positions following the the new career model.

Tallinn University Employment Relations Rules regulate the employment relationships of academic staff in their entirety: recruitment, duties, workload, job requirements, evaluation, sabbatical leave, conferral of emeritus status, etc.

Academic staff positions are generally filled by election through a public competition. Academic positions may be filled without public competition by appointment or career path mobility (professor or lecturer). If the position does not require proficiency in the Estonian language, the competition will be announced internationally in order to contribute to the university's goal of increasing the share of foreign academic staff and creating an increasingly international work, research and study environment. The principles of the targeted search for finding international employees have also been agreed on. The proportion of foreign academic staff, which is a key indicator of the university, has

Table 18. Competition for academic positions in 2015–2019

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Posts announced</i>	95	146	115	86	66
<i>Number of candidates (number of applicants)</i>	127	218	175	141	124
<i>Number of candidates admitted to the competition</i>	103	171	131	101	96
<i>Average combined competition</i>	1.08	1.17	1.14	1.17	1.45

increased as expected (9% in 2015, 13.11% in 2019). We forecast a future increase primarily through research employees, and we expect tenured professors to acquire Estonian, because we consider it important to ensure the provision of high-quality higher education in Estonian. Table 18 presents the competition for academic positions in 2015–2019. The number of competitions has decreased, as academic staff have had predominantly open-ended employment contracts since 2015 (the previous maximum length of the employment contract was 5 years, to be followed by the re-election process). The average number of candidates for the post has increased slightly due to the increase in the number of international competitions. However, finding more than 1–2 suitable candidates remains a challenge.

The number and distribution of academic staff between positions is presented in the introduction (see Ch.1.7.2.). The share of academic staff with a doctoral degree of all academic staff has increased over the years (49% in 2015, 59% in 2019); more detailed data is available on the [university's website](#). The new career model requires a doctoral degree at and above the lecturer and research fellow career level (previously at and above the position of associate professor). Therefore, we forecast a further increase in the share of academic staff with doctoral degrees through the full implementation of the new career model.

In addition to regular academic staff, outstanding creative people or practitioners are invited to carry out study work or research for up to 5 years as visiting employees (2015: 7 employees; 2019: 28 employees). Like regular staff, visiting staff contribute to the achievement of study programme objectives and expected learning outcomes or to the implementation of unit projects and service agreements. In order to perform specific short-term tasks (e.g., teaching a course, co-supervision, reviewing), practitioners (incl. employers and alumni)

are involved in educational activities as service providers. This ensures a close connection between study programmes and the reality of employment and practice. In 2019, 448 employees participated in teaching under the abovementioned terms, which is in the same order of magnitude as in previous years.

The number of students per academic employee has decreased over the years: in 2020, there were 17.3 students per academic employee (FTE), 17.5 in 2019, 17.8 in 2018 19.1 in 2017, and 19.9 in 2016. The aim is to further reduce the ratio in order to better support learners and allow for a more individual approach. We expect a change in the ratio due to the increase in the number of academic staff, especially in the near future due to the addition of junior lecturers and research fellows.

A general description of the duties of academic staff and the workload of positions are set out in the [annexes of the Employment Relations Rules](#). Academic work includes teaching, RDC activities, and social and institutional activities. The distribution of workload between work areas has been established as a range that promotes the consideration of personal differences (e.g., differences in the fields and/or study methods, ability/opportunity to participate in project-based R&D activities, etc.). The calculation of workload is regulated by the [Bases for the calculation of the workload of academic staff](#). The specific workload and tasks are agreed between the employee and the head of unit. In order to support cooperation among members of academic staff and interdisciplinarity, joint teaching (for example [LIFE](#), see [Chapter 3.8.](#)), supervision (incl. co-supervision) and reviewing in other academic units are encouraged. Work carried out in other units is included in the overall workload of the employee, and the academic unit can apply for additional funding from the co-operation fund for the implementation of such activities.

3.6.2 ACADEMIC STAFF' SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND WORK EVALUATION

Part of Tallinn University's personnel development system is the development of academic staff, which is based on the model for supporting the professional development of academics. The implementation of the elements of the learning culture included in the model lies within the responsibility of various university units, whose cooperation is coordinated through the employee professional development support network (see Ch. 3.2.2.). Continuous development of teaching skills remains important to ensure the skills necessary to create a supportive learning environment.

Primary teaching and supervising skills can be acquired by doctoral students within the course "Learning and teaching in higher education". The Centre for Innovation in Education (hereinafter HIK) offers training for novice teaching employees. Support for the teaching and mentoring skills of experienced staff is provided by the academic units, HIK, the e-learning centre of the Academic Affairs Office and LIFE coordinators. Self-development in general competencies is organised by the Personnel Office. An overview of university-wide activities is presented in Table 19.

In addition to training, the motivation of academic staff and the development of the university's learning and teaching culture are supported through various initiatives. Those include discussions related to learning and RDC activities in experience cafés (EST), self-reflection on learning and teaching in peer review of teaching (EST), research on academic staff's learning and teaching in networks (teaching employees' TeadusELU), organisation of seminars on quality (e.g., heads of studies of academic units have pointed out a lack of a single mentoring system for lecturers and, in

some cases, excessive teaching workloads, as issues in need of improvement), and studies are carried out on learning and teaching (e.g., a study conducted in 2019 (EST)). The latter has led to, for example, the creation of the Research-Based Learning Portfolio material (EST) to support evaluation, and the idea of launching a university-wide mentoring system to support new teaching employees, which staff have found necessary. Co-operation with Estonian and foreign higher education institutions is also carried out in the field of diversification and mutual improvement of the professional development opportunities of members of academic staff.

Professional self-development planning is based on employees' choices, but recommendations are also given by their immediate superiors. Employees belong to professional networks and participate in continuing education through them. Academic employees are entitled to use a sabbatical semester for the purpose of professional self-development. A period of paid professional self-development is also provided after the end of academic managers' terms of office, provided that academic work is continued. The number of academic staff who have taken sabbatical leave is not very large, remaining in the range of 10–19 people per year in 2015–2019. The low uptake has not been studied separately, but one of the reasons may be the difficulty of finding a teaching substitute. Expenses related to professional development are covered by the academic unit from a dedicated budget.

The evaluation of the work of academic employees along with development planning are carried out in the development interview conducted between the

Table 19. Participation of lecturers in self-development by areas of training

Area of training	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Teaching skills	53	67	19	39	172
Supervising skills	20			111	79
Sharing best practices	1		3	6	28
Language learning and cultural knowledge	110	127	73	52	38
General employment-related competencies	52	157	130	74	107
Digital skills	127	200	114	107	93
Research, including ethics and communication				5	42

employee and their superior (the results of which can be stored on the Intranet) and through the evaluation, the conditions and procedure of which are regulated by the Employment Relations Rules. However, the practice of conducting development interviews within units needs attention and harmonisation to ensure that the interviews take place throughout the university and provide an opportunity for substantive feedback on all areas of work. Evaluation of employees with an employment contract of indefinite duration usually takes place after every five years of employment. The evaluation is carried out by the evaluation committee, which, for teaching employees, also includes a student. The employee submits a self-analysis for the purpose of the evaluation. In assessing the employee's work results and conformity with job requirements, the evaluation committee shall rely on the duties, the job requirements and the expected results of the position, as well as student feedback, assessment of the employee's work results from the employee's immediate superior, the results of the previous evaluation, etc.

The implementation of the new career model also brought along changes in the existing evaluation system. During the transition period between the career models, all members of academic staff with the employment contract of an indefinite duration will be transferred to positions according to the new career model through evaluation. The preparation for the evaluation and the transition to the new career model is supported by a web application (EST) created by the university, which facilitates getting acquainted with the new criteria and allows to conduct a self-assessment with regard to

meeting the new job requirements. In addition to self-assessment, teaching employees are expected to submit an academic teaching portfolio (EST) for evaluation, which contains an overview and analysis of their own teaching philosophy, activities and development. The work experience and performance of employees who have received a positive evaluation result is assessed according to the criteria of the career model in order to be able to offer the employee a position in the context of the new model. During the evaluations, feedback is collected from both the conductors and the subjects of the evaluation on the smoothness and efficiency of the process in order to adapt it as necessary and to support the participants.

At the end of each semester, the university collects feedback from students in SIS. In 2017–2019, more than 75% of the students were satisfied with the lecturers' ability to create a supportive learning environment and 65% of the respondents were satisfied with their course as a whole. During the same period, lower ratings were received by statements related to the mapping of students' prior knowledge, the suitability of teaching methods and the clarification of the requirements for passing the course. The teaching employees' appreciation of the topic and teaching, respect for learners, the coherence of learning outcomes and course content, and the relevance of the study material received high evaluations. Feedback results are discussed in the teaching employees' development interviews and evaluated during the evaluation process. They also serve as an input in the employees' self-development planning.

STRENGTHS

- A new academic career model has been created and the transition process has been mapped out.
- A model for supporting the professional development of academic staff has been created, and versatile development support opportunities are offered.
- The share of foreign academic staff has increased, which supports the development of an international work, research and study environment.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Ensuring a more systematic and consistent conduct of development interviews in units.
- Establishment of a mentoring system for new teaching employees.

3.7

STUDY PROGRAMMES

3.7.1 SHORT DESCRIPTION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES AND THE PRINCIPLES OF STUDY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

TLU aims at having and developing future-orientated study programmes which are based on the focus fields of the university, foster the development of the society and include a strong interdisciplinarity component. The aim of study programme development is to contribute to shaping attitudes which value entrepreneurship and active, open, caring and sustainable ways of thinking.

The university has the right to conduct studies in 18 study programme groups: Arts, Humanities, Informatics and Information Technology, Languages and Cultures, Personal Services, Social Science, Social Services, Teacher Training and Educational sciences, Business and Administration, Environmental Protection, Healthcare, Journalism and Information, Law, Life Sciences, Performing Arts, Physical Sciences, Psychology, Sports. TLU study programmes have a similar structure within the same level of studies, including the modules of university-wide courses, subject-specific courses, elective courses and the final thesis (scheme in annex, based on Statute of Study programme). Joint study programmes are an exception, as well as teacher education. University study programmes consist of coherent modules. The compliance of learning outcomes with national qualifications framework is assessed when creating study programmes or making changes to them. The module of BA and MA university-wide courses includes the subject of interdisciplinary projects called LIFE (6 ECTS, see Ch.3.8.); the module of subject-specific courses includes language courses and courses in a foreign language and traineeship (at least 6 ECTS); the module of elective courses includes mobility windows (see Ch.3.5.2.), including traineeship abroad (9 ECTS). To guarantee flexibility and offer a variety of possibilities to choose from, the subject-specific modules of the first and second level of studies include up to 20% of options of the total volume of the study programme and the modules of open elective courses include 5-15% of options of the total volume of the study programme. Out of the total volume

of 240 ECTS of Doctoral study programmes, the courses constitute 60 ECTS, the student can select the courses depending on the research needs. All study programmes can be found in SIS and are published on the university webpage.

In the area of education where a professional standard exists it is possible to graduate from the university by taking a vocational exam. Members of academic staff belong to teams that compile professional standards and are in assessment committees of vocational exams, providing valuable input into the development of study programmes. University-wide development activities related to studies are planned and prepared by work groups that generally include representatives of all academic units and the Student Union (for example, the vision "I Change the Way of Learning," Strategy of Digital Learning, topics related to plagiarism and ethics, Strategy of International Learning, etc.).

Study programme development at the university is based on legislation regulating the field of higher education; forecasts of the future and development of the society, TLU Development Plans 2015-2020 and 2020-22; administrative contracts concluded with The Ministry of Education and Research for the periods of 2015–18 and 2019–21; professional standards and recommendations from professional associations and networks, as well as on feedback from students, alumni, staff and recommendations received during quality assessment.

The Principles of Study Programme Development 2016+ (hereinafter PSPD 2016+) were compiled by the university in 2015, with its objectives being *research-based* development and transition to modern, *learner-centred* approach to studies. All TLU study programmes must support students in 1) gaining professional knowledge while building on the most recent research trends and labour market needs; 2) the development of general competences to guarantee that the competences of a graduating student correspond to the learning

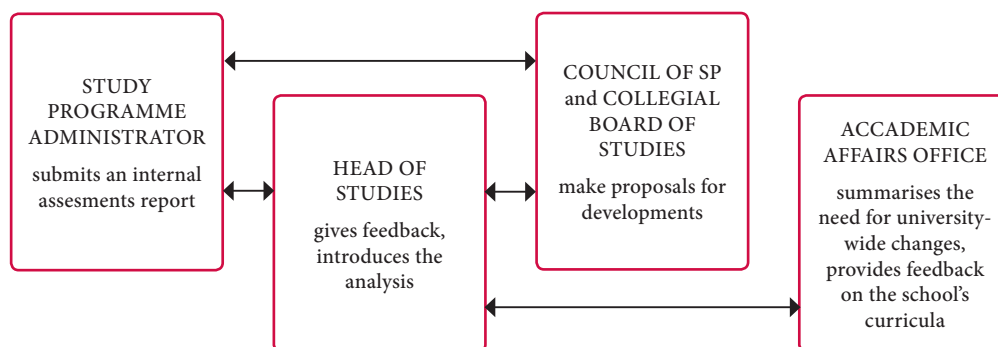


Figure 7. Scheme of annual internal evaluation

outcomes established in the Higher Education Standard; 3) gaining interdisciplinary learning experience; 4) gaining international learning experience; 5) acquisition of a foreign language; 6) the development of digital skills.

The present Statute of Study Programme (hereinafter SSP) relies on the principles of PSDP 2016+. SSP regulates the structure, the system of developing, changing and closing study programmes and their internal evaluation, and establishes the roles and responsibilities in study programme development (study programme administrators, heads of study areas, heads of studies, collegial boards of studies, councils of study programmes). In order to open a new study programme, academic units must conduct systematic analysis and prove that the study programme is in accordance with the development needs of the area, the goals of the university and of the academic unit and that it does not duplicate already existing study programmes in the region. Collegial boards of studies / councils of study programmes monitor the relevance of study programmes with the labour market. The internal evaluation of study programmes (see Figure 7) is carried out annually – the study programme administrator analyses main figures related to the study programme, feedback provided by students, alumni and academic staff, the fulfilment of goals established in the Development Plan, sustainability of the study programme and needs for changes arising

from the developments taking place in the field/area. The collegial board of studies / council of study programmes analyses self-assessment reports and provides feedback. Internal evaluation reports are submitted in writing and can be accessed in the document management system WebDesktop.

In addition to the analysis carried out by the study programme administrator, once every three years the head of the study area evaluates the study programme, mainly focussing on topics related to professionalism of academic staff and final theses. In case of fundamental changes to be introduced to the study programme, applications that have been approved by the council of the study programme / collegial board of studies are analysed by Academic Affairs Office and the Senate makes a decision thereafter.

Financial sustainability is ensured by determining the minimal number of student places for each study programme, being 22 for BA study programmes and 12 for MA study programmes. A study group is opened when at least half of the student places have been filled. An exception is given to study programmes where the demand based on societal needs is smaller and studies are expensive (e.g. the area of sciences and natural sciences and teacher education where despite the low number of learners their continuation is of national/strategic importance).

3.7.2 RESULTS ACHIEVED AND FUTURE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

The university monitors closely the number of study programmes and adjusts the number according to dynamics of student numbers and developments in the area. Taking into account the population projections, “Estonia 2035” Vision, the rapidly developing digital society and the fact that the proportion of students aged 25 and above continues to be high in higher education

(in professional higher education and MA studies currently reaching 60%), we foresee an increasing need for flexible (retraining) study programmes and individual study pathways and increase in the popularity of joint and e-learning study programmes. In Academic Year 2020/21, in cooperation with Cyprus University of Technology, the first entirely web-based study programme

(Interaction Design, MA) was opened for admission; the first MA students are expected to start their studies on a one-year study programme in Academic Year 2021/22 (Inclusive Education). In reference to in-service training and retraining, training courses provided by TLU Open Academy should be noted (see [Chapter 3.12.1.](#)). The university aims at keeping the selection and content of study programmes competitive in the context of higher education in Estonia and the regions close-by.

In addition to internal evaluation, TLU regularly collects feedback about study programmes and the quality of studies from its graduate students (see [Ch.3.3.](#)), and the results of national surveys conducted among alumni of higher education institutions are followed. The results indicate that 63% of the respondents of the TLU feedback questionnaire agree or rather agree with the statement that the study programme constitutes a logical whole and 84% of the respondents are satisfied with their intellectual development during studies. On the basis of the feedback it is also possible to define the fields of improvement related to study programmes. For instance, students have pointed out the necessity of making subject-specific courses more practical and more closely related to real life; the volume of traineeship is considered to be too low and its content not related to real life; the organisation of elective courses does not allow students to choose these courses according to their preferences; the lack of cooperation between different universities has been pointed out, as well as the need for the development of teaching competences of academic staff. Approximately 12–16% of the students respond to the university feedback survey during the year of their graduation. However, the results of the national survey conducted among [alumni of higher education institutions \(EST\)](#), published in 2020, (18% of TLU alumni of 2016–

2028 participated in the survey) indicate that satisfaction with academic staff and teaching is on the average level as compared to that of the rest of Estonian universities, as is satisfaction with the acquired higher education (3.4 at TLU on a 4-point scale, the national average being 3.4) and with the competitiveness on the labour market (3.3 at TLU on a 4-point scale, the national average being 3.3)²⁵.

The analysis of the graduate students' feedback indicates quite a low response rate which could be related to the fact that in addition to university-wide feedback, academic units (heads of study areas, study programme administrators and lecturers) ask for feedback from students about the study programme, courses, etc. In the future, we intend to have better coordination of activities related to collecting feedback in different units. In order to keep study programme administrators informed and coordinate their work better, there is a plan to create a university-wide network meeting at regular intervals. At present, the cooperation is unit-based.

According to the heads of studies and study programme administrators of academic units the system of regular internal evaluation has had a successful start at TLU and all the stakeholders can see the benefits of regular analysis in reaching goals. In order to ensure the sustainability of internal evaluation in the future, the changes in the quality assessment of Estonian higher education²⁶ that were introduced in 2019 are taken into account and the university's own system of internal evaluation is analysed and updated.

²⁵ *National survey report conducted in 2016-2018 among alumni of higher education institutions, 2020 (EST)*

²⁶ *In 2019, the external evaluation based on study programme groups was replaced by thematic evaluation.*

STRENGTHS

- The university has formulated the principles of study programme development, the Statute of Study Programme has been established in accordance with the principles and, based on that, study programmes have been changed during the period 2015–2020.
- The system of internal evaluation of study programmes has had a successful start, study programme administrators are motivated, the results of analyses are used when planning and implementing changes.
- Study programmes are updated on an on-going basis, development activities are carried out in the form of teamwork.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Updating the system of internal evaluation, taking into consideration changes in the quality assessment of Estonian higher education and feedback received from graduate students.
- More skilful use of the contribution of alumni and employers for the development of study programmes in order to better meet the needs of the labour market.
- Creating a university-wide network of study programme administrators and its implementation for the detection of areas of concern and for delivering solutions.

3.8

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The main goals of Tallinn University study activity are established in the Development Plan (2015-2020; 2020-2022), based on national expectations²⁷, the results of internal and external evaluation and expectations of stakeholders²⁸. In addition to university-wide goals, academic units establish goals related to learning and teaching in their development plans. As far as the study programmes are concerned, the establishment of goals related to learning, teaching and the organisation of studies takes place during the process of internal evaluation of study programmes (see [Ch.3.7.](#)). This approach enables multi-level consistency and the possibility to base the goals on the development needs and specific features of the academic unit and the study programme.

The achievement of goals is analysed on a regular basis every academic year and the assessment is based on [study-related figures](#), feedback from stakeholders (see next paragraph) and other indicators associated with achieving the goal. The evaluation of the results of academic units is provided in the annual report of the academic unit, the results concerning TLU as a whole are provided in the annual report of the university, where the input also includes the activity report of the Academic Affairs Office. The achievement of goals is measured by using [key indicators \(Annex 2 of the Development Plan implementation plan\)](#). Improvement activities are included in the activity plan of the following year (see [Ch.3.1.1.](#)), as far as study programmes are concerned, the improvements mostly include changes in the study plan, i.e. courses. Heads of studies have concluded²⁹ that in order to provide substantial analysis, it would be necessary to develop the capacity to analyse big data at the university.

Feedback from the stakeholders involved in degree studies is collected in accordance with the [TLU Procedure for Collecting Feedback in Degree Studies](#). Feedback is collected systematically in Estonian and in English from student candidates, students (including Doctoral students and international students), graduate students, alumni and employers / cooperation partners. Feedback

includes topics related to learning, teaching, study environment, study programme and the organisation of studies (more at [TLU webpage](#)).

Legal acts regulating studies follow the principle where a threshold for quality is established but the academic unit has the right to establish requirements that are higher than the threshold³⁰. For process analysis, feedback as well as student contests and proposals from members of university are used.

The organisation of admission is regulated by [Tallinn University Requirements and Procedure for the Admission on Degree Studies, List of Study Programmes Opened for Admission](#) (EST) created for each academic year, [Admission to Doctoral Studies](#) (EST) and [Academic calendar](#). By implementing uniform requirements candidates are guaranteed equal treatment. All legislation regulating admission is updated annually on the basis of the process analysis of admission³¹. For example, for the admission of Academic Year 2021/2022, the organisation of admission exams was changed on the basis of feedback received from international student candidates, the timeframe for admission was changed on the basis of feedback from academic units, and taking into account university's sustainability goals the amount of paper documents received for admission was reduced significantly. In addition to changing university-wide

²⁷ [Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, Higher Education Act, Standard of Higher Education \(EST\), Administrative Contract concluded between TLU and the Ministry of Education and Research, OSKA reports](#)

²⁸ [Feedback from students and alumni, proposals from members of university](#)

²⁹ [Quality workshop for heads of studies 12.-13.10.2020](#)

³⁰ e.g.: foreign language skills upon admission, calculating workload of academic staff, determining the minimum or maximum amount of contact classes, joint teaching, etc.

³¹ [Including heads of studies, academic unit staff members involved in admission and admission specialists of Academic Affairs Office who review and discuss the admission procedure and feedback from candidates.](#)

Table 20. Satisfaction of graduate students with the development of general competences (on a 5-point scale)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Satisfaction of graduate students with general competences</i>	3.59	3.68	4.33	4.09	4.16	4.09

legislation, the admission procedure is evaluated in academic units and changes are introduced to speciality-specific admission exams and sometimes also members of committees are changed.

Admission during the period 2016-2020 (see [Ch. 1.7.1.](#) for aggregated data) was, as predicted, being influenced by the demographic recession in Estonia³² and by the rapid growth in the numbers of international students (see [Ch. 3.5.](#)). One of the goals of TLU is to increase the proportion of students who graduate within the nominal period of studies in the cohort of students who have been admitted³³. In order to achieve that, the principles of admission exams were standardised within the period of 2015-2020 in order to determine upon admission the awareness and motivation of students for studying on a specific study programme. In spite of the fact that the number of students graduating within a nominal period of studies has somewhat increased (see [Ch. 1.7.1.](#)), the number of students who drop out during the first semester of studies remains high (12%). The main reasons for dropping out include unsuitability of the speciality and working. Some study programmes have taken steps to³⁴ to study the relation between admission and further studies; however, a more systematic approach is needed. Within the next period, the university aims to pay more attention to raising awareness about the speciality, combining studies and work and to increasing the possibilities for changing the speciality.

The organisation of studies at TLU is regulated by [Tallinn University Study Regulations](#) (also known as TLUSR), [Tallinn University Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses](#). The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs approves the [Academic calendar](#) for each academic year. Information related to studies is recorded in the [Study Information System](#) (SIS). The processes of study planning and the organisation of studies are analysed every academic year and updated, if necessary. Changes to be introduced are based on the feedback received from students (including their contests), proposals from the members of university³⁵, national guidelines and agreements

between universities³⁶. When preparing more substantial changes, practices of other bigger universities in Estonia are analysed for comparison. Updates are usually made twice a year (in spring for the coming academic year and in autumn related to the scheduled admission). In 2020, for example, the procedure for taking academic leave for other reasons was changed on the basis of feedback received from drop-out students, the regulation of the organisation of exams was changed on the proposal of academic units and the procedure for reimbursement of study costs was changed on the proposal of the Student Union.

One of the goals set out in the Development Plan concerns the development of general competences and practical experience during the study process. Feedback from graduates of

2015-2020 indicates that there has been an increase in the satisfaction with the development of general competences³⁷ since 2017 (Table 20). Changes to study programmes were made in 2016 (see [Ch.3.7.1.](#)), for example, topics of general and digital competences were integrated to subject-specific courses and the proportion of block mode studies, more suited to the needs of a working student, was increased³⁸.

Based on the feedback received from students, the level of previously acquired competences should be considered more when supporting the development of general competences. Taking the above-mentioned into consideration, the Development Plan aims at creating a university strategy for the development of general competences³⁹, which includes determining the general competences to be developed and measuring the results.

Supporting the development of general competences and enhancing creativity and innovation is best illustrated by full implementation and constant development of the interdisciplinary [LIFE course](#) in the form of project learning. 5055 students and 246 members of academic staff have participated in the LIFE course

32 [Statistics Estonia \(Natural increase in 1989-2019\)](#)

33 [Goal in TLU Development Plan and financing model \(EST\)](#)

34 e.g.: [Educational Innovation and Leadership Self Evaluation Report](#)

35 [Proposals for changes are collected from academic unit staff members \(heads of studies, study counsellors-specialists\)](#)

36 [TLU participates in the network of vice-rectors of Estonian universities and of heads of academic affairs offices, representative of Academic Affairs Office participates in data working group of Universities Estonia](#)

37 [Based on Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020: creativity, entrepreneurship, problem solving and teamwork skills, critical thinking and analysis skills and digital competences](#)

38 [As compared to 2015, the proportion of block mode study has increased significantly \(BA-10%, MA - 25%\)](#)

39 [Based on: Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020, Educational Strategy 2035, World Economic Forum, Skills for 2023 \(OECD\)](#)

within the period of 2016–2020, feedback to the course has generally been positive. The goals of the Development Plan include the implementation of LIFE-like courses in teacher education and offering modules larger in volume (e.g. 18–24 ECTS).

In traineeship, being compulsory in all first and second level study programmes, links are made between acquired learning and the world of work. The level of satisfaction with the organisation and effectiveness of traineeship is generally high (on an average 4.5 on a 5-point scale⁴⁰). Since traineeship is mandatory it means that the academic unit and the student have the obligation to find a traineeship place (according to the feedback, 75% of the respondents have looked themselves for a traineeship place), this being still a problem in case of several study programmes, especially where the language of instruction is not Estonian. Academic units are systematically involved in the development of traineeship possibilities and finding suitable partners. One of the solutions has been the use of the possibilities for traineeship abroad, which, however, has proved to be difficult due to SARS-CoV-2 pandemic (see [Ch. 3.5.2.](#)).

75% of the respondents to university feedback are satisfied or very satisfied with the skills of academic staff in creating a favourable learning environment, i.e. support the feeling of belonging, being competent and autonomous.

According to the survey of 2020 conducted among [alumni of higher education institutions \(EST\)](#), satisfaction with the academic staff and teaching is rather good (3.1 on a 4-point scale), thus being above the national average (3.0).

Teaching methods applied by academic staff are varied (examples from self evaluation reports of selected study programmes). The method is chosen by the lecturer (or by lecturers⁴¹, if jointly teaching; in many cases together with the learners), taking into consideration the specific course, its learning outcomes and the expected previous knowledge and skills⁴² and one's own teaching competences. TLU prioritises the use of modern teaching methods on the highest level (objectives are set out in the Development Plan, a concept "[I Change the Way of Learning](#)" has been developed and its users are recognised ([Procedure for Recognition of Studies at TLU](#))). Even if more traditional approaches are still supported (e.g. lecture), the university prioritises the use of modern approaches to ensure that learners have varied learning experience. The teaching competences of academic staff are evaluated during attestation and their

development receives constant support. Lecturers from other higher education and research institutions provide added value. Alumni, employers and professionals are involved in the development of study programmes and in implementing them (traineeship places⁴³, councils, professional associations, joint projects⁴⁴, academic staff employed on the basis of service contract) (see [Ch. 3.6.](#)). There is no university-wide collection of feedback from employers, as the practical value to improvement activities related to study programmes would be small (the effect was similar in the case of an alumni feedback survey carried out university-wide, as is the case of a study being conducted by the Ministry of Education and Research). For the purposes of study programme development, academic units collect feedback from employers⁴⁵. However, similar pattern is not followed in case of all the study programmes, and offering central support, at least partly, should be considered (e.g. sharing best practices).

The implementation of digital tools in studies is not obligatory, but their use is increasing and consistent support is provided by [e-Learning Centre](#). The student feedback from SIS reveals that too many different online platforms are used in studies. Even if such variety prepares students for working in different environments, it also causes more stress to students⁴⁶. A study conducted in spring 2020 during SARS-CoV-2 pandemic revealed that many students (58% of the respondents) and academic staff (59%) are ready to use blended courses more than before. At the same time it was pointed out that teaching needs more systematic support, and there is a need for better technical means and balancing the workload. As a result, a Task Group of Digital Learning was summoned with the aim to create by December 2020 the concept and implementation plan of digital learning for the next five years (also choosing the most suitable platforms). University-wide discussions and application have been planned for spring semester 2021.

According to Statistics Estonia⁴⁷, 97% of TLU alumni have started work within one year after graduation or continued their studies on a higher level of education. The indicator reflects the national average. On the basis of how alumni have estimated their achievement in

40 Based on feedback about TLU degree studies

41 e.g.: *Educational Innovation and Leadership, European Modern Languages and Cultures Self Evaluation Reports*

42 e.g.: *Integrated Natural Sciences, Law Self Evaluation Reports*

43 e.g.: *Law, European Modern Languages and Cultures Self-Evaluation Reports*

44 e.g.: *within LIFE projects [Kindlustusseltside liit](#), [World Clean Up Day](#)*

45 *TLU Procedure for Collecting Feedback*

46 e.g.: *Educational Innovation and Leadership and Integrated Natural Sciences Self Evaluations Reports*

47 Bases on the data from the financing model of 2018–2021 of the Ministry of Education and Research

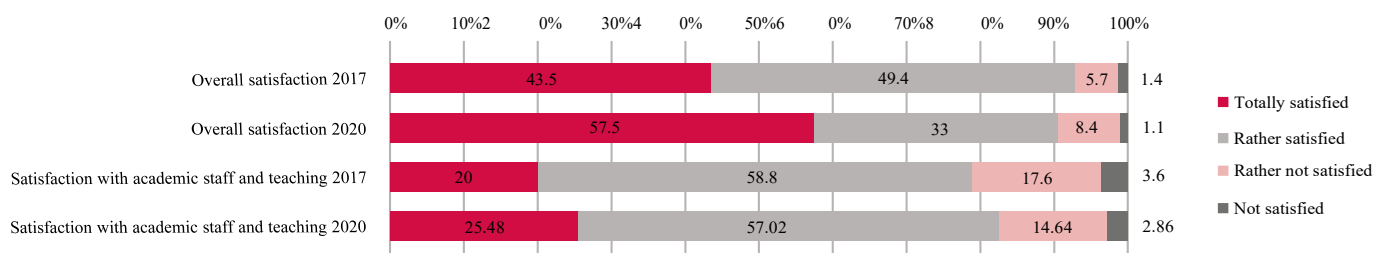


Figure 8. Satisfaction of alumni with studies, academic staff and teaching in 2017 and 2020

Table 21. Satisfaction of students with the content and organisation of studies (on a 5-point scale)

	2017*	2018	2019	2020
Satisfaction of students with the content and organisation of studies	4.24	4.21	4.13	4.34

* The system of feedback was changed in 2017; data cannot be compared to that of previous years.

labour market, it can be said that they see themselves as rather competitive (3.4, on the 4-point scale; national average 3.3)⁴⁸. On the basis of the feedback received

from students and alumni it can be concluded that learners are generally satisfied with the quality, content and organisation of studies at TLU (Table 21, Figure 8).

48 *National survey conducted in 2016-2018 among alumni of higher education institutions (EST)*

STRENGTHS

- The university has agreed on the processes and legislation concerning the organisation of studies, and while involving stakeholders, these are regularly updated.
- Academic units have the right to establish requirements that are higher than those established university-wide, taking into account the needs of the speciality and the academic unit.
- TLU has successfully implemented a subject, called LIFE, which supports disciplines, general competences, creativity and the development of innovation.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Analysing the relation between admission and later academic progress in order to find motivated students making an informed choice about their speciality.
- Creating and implementing the strategy for the development of general competences with the aim of ensuring that the general competences of graduates meet the expectations of the society of the future.
- Continuing support to the implementation of modern approach to learning, including systematic use of digital tools to ensure more personal approach to learners.

3.9

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

In higher education, assessment is based on Single Assessment System of Higher Education and the Requirements and Procedure for Granting Diplomas and Diploma Supplements (EST) and Tallinn University Study Regulations. The assessment of traineeship is additionally regulated by TLU principles of implementing traineeship. Students can contest all the decisions and results related to assessment in accordance with Sections 33-34 of TLUSR. Guidelines on how to make a contest and the procedure can be found on TLU webpage. All courses end with an assessment (non-differentiated assessment) or exam (differentiated assessment). In Academic Year 2020/2021, 65% of 7073 courses end with an exam and 35% with an assessment. The assessment form is provided in the course description, found in SIS. The assessment method is chosen by the lecturer together with the study programme administrator, together with other lecturers if the course is jointly taught, and the opinion of students is often taken into consideration. When choosing the method, the learning outcomes set out for the course (including traineeship) are taken into account, aiming to support students in gaining knowledge and skills. Assessment methods and criteria are made available in the course programme to the students who have registered for the course and the lecturer introduces them during the first meeting.

There is an ever-growing tendency to use a committee during assessment (especially in the case of creative work), and also people from outside the university⁴⁹. The assessment of traineeship is done together with the supervisor from the traineeship place. In addition, the practice of students assessing each other and self-assessment are used⁵⁰. For the development of teaching and learning practices, supporting feedback, known as formative assessment, provided by the lecturer to (inde-

pendent) work produced during the course is considered important⁵¹ as it helps to direct students towards the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for getting the final assessment result.

Students' contests have provided essential input for correcting assessment methods and criteria. The more complex cases are analysed by the Academic Affairs Office, and in order to avoid the reoccurrence of mistakes, cases and solutions are introduced non-personally in the network of heads of studies. Members of academic staff have the possibility to participate in training of assessment methods and criteria, we also intend to share good practices more and introduce the principles of motivational feedback. In conclusion it can be said that clear presentation of assessment criteria⁵², including their relation to learning outcomes⁵³, needs on-going attention, as well as assessment that is sometimes too strict or too loose⁵⁴.

Taking exams and assessments is one of the most precisely regulated procedures at TLU (Section 21 of TLUSR) with the aim of enabling students to plan their exams/assessments (including retaking them) and guarantee equal treatment.

Studies in higher education end with a final exam or defence of the final thesis, regulated by TLUSR (Sections 26-28). 17 out of 44 study programmes of the first level of higher education and 1 out of 57 study programmes of the second level of higher education end with the final exam. Objectives and learning outcomes set out for the final thesis are similar for each level of education and they are published in SIS. The writing of final thesis is supported by courses in the study programme in the volume of at least 6 ECTS that tackle research methods and the compilation of research papers. Students

⁴⁹ e.g.: *Educational Innovation and Leadership, European Modern Languages and Cultures Self Evaluation Reports*

⁵⁰ e.g.: *Educational Innovation and Leadership Self Evaluation Report*

⁵¹ Example: *European Modern Languages and Cultures Self Evaluation Report*

⁵² *Summaries of TLU feedback surveys*

⁵³ *Quality workshop for heads of studies 12.-13.10.2020*

⁵⁴ *Quality workshop for heads of studies 12.-13.10.2020*

who need to take the final exam also have to compile an academic research paper (at least 6 ECTS) during their studies to be prepared to continue their studies on the next level of higher education. The compilation of final theses (other written papers created during studies) is based on guidelines established by academic units for writing student papers⁵⁵ and on the [TLU guidelines for Doctoral studies](#). Section 27 of TLUSR defines the requirements for supervisors of final theses, including the requirements for co-supervisors connected with the field of work. All papers are run through a plagiarism detection system Urkund (see [Ch. 3.4.](#)). If plagiarism is suspected in a paper, the committee may refuse to allow the student to defend. In such cases all evidence is made available to the student and the student has the right to contest the decision of the defence committee. The committee usually assesses the final theses during oral defence. The Council of the academic unit may decide not to hold a defence on the first level of higher education. In this case, in addition to the final thesis, the written evaluation received from the supervisor and the reviewer and the student's response are taken into consideration in assessment. Best papers are entered to [TLU competition of student research papers](#), [Estonian national competition of student research papers](#) and other national and international competitions. In addition to research, the creative activities of TLU students have recently received recognition. For example, five TLU students received recognition at film festivals in 2020, the most outstanding of them being German Golub's gold at the [Student Academy Awards](#).

In the feedback survey conducted during the period of 2017–2020 students were asked to evaluate statements related to writing the final thesis (motivation, planning, support from the supervisor). Some differences were noticed in the evaluations of students who had submitted their final thesis to defence and of those who were still working on their thesis, the evaluations from students who had already submitted their thesis being significantly more positive. Students have pointed out that the obligations of the student and the supervisor, as well as the timeframe, should be defined in a more concrete manner and in written form (e.g. supervision agreement; obligations are determined in Subsection 7-8 of Section 27 of TLUSR). Understanding the working style of the supervisor was also considered important. In conclusion, it can be said that satisfaction with supervision is quite high, but more attention should

be paid to agreements that could be made between the student and the supervisor and informing each other about the agreements.

If upon graduation a student is awarded a professional qualification, a representative familiar with the world of work is included in the committee awarding professional qualifications. The professional qualification can be awarded during studies (e.g. after passing main traineeship in Teacher Education II) or after defence of the final thesis.

The attestation of Doctoral students is organised at the end of each semester in a way as to ensure that Doctoral students participate in the attestation when two semesters have passed from their last attestation or from their matriculation. The procedure for attestation is established in the [Tallinn University Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses](#) and the requirements are also published on [TLU webpage](#). Starting from 2013, the attestation committees base their assessment on the field-specific assessment criteria established by the Vice-Rector for Research⁵⁶ which enables doctoral students to have a better overview of their progress. [A study conducted among Doctoral students \(EST\)](#) in 2017 revealed that 58% of the students were satisfied with the attestation. The respondents expected to have more substantial feedback from the assessment committees to help the students proceed in their studies. The results and their implementation are discussed at annual information seminars and workshops with the aim of consistent improvement of the attestation process. Doctoral students are informed of their assessment results through the document management system Webdesktop and students with a positive result are transferred to the next academic year. Doctoral students have the right to contest the decisions in accordance with the procedure established in Section 33 of TLUSR.

The principles for the recognition of prior learning (hereinafter RPL) are regulated in Sections 22–24 of TLUSR and the guidelines can be found on [TLU webpage](#). There are special RPL counsellors (normally study counsellors) who have been appointed at TLU to guide and support applicants during the application process. The employees of Academic Affairs Office provide counselling at university-wide level. Students can apply for RPL for fulfilling the admission requirements (in Master's and Doctoral studies) as well as for completing the study programme (on all levels of education). When starting studies, RPL is used if the student's previous education

⁵⁵ e.g.: [Requirements for Final Theses at the School of Digital Technologies](#); [The Style Sheet for research papers at the School of Humanities](#)

⁵⁶ e.g.: [Progress Review Criteria in Social Sciences](#); [Progress Review Criteria in Humanities](#)

Table 22. Submission and approval of RPL applications during the period 2015/2016– 2019/2020

	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
<i>Total no. of students (incl. the transfer of TLU courses)</i>	1215	1208	1171	1283	1134
<i>ECTS applied for, Estonian universities</i>	5901.5	7090	6909	5005	4575
<i>ECTS approved, Estonian universities</i>	5652	6812	6795	4946.5	4424
<i>ECTS applied for, universities abroad</i>	7129	8209	10209	19244.5	14217.5
<i>ECTS approved, universities abroad</i>	6829	7796	10046	18963	13243.5
<i>ECTS applied for, learning experience from work and non-degree studies</i>	1198	987	1410	1472	1353
<i>ECTS approved, learning experience from work and non-degree studies</i>	849	771	1167	1342	1164
<i>Total ECTS applied for</i>	14228.5	16286	18528	25721.5	20145.5
<i>Total ECTS approved</i>	13330	15379	18008	25251.5	18831.5

does not meet the admission requirements. People responsible for assessment may approve the RPL application in full, i.e. the admission requirement is considered as fulfilled; or partly, and the student has to acquire additional learning outcomes (maximum 18 ECTS). 28 applications were submitted during the admission of 2020, 14 applications were approved. Additional studies were required in the amount of 12 ECTS.

For the completion of the study programme, on an average 16.5% of all students apply for RPL, which is lower than the national average (32%)⁵⁷. It is important to point out that the data does not include agreements made with the academic staff when RPL is partly taken into account during the course. However, the proportion of applicants has grown within the last years: in 2015, 14% of students applied for RPL, as compared to 16% in 2019. The percentage of applications that have been approved remains stable and relatively high (96%), which is close to the national average (95%)⁵⁸. The majority of applications that receive approval are for recognising studies abroad (97%), applications related to work and non-formal studies have the lowest approval rate (81%). Table 22 provides an overview of ECTS and of the approval of applications, the data does not reflect the recognition of previous studies at TLU (except in the number of applicants).

TLU feedback survey reveals that 59% of the students on the second level of higher education and 55% of the students on the first level of higher education are aware of RPL. In 2019, 45% of the respondents rated the level of satisfaction with the possibilities of RPL as positive and 16% as negative, the rest of the respondents, 39%, remained neutral. The main negative aspects pointed out by students included the lengthy process, unclear information in the application form and too brief feedback in case the decision was negative (people responsible for assessment must provide reasons for the negative decision as established in Section 24 of TLUSR). Guidance, simple process and availability of information were pointed out as positive aspects. During the quality workshop for heads of studies⁵⁹, the limited use of different assessment methods of RPL was pointed out as a weakness (assessment is generally based on submitted documents). Based on the above-mentioned, we have concluded that even if the university has a well-functioning system of RPL, including the network of counsellors, then introduction of RPL to target groups, presentation of information in a clear manner and the use of a wider variety of assessment methods remain a challenge.

⁵⁷ *National survey conducted in 2016-2018 among alumni of higher education institutions (EST)*

⁵⁸ *National survey conducted in 2016-2018 among alumni of higher education institutions (EST)*

⁵⁹ *Quality workshop for heads of studies 12.-13.10.2020*

STRENGTHS

- The use of varied assessment methods.
- A well-functioning procedure for contesting decisions that helps improve the quality of assessment.
- A well-functioning recognition of prior learning system.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Support to academic staff in choosing methods and means of assessment and in introducing the principles of motivational feedback with the aim of improving the connection between assessment criteria and learning outcomes.
- Defining the expectations of the supervisor and the student in good learning practices and providing support to students in fulfilling their obligations in order to have a better functioning agreement between the two parties.
- Organising seminars on a regular basis for students and student candidates and applying assessment methods that have not found much use so far in order to raise awareness and increase the use of prior learning system.

3.10

STUDY SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Support systems offered by the university and their availability play an important role in how successful the students are and how well they proceed in studies. The university has set goals which, on the one hand, aim to develop counselling opportunities and activities (including the network of academic/study counselling); on the other hand, regard the monitoring of the students' progress in studies and implementing measures to reduce the number of drop-out students⁶⁰. Special attention is paid to learners with special needs in extending their possibilities to access higher education and in supporting them during their studies⁶¹. Support and counselling services offered to students are meant for everyone, including international exchange students.

3.10.1 STUDENT SUPPORT SYSTEMS

TLU offers a variety of support services to students:

IT support <u>User account and e-mail + Google G Suite,</u> <u>Study Information System (SIS),</u> <u>Timetables (ASIO),</u> E-learning solutions (Moodle, e-didaktikum etc.).	Economic support Study Allowances and Scholarships for <u>local students (EST)</u> and for <u>international students</u> .
Availability of information resources for research <u>Research Library and Study Centre</u>	Adjustment support. <u>Accommodation, support to students who have just started their studies.</u>
Counselling Academic units, <u>Academic Affairs Office</u> (incl. <u>Career and Counselling Centre</u>), <u>Student Union</u> , <u>Peer Supporters</u>	Supporting healthy and sustainable lifestyle <u>Sports Club (Videos Treeni targalt (EST)),</u> <u>Student Projects,</u> <u>UNICA Green,</u> <u>LIFE projects</u>
Recognition of students <u>Student Mark of Honor,</u> <u>Tallinn University Scholarship Recognising Civic Participation</u> 100 best students of the first semester are given a student cap. Discounts are made for study costs in the case of Student Union board and council members.	Active student life <u>Cultural activities (Orchestra, choirs, folk dance),</u> <u>Student clubs and projects,</u> Social Media (<u>Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube</u> etc.).

⁶⁰ Administrative contracts concluded with The Ministry of Education and Research for the periods of 2016-2018 and 2019-2020.

⁶¹ Administrative contracts concluded with The Ministry of Education and Research for the periods of 2016-2018 and 2019-2020.

Table 23. Students' satisfaction with the organisation of studies during the period 2017–2019 (on a 5-point scale)

	Personal timetable	Studies Information System	Availability of information	Information about changes	Respondents
2017	3.83	4.02	3.68	3.91	1337
2018	3.86	3.99	3.73	3.90	1342
2019	3.98	4.13	3.85	4.04	1451

TLU started to develop on a 2-step student counselling system in 2015:

1) study counsellors of academic units are the key persons when it comes to topics related to student life and studies, 2) the person to contact in case of more specific concerns which might require additional intervention is the head of studies of the academic unit, study programme administrator or a specialist of a specific field. The counselling system has been segmented according to the status of the student (candidate, learner, external student, drop-out student) that enables to monitor students in a more systematic manner and provides for more substantial cooperation of counsellors, also when having to take decisions that affect students. The support of members of staff who are involved in (study) counselling is organised in the form of networking, information sessions, aid materials and training/seminars. In addition to counselling provided by university staff, support is also provided by student councils and the board of the Student Union and peer supporters.

Students first become aware of the support and counselling services through information sent to potential students (introducing the possibilities at promotional events and on the webpage and then during the orientation week intended for first-year students⁶².

62 *Stardipauk for students on Estonian language based*

During studies different information channels are used to keep the students informed (e.g. study-related newsletters sent by Academic Affairs Office, academic units and Student Union). As a result of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in 2020, e-counselling possibilities have been developed. Since the numbers of adult learners and working students is increasing (see Ch.1.7.1.), more importance is given in the future to the development of counselling services intended for this target group (e.g. time management skills; reconciliation of work and family life), which will include the increase in the number of one-to-one counselling sessions in addition to replying to *ad hoc* questions.

As part of developing student counselling services, we consider the creation of the post of a disability adviser very important as it forms the basis for systematic support provided for learners with special needs during admission and during studies⁶³. It is worth mentioning that TLU disability adviser is a leader of the field in the network of Estonian higher education institutions.

study programmes, Orientation week for students on study programmes where the language of instruction is not Estonian

63 *Mapping the needs of students with special needs, offering adjustments, individual counselling, guaranteeing and offering means of support services, training members of university, changes introduced to legal acts to ensure equal treatment. In 2020/2021, the university has 99 students with disability or incapacity for work, 27 of them have needed adjustments.*

3.10.2 STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH SUPPORT SERVICES

TLU regularly asks for feedback about students' satisfaction with the organisation of studies and with the availability of information. Table 23 provides an overview of some questions and answers collected in 2017–2019.

Student satisfaction has increased over the years, which could be attributed to more varied solutions in communicating information.⁶⁴ In 2019 and 2020, students were asked to provide feedback (open-ended questions) about the support received from study counsellors. The

64 *The use of TLU-app (TLU Student Guide) university newsletters sent at regular intervals, video tutorials about the use of SIS*

results are used to organise the network of study counsellors and their training (e.g. assertiveness training). Our future plans include the development of Study Information System to make its use more convenient for study counsellors and make it possible for them to obtain more comprehensive information necessary for counselling students and to save agreements made individually with students.

Estonian and international alumni who participated in the National survey conducted in 2020 among alumni of higher education institutions (EST) evaluated TLU counselling services (study, career and psychological

cal counselling) quite differently. Approximately 55% of Estonian students did not need counselling during studies, whereas only 16% of international students admitted they did not need counselling. 72% of Estonian students and 58% of international students who had received counselling services and support were

satisfied with the service. The results clearly indicate that more attention must be paid to counselling provided to international students, and also consider if the university is capable of offering solutions to problems not directly related to university, such as accommodation and healthcare.

3.10.3 GRADUATING WITHIN THE NOMINAL PERIOD OF STUDIES AND REDUCING DROP-OUT RATE

When comparing the average period of studies at different levels of education in 2015–2019 (see Figure 9⁶⁵), it can be noticed that the period of studies has shortened on both, BA and MA level.

The goal of TLU Development Plan is to increase the proportion of students who graduate within the nominal period of studies (see results in Ch. 1.7.1.). The proportion of students who have graduated within the nominal period of studies has increased approximately by 3% within the period of 2016–2020: in 2016, 46.6% of students graduated within the nominal period of studies versus 49.6% in 2020. In order to increase the number of students who graduate within the nominal period of studies more attention is paid to admission (see Ch.3.8.), support is provided to students and the student counselling system is improved, good practices are shared among academic units about activities on study programmes where the number of students who graduate within the nominal period of studies is considerably above the average.

The proportion of TLU students who have dropped out has been below the national average during the last two years (see Figure 10)⁶⁶. Since the first semester of studies usually sees the largest number of drop-out students, this period is systematically monitored – the proportion of drop-out students of matriculated students was on an average 12% in 2015–2019, whereas the differences are quite substantial when comparing different specialities and academic units. 35% of first-year drop-out students continue their studies at TLU within one year, whereas 62% of them change the speciality.⁶⁷

out students and the reasons for dropping out which are quite similar from year to year: 50% at their own request (the most common reasons being: working, unsuitability of the speciality, lack of motivation, health reasons, family reasons); 30% for failure to advance in studies (do not complete the study load, failure to pass the courses, do not complete attestation); 10% for absence from studies (students do not continue studies but reasons are unknown); 3% for failure to reimburse the study costs; 7% for other reasons (e.g. for not concluding the study agreements, absence from studies during the first year, indecent behaviour, death etc.).

In order to prevent dropping out from university, an intervention scheme (EST) was developed on the basis of studies conducted in Estonia and abroad and student feedback with the aim to support students' progress in studies. It includes the list of possible activities to be implemented by different parties at the university.

Changes are introduced on an on-going basis to SIS and legal acts (e.g. establishing the obligations of the supervisor and the student; adding courses to the study plan that support the formation of learning skills; adding a field to the application for deletion from the matriculation register to elaborate more on the reasons for deletion from the matriculation register; introducing additional tasks to study counsellors) in order to reduce the drop-out rate and support students in finishing their studies. Dealing with student drop-out will remain a challenge for the university.

The university regularly monitors the amount of drop-

⁶⁵ The figure considers the student's nominal period of studies, i.e. academic leave has not been excluded from the period of studies

⁶⁶ www.haridussilm.ee (EST)

⁶⁷ Termination of studies and dropping out in higher education during 2011/12-2018/19 (EST)

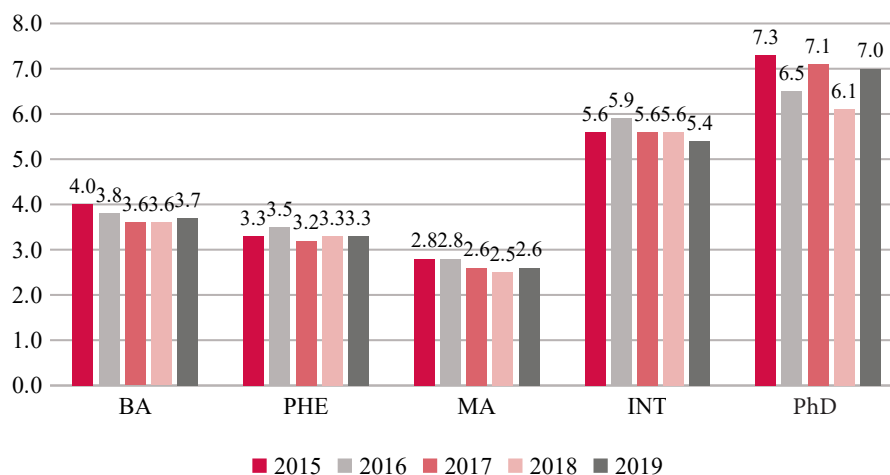


Figure 9. Average duration of studies on different levels of education during the period 2015–2019

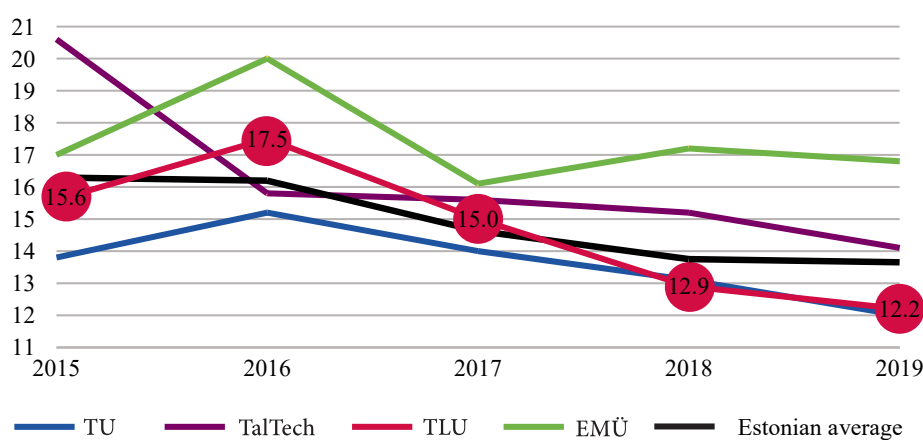


Figure 10. The proportion of drop-out students in Estonian higher education (as of 10.11.2020).

STRENGTHS

- Support services to students are offered on different levels (also considering student status), cooperation of counsellors.
- Having a disability adviser enables to provide systematic support during studies to students with special needs.
- As compared to 2015, the proportion of students who have graduated within the nominal period of studies has increased in the entire university and the proportion of students who have been deleted from the matriculation register has decreased.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Development of counselling services to meet the needs of international students and adult learners and increasing the capacities of e-counselling.
- Establishing the procedure for mandatory counselling before the student is deleted from the matriculation register and sharing good practices as regards monitoring students in order to increase the proportion of students graduating within the nominal period of studies and decrease drop-out numbers.

3.11

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (RDC)

RDC-related goals are described in the university's Development Plan and the Tallinn University Research and Development Strategy for 2019–2021. Academic units specify their goals and the strategic development of focus fields in their development plans. Strategic objectives in the field of RDC are based on a thorough self-analysis and the results and recommendations of external evaluations.

Changes in the funding system of the Estonian R&D⁶⁸ have also been taken into account. In 2018, an internal audit of the processing of projects in the field of RDC was carried out, providing recommendations serving as an important basis for compiling the development plans and R&D strategy of the university and units, developing new support measures and updating regulations. In recent Development Plan periods, the university has prioritised R&D by implementing measures for its priority development. In order to develop an international top-level research community, promote research and increase cooperation with private companies, five interdisciplinary TLU Centres of Excellence were established in 2015 in the university's focus fields, funded by development programmes (the ASTRA measure project TLU TEE) as well as from the Tallinn University Research Fund.

TLU research activities have been assessed at the national level during both regular and targeted evaluations. In 2017, a regular evaluation of the entire field of Estonian R&D was carried out. TLU's research activities were assessed in three fields, all of them receiving positive evaluations: natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities. Targeted evaluations have been carried out in three more specific areas. The targeted evaluation of educational sciences (2007–2011) highlighted a clear positive development trend. The targeted evaluations of the fields of educational sciences and ICT (2009–2014) described the field of educational technology as outstanding, with the efficiency and effectiveness of R&D activities achieving a high international level. The feedback on the targeted evaluation of the field of law (2009–2014) noted

positive developments; however, a strong recommendation was made to thoroughly consider the sustainability of the respective field of study at the university. Following from the bottlenecks and recommendations presented in the report, the university has thoroughly reorganised all activities in the field of law and linked it to topics important for Estonian society.

The positive trend in RDC-related performance is reflected in the university's ranking in two of the world's best-known rankings: QS World University Rankings and Times Higher Education (THE) Rankings, ranking TLU as one of the 5% top universities in the world. In the Times Higher Education 2021 ranking, TLU is ranked 801–1000, ranking at 401–500 in arts and humanities as well as social sciences, and 301–400 in educational sciences. In the QS 2021 ranking, TLU was ranked among the most research-intensive universities in the research intensity category, which is the highest possible position in this category. More information about TLU representation in the rankings is available at <https://www.tlu.ee/en/ranking-positions>.

At the level of research groups, several TLU researchers have been recognised with the national research award: 8 researchers collectively and 1 researcher personally in 2020, 2 researchers personally in 2019 and 1 researcher in 2014. Recognition of the high level of TLU researchers and research activities is also expressed in the involvement of TLU researchers in the composition of the board of Estonian Research Council, evaluation committee and expert councils. The motivation of top researchers is also supported by the university's internal recognition system, part of which is the annual appreciation reception by the Vice-Rector for Research.

68 <https://www.etag.ee/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Uurimistoetuste-teemaleht-juuli-2020-1.pdf> (EST)

Table 24. Volume of RDC revenues in 2016–2019 (in euros) *

Volume of RDC revenue (in euros)	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Total RDC income</i>	9,807,581	11,579,839	14,279,295	15,586,088
<i>including the volume of funding for research and research-based development</i>	7,248,689	9,539,122	12,218,450	13,602,930
<i>including base funding from public funds</i>	1,043,970	1,215,130	1,947,090	2,933,107

* The methodology of RDC revenue calculation changed in 2015; the final data for 2020 will be approved in February 2021.

Table 25. Volume of TLU interdisciplinary and international and/or foreign funded research projects in 2016–2019 (in euros)

	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Volume of interdisciplinary research projects and research and development services (in euros)</i>	4,158,605	6,563,144	8,887,571	10,539,302
<i>Volume of funding for international and/or foreign funded research projects (in euros)</i>	2,722,534	3,812,628	4,023,085	3,768,371

A selection of statistics pertaining to the field of RDC can be found on the [university's webpage](#). The development of the RDC sector is highlighted by the growth trend in the volume of RDC funding (Table 24). Due to the increase in the volume of national base funding for research, the volume of base funding received by TLU has also increased, allowing the university to implement new measures to support research and development. However, the key to the development of the university's RDC area continues to be the success in applying for competitive funding. [The university's website presents an overview of larger research projects at university and unit level.](#)

Considering RDC activities from the perspective of the university's strategic operating principles (see Table 25) suggests that the share of interdisciplinary research projects and research and development services in the university's income has increased as expected. The growth trend in the volume of international and/or internationally funded R&D projects depends to some extent on the cycle of funding periods and increasing competition. The university's foreign funding has remained stable in recent years, illustrating the activity of university researchers in finding foreign funding opportunities. In 2014–2020, TLU participated in a total of 29 H2020 framework programme projects and received grants in the total sum of 12.58 million euros, ranking as the 3rd most successful applicant organisation⁶⁹. On a relative scale, considering the general volumes of research,

TLU's success in applying for funding from the H2020 measure surpasses other Estonian universities slightly: in 2019, TLU received about 13% of the H2020 funding allocated to Estonian universities, which exceeds TLU's share of total national base funding. Among the major projects funded by H2020 are two ERA-Chair projects and two ERC grants. The international dimension has been enhanced by three Estonian researchers previously working abroad who joined the university in 2016–2020 through the Mobilitas+ support measure, along with one top foreign researcher.

The total volume of TLU's national research grants has increased year by year (1.64 million euros in 2017, 1.95 million euros in 2019) in spite of extremely intense competition (success rate in key areas of TLU 10–15%). The proportion of TLU in the total volume of ETAG research grants in 2016–2020 has been 4–5%⁷⁰, which is lower than the share of TLU in the total volume of national base funding and reflects the historically developed distribution of grants, which puts the social sciences and humanities at a disadvantage due to a significantly lower volume of funding and increased competition.

To ensure academic continuity, TLU has used various funding opportunities to involve postdoctoral and doctoral students. Three postdoctoral researchers have gone to foreign universities financed through personal research grant (one in 2016 and two in 2020). 14 foreign postdoctoral researchers came to TLU financed through various structural grants in 2008–2015. 9 postdoctoral

⁶⁹ [ETAG framework statistics](#)

⁷⁰ [ETAG statistics](#) (Table 8, EST)

researchers came to the university in 2016–2020 through the Mobilitas+ support measure. Funding from the TLU Centres of Excellence has allowed the creation of numerous junior research fellow positions and the inclusion of 8 postdoctoral researchers.

Over the years, the university has developed a number of support measures to alleviate the bottlenecks of project-based funding and to support researchers in applying for competitive funding and implementing the projects. A key regulation is the Procedure for Processing Projects, which is constantly updated. A Research Fund (EST) has been formed from the base funding of the university for the purpose of strategic development of the field of RDC. The aim of the fund is to promote the research and development activities at the university, and to enable doctoral students as well as researchers to apply for grants. A key part of the RDC support system is the Network of Research Coordinators (EST), which aims to ensure that the voice of the research community is central to establishing the organisation of RDC, to support researchers in RDC-related administrative tasks, and to ensure that academic units are informed about the development processes in the field. The Research Administration Office also employs a lawyer who provides advice on matters related to research and development and intellectual property. Recent developments include centrally hired project writer-consultants and a constantly updated project manager's handbook. In order to facilitate the implementation of the principles of open science (EST), a cooperation agreement was signed in 2020 to add the scientific data of TLU employees to the DataDOI repository of the UT library.

A key factor in international excellence in research is provided by modern research infrastructure, which has been developed with support from external funding schemes as well as with university resources. Major investments have been made for the development of the Estonian e-repository and national-level digitisation centre, for the development of scientific archives and data network, for equipping the BFM complex with ICT equipment, for the development of a population and social data analysis environment, etc. Since 2020, TLU has been the leading partner of the Estonian Research Infrastructure Roadmap object “Survey of Estonian Families and Births”. TLU manages two research collections: the Cultural History Collection of the Academic Library and the Archaeological Research Collection.

A prerequisite for the successful development of science is a motivated research community. The

implementation of the new career model in 2019 has created clear and transparent opportunities to move up the academic career ladder, preconditions for ensuring a more stable income and working environment for researchers, and for shaping an international top-level research community (see Ch. 3.6.1.). The career model also increases flexibility in the definition, work organisation and remuneration of academic staff and provides greater motivation for activities having societal outreach and impact. In the context of the career model, a tenure committee and a Tenure Fund were formed and profiles of tenure professorships were developed. The first international competitions for tenured positions were announced in early 2020.

Ensuring improved integration of science and teaching is a major challenge in implementing the new career model. This principle is the basis for all career stages: treating doctoral students as junior research fellows allows them to be more involved in teaching; for those who have defended their doctoral degrees, we ensure balanced opportunities for R&D activities and teaching as lecturers; all researchers have an obligation to participate in teaching; an important task of tenure system professors is to lead both teaching and research activities in the field, including promoting a research-based focus in study development.

The strength of the university's research community is evidenced by high-level scientific publications (Table 26). The number of TLU publications per academic staff member is at a comparable level with the two largest universities in Estonia⁷¹. There are 31,591 publications related to TLU in the Estonian Research Information System (as of 20.12.2020). The entire overview of TLU publications can be found on the Estonian Research Information System page and a selection of indicators is available on the university's website.

TLU currently has a total of 13 interdisciplinary doctoral programmes open for admissions in the fields of education, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and health sciences. The conduct of studies at the third level of higher education is regulated by the Tallinn University Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defense of Doctoral Theses, which is in accordance with the agreements of the Universities Estonia council (EST). All doctoral study programmes have undergone an external quality assessment, and the implementation of improvement proposals is monitored during annual internal evaluations (see Ch.3.7.). Two new doctoral programmes (Audiovisual

⁷¹ <https://www.tlu.ee/en/research-figures>

Table 26. Key indicator of university publications 2015–2019 (as of 31 December)

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of high-level scientific publications per academic staff member (ETIS classification 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1)	1.31	1.28	1.12	0.99*	1.15

*As of 21.12.2020, the corresponding indicator is 1.17 (the difference is due to later updates in the ETIS data).

Table 27. Volume of TLU customer-based research and development activities in 2016–2019

	2016	2017	2018	2019
Volume of funding in euros	376,882	764,820	1,760,371	1,801,511

and Media Studies and Complex Systems in Natural Sciences) will be evaluated in 2021.

In developing the field of doctoral studies, we have considered both the development of the new generation of researchers and the possibilities for increasing the efficiency of studies. The development of doctoral studies at the university level is led by the Vice-Rector for Research, who is supported by the Doctoral Studies Service of the Research Administration Office, which, in turn, coordinates the network of Schools' doctoral study advisors. As the doctoral allowance (660 euros per month) does not enable the doctoral students to fully commit to doctoral studies, the university has decided to ensure a net income of at least the Estonian average net salary for full-time doctoral students admitted since 2019 from its own funds. 25 publicly funded places are opened every year under the administrative contract. In order to increase the number of doctoral students at the university and improve the involvement of doctoral students in the project-based R&D activities of the university research groups, academic units may open additional project-funded study places.

In addition to top Estonian researchers and lecturers, doctoral students at the university are taught and supervised by numerous internationally recognised foreign professors. In 2020, the share of foreign academic staff was 14.36%. The community of doctoral students is also international (in 2020, 20.47% of doctoral students are from foreign countries). Doctoral students are involved in teaching; students in many doctoral study programs actively cooperate with partners outside the university (through EXU, their main job, etc.), thus contributing to the development of both innovation and society during their studies. The university must make an even greater contribution to building the reputation of the doctoral degree in society and ensure that those doctoral students who do not have the opportunity to stay at the university are entrepreneurial, creative and have the management skills to adapt quickly to changes in society and economy.

TLU increasingly values the social impact of science and promotes researchers' contribution to it. The development of co-operation with companies has received significant support from ASTRA measure project TLU TEE. In order to promote cooperation between university researchers and companies and organisations, the cooperation platform EXU was established in 2019⁷². The EXU team helps academic units to create cooperation projects with companies and organisations and performs both pro- and reactive activities (incl. through the national business cooperation platform ADAPTER). TLU's activities in ADAPTER are on an upward trend: in 2019, bids were submitted in the amount of 474,596 euros (172,710 euros in 2018), of which financial agreements were signed for 90,479 euros. For other measures, e.g., tenders have been made via Open Academy for approximately 600,000 euros in 2019, of which 265,000 euros were signed. A selection of successful cooperation projects with private and public sector organisations is available on the EXU website.

TLU's increasingly purposeful societally oriented RDC activities and the growing activity of researchers in the field are expressed by the remarkable increase in the volume of customer-based research and development activities, which is a key indicator of the R&D strategy. The university is aiming for continued improvement, particularly in the framework of more extensive business cooperation. TLU has 2 patents as an outcome of applied R&D activities, both issued in 2016: "Medicinal mud mixture and a method for its preparation" and "Electrical device for performing a mud bath procedure on the limbs".

72 EXU stands for "Enterprise x University"

STRENGTHS

- The volume and quality of RDC activities are on the rise.
- High ability and motivation of research teams to apply for external funding.
- A tenure system has been launched to help bring top researchers to the university and provide a motivating work environment.
- Several reforms and innovations have been carried out to increase the quality of doctoral studies.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Modernisation of the strategic structure supporting excellence in the field of RDC and related funding mechanisms (incl. interaction and funding between research centres, TLU Centres of Excellence, strategic laboratories and infrastructure development).
- Enhancing the system of participation and motivation of researchers and the support team (incl. the EXU platform) in business cooperation for ensuring the continuous growth of the volumes of customer-based R&D activities
- For improving the efficiency of doctoral studies, ensuring the opportunity for doctoral students to commit to the doctoral thesis and developing the admission process for doctoral students in order to select the most capable and motivated candidates.

3.12

SERVING THE SOCIETY

The mission and vision of Tallinn University are aimed at serving the society through study, research, creative and development activities. In addition to degree studies and RDC activities, a number of lifelong learning opportunities are offered, a link is established between researchers and companies and organisations, researchers' know-how is shared in professional and trade associations, there is active participation in expert, contributions are made to sectoral strategies and policies, and involvement as opinion leaders in the development processes of the society is enhanced. In addition, the university's activities contribute to the community with various conferences, public seminars and lectures, as well as cultural and other events.

Objectives aimed at serving the society are valued in the university Development Plan 2020-2022, development plans of academic units, the R&D strategy 2019-2021, action plans of academic units, and taken into account when planning the workload of academic staff. Both

academic units and support units have an important role to play in achieving results. The results are evaluated in the university's annual report, activity reports of the units, development interviews and evaluation of lecturers.

3.12.1 LIFELONG LEARNING

Continuing education is organised in all focus fields of the university, and lifelong learning is promoted and integrated in formal, non-formal and informal education as per the goals of the Tallinn University Development 2020-2022. In view of the needs of different target groups, flexibility to move within the education system is provided to allow for reconciling studies and working life.

TU is the third largest provider of continuing education among Estonian public law universities (source: ENUCE). The field of continuing education is coordinated, organised and developed by the Open Academy in cooperation with the network of programme coordinators. The field is regulated by the Regulations of Continuing Education at Tallinn University and a good practice document for ensuring the quality of continuing education at Tallinn University (EST) has been prepared to manage the continuing education process and ensure its quality. The organisation of continuing education is supported by the continuing education information system (CEIS). The forms of continuing education include public training (EST), tailor-made training based on the client's requirements (EST), and courses provided as continuing education. In the new web environment, trainings can be searched

by fields (incl. digital, education, languages and culture, arts, nature, media, health and society), type of training, cost, organising unit, language of instruction and target group. The Open University (EST) allows degree level courses to be taken together with the students, either by individual subjects or modules, as in the programme A Year at University (EST) (14-24 ECTS).

Table 28 presents the results in the field of continuing education in 2015-2019. The number of students in continuing education has changed due to the study programme reform and external factors; in 2018-2019, the number of students remained stable at over 12,000 students per year. The university's income from continuing education has increased over the years, accounting for 11.4% of the university's total study revenue in 2019. A selection of statistics to continuing education can be found on the university's webpage.

The university supports and offers several opportunities to complete interrupted studies: 1) admission; 2) applying for a vacant study place; 3) external studies and 4) passing degree level courses in continuing education. In addition, students regularly use the opportunity to study as a visiting student. Every year, an average of 80-100 students from other Estonian higher education

Table 28. TLU continuing education results 2015–2019*

Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of students (based on participation)	12,975	9,652	9,920	12,226	12,244
including degree level courses	2,213	1,765	1,141	1,106	1,228
including the number of students per full-time academic employee in full-time terms	N/A	23,6	25,2	31,1	31,2
Number of academic hours per student in continuing education	60,8	39,7	40,0	36,2	42,5
Number of courses	547	556	732	1,275	1,187
Revenue (in euros)	N/A	1,138,981	1,431,008	1,795,966	1,716,741
Share of revenue in total study revenue	N/A	8,3%	10,0%	12,0%	11,4%

*Comparable revenue data is not available for 2015, as the reporting was carried out on a different basis; data for 2020 will be available in January 2021; the university reporting environment displays data by unit.

institutions study at TLU, and 40–50 TLU students study at other Estonian higher education institutions.

In addition to adult learners, young people are offered opportunities to study and get to know the university. The Student Academy (EST) aimed at upper secondary school students and vocational school students, which has been completed by more than 200 students a year in recent years, has entered its 18th season. The Student Shadowing Week is held to introduce specialities and student life. Hobby groups such as the Children's Film School (EST) and the Nature Academy (EST) are gaining popularity among primary and lower secondary school students.

For the international public and continuing education students, TLU has been organising the Tallinn Summer School in summer and the Tallinn Winter School in winter since 2006. Since 2012, TLU has been one of the leaders of the working group of UNICA universities' summer and winter schools. The number of courses, participants and countries represented has been on an increasing trend, reaching 32 courses and 563 participants in 2019 (for comparison: 17 courses and 334 participants in 2016). Due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, the number of participants decreased in

2020, but the summer school was conducted by the means of online courses.

In order to map the need for continuing education and continuously improve the quality, multiple channels are used to collect feedback from different target groups. Immediate feedback on the content of trainings and future needs is collected from all participants in continuing education. Feedback is also received from cooperation partners (incl. Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, PARE, ENUCE, EUCEN), through tenders and sectoral surveys on labour and skills needs, incl. the OSKA and EKKA continuing education quality survey. A CEIS development is planned for 2021 for the comparative analysis of continuing education participant feedback by courses and units.

The high quality of continuing education is also indicated by passing the first stage of the threshold-based assessment⁷³ of continuing education institutions in 2019 (EST). In order to motivate the employees, the university annually recognises the most successful trainers, programme coordinators, training activities and cooperation partners in the field of lifelong learning.

⁷³ In the first stage, the compliance of the websites of continuing education institutions with the requirements was assessed.

3.12.2 POPULARISATION OF THE MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

In order to promote the transfer of the university's knowledge and increase business cooperation, the EXU cooperation platform has been created, bringing together product and development services offered to companies and organisations by the main areas. While EXU was only launched in 2019, several successful projects (EST) have already been implemented⁷⁴. In addition, the university has contributed to the promotion of entrepreneurial cooperation through the sub-measure Entrepreneurship Cooperation and the Development of Research-Based Services for the Public Sector established in the Research Fund⁷⁵ in 2020.

Since autumn 2020, EXU has been part of the ASTP and SDN networks, which support the development of business cooperation with universities internationally. Partner events are regularly organised for the purpose of introducing TLU's cooperation opportunities and promoting cooperation, e.g., the ADAPTER cooperation network annual festival (EST), partnership week (EST), lecture series for entrepreneurs (EST), F2F seminars (EST), etc. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in entrepreneur interest in digital technologies, education and competences in the field of natural and health sciences. An SD4X pilot course on service design for managers has also been developed as a training and cooperation opportunity for entrepreneurs (see the

article (EST)). In cooperation with other universities, the Open Academy successfully implements the youth-oriented development and training programme STARTERTallinn, which supports the development of entrepreneurship.

In order to support regional development (Haapsalu and Lääne County), Haapsalu College carries out RDC projects related to the needs of the region, which are implemented primarily through the Centre of Excellence in Health Promotion and Rehabilitation. The financial volume describing the results of RDC activities aimed at the society (customer-based knowledge services and implementation projects) is presented in the chapter on the RDC standard (see Ch.3.11.).

A number of science promotion activities are carried out on a regular basis. Information on events, public lectures and seminars offered to the public can be found on the university's website. In particular, TLU video series, including series (EST) such as the "1-minute lecture", "Train with Tallinn University", "Healthy Lifestyle with Tallinn University" and the programme series "Expert on Air" (EST) that was conceptualised during the spring emergency situation and appreciated with the high national science promotion award (EST) have received the most positive feedback and recognition. In addition to the above examples, a content marketing page has been available on the Delfi portal since 2018 (on Postimees also in 2019), and Äripäev's radio programmes "Tallinn University on Air" have been produced since 2019.

⁷⁴ The English EXU page contains examples of work done under the heading "service portfolio", rather than separately.

⁷⁵ Tallinn University Research Fund Statutes (EST)

3.12.3 COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS AND OTHER PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

University staff shape societal processes by publishing opinion articles, participating in television and radio programmes and providing public opinions. For example, university employees have contributed to several collections of the Estonian Human Development Report in the capacity of editor-in-chief (2019/2020 report) and as co-authors of several collections. The 2019/2020 Human Development Report "Spatial Choices for an Urbanised Society" won the 2020 Clear Message Award (EST).

The social and public activities of academic employees are taken into account in the annual workload calculation, and the contribution in and impact on society is taken into account when evaluating their work

and as an evaluation criterion. The social contribution of academic staff is reflected in the ETIS database and on the Intranet in the job overview environment. Members of the university have been recognised for various participations and contributions by the President of the Republic of Estonia, ministries, as well as several Estonian and international organisations and cooperation partners. Academic employees who have received social recognition such as decorations awarded by the President of the Republic of Estonia or the National Research Award are recognised by the university at festive ceremonies organised for the occasion of the anniversary of the Republic of Estonia and invited to speak at the ceremonies as guest speakers.

Table 29. Number of events organised through the TLU Conference Centre in 2015–2020 *

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>In cooperation with TLU units</i>	31	28	40	23	20	8
<i>External partner</i>	147	134	138	117	134	78
<i>Total</i>	178	162	178	140	154	86

* In addition, some events are organised at the university premises without the involvement of the Conference Centre. Data on such events is not included in the table.

Examples include a history teacher who received the title 2018 European Citizen and the 2019 Mission Leader of the year, a bullying-free school advocate and a winner of the President of Estonia Cultural Foundation Young Educator Award, a TLU alumnus. In 2019, the Federation of Estonian Student Unions awarded the former Rector Tiit Land the title of the Student Friend of the Year, calling him a “shining example of a student-friendly rector”. In 2020 The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded our student film with Gold Medal (Student Film Oscar).

The university contributes to the welfare of the community and provides many necessary services to society. The TLU Academic Library is a research, study and archive library that, in addition to the study centre located on the university campus, provides researchers and other residents with the information resources and public services necessary for study, research and development. In 2019, the academic library had over 21,000 readers, a little over half of whom are not members of the university. The number of digitised documents has undergone a steep increase from 12,616 in 2015 to 70,184 in 2019. In addition to the Academic Library, the university includes other so-called memory institutions that preserve and introduce Estonian intellectual and cultural heritage: the TLU Museum, the Estonian Pedagogical Archives and Museum, the Jüri Lotman Semiotics Repository and the Archaeological Research Collection. Of special significance to the university is the special repository of archaeozoological bone finds at Ankru Street in North Tallinn, completed in 2019. The next stage of development currently underway is the digitisation of the bone collection, which would allow digital access to the collection and enable access to all interested parties.

Tallinn University Press publishes high-level academic and intellectual literature aimed at the public as well as a community of dedicated scholars and students. The publications of Tallinn University Press (e-shop, EST) have been nominated for several awards and book presentations are organised both at the national

and international level. Three scientific journals (EST) are also published by the University Press. In recognition of Estonian authors who study or teach at Tallinn University or are TLU alumni, TLU started to award a literature prize (EST) in 2007. The University Conference Centre services university members and other clients looking to use the campus facilities to organise seminars, trainings and conferences. Due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic in 2020, the number of events organised at the conference centre decreased significantly (Table 29). As a result of the difficulties, a virtual event management service (EST) was developed in cooperation with BFM.

In 2015, the TLU International Examination Centre (former TLU Language Centre, founded in 2007) was established, which cooperates with universities from different countries (e.g., University of London, Heriot Watt, Queen’s University Belfast, Brunel University, etc.) and conducts internationally recognised foreign language examinations, preparation courses and language training. The greatest interest is in English language exams⁷⁶, which are taken approximately 1,100 times per year on average.

Nationwide olympiads in English, German, Russian as a foreign language, Estonian as a foreign language, Estonian as a mother tongue, handicrafts and home economics, and study skills are also organised. Academic employees are involved in the activities of HARNØ in the preparation and assessment of state exams and in the training of examiners and assessors.

The university also supports the activities of several of its creative and sports collectives: women’s choir, men’s choir, mixed choir vocal ensemble, symphony orchestra, folk dance groups, and the basketball and volleyball teams of the university sports club. Creative groups perform actively both at university events and outside the university (incl. all Estonian Song and Dance

⁷⁶ The establishment of the competing INNOVE (HARNØ since 1.8.2020) Cambridge English centre in 2019 led to a decrease in the number of examinations carried out at TLU.

Festivals, spring and Christmas concerts, etc.), and high prizes have been achieved in national and international competitions. To support the creative and cultural field, the university has established and operates 1) [the Riho Päts Fund of School Music](#), which provides scholarships for outstanding children, young people and teachers for musical activities, and 2) [Enn Soosaar Foundation \(EST\)](#), which awards an annual prize for ethical essays.

With the completion of the Vita study and creative building in 2020, the training conditions of the university's sports teams and choreographers improved significantly. Gym facilities are also open to non-university guests. The university also promotes the use of other campus premises for non-primary activities. For example, the [SuperNova film hall \(EST\)](#) in the Nova study building hosts regular cinema screenings and festivals (e.g., PÖFF Shorts, Estonian Film Days), and the university courtyard has become a venue for acts and concerts that enrich the urban space and where all urban dwellers are welcome.

The university actively contributes to the creation, maintenance and involvement of the alumni community. It is also common practice to involve alumni in guest lectures to strengthen the link between university studies and the labour market. Recent developments include the involvement of alumni in LIFE projects and, for example, as mentors in virtual social incubators. Alumni are welcome at all public events of Tallinn University, which will be announced not only in the newsletter but also on social media and on the external website. Every year, Tallinn University nominates the Alumnus of the Year, which is the highest recognition for outstanding achievements in improving the well-being of the international, national and/or local community. On the 100th anniversary of continuous teacher education in 2019, TLU recognised one hundred Tallinn University Alumni of the Century who have made significant contributions to the development of Estonian society, education and culture. All recognised alumni are listed on the [TLU website](#).

STRENGTHS

- Strong quality and organisation of continuing education, systematic reporting and feedback, large selection of courses for different target groups.
- The EXU collaboration platform, which gathers activities promoting cooperation between the university and companies, as well as the core team and the network at the university.
- High involvement and representation of university employees in the work of professional associations and in advisory and decision-making bodies.
- Diverse selection of services and activities for organisations and the general public.

IMPROVEMENTS

- A more systematic use of TLU's great research potential to increase the university's contribution in addressing issues facing the society (including entrepreneurship) and to support development.
- Launching an innovation network in cooperation between Open Academy and Research Administration Office to motivate various parties (incl. researchers, entrepreneurs and innovation specialists at academic units) as well as to increase the necessary competencies (incl. intellectual property and its protection) and share experiences at the university.
- Greater involvement of the alumni enjoying entrepreneurship success as spokespersons for Tallinn University in the business community for expanding business partnerships.

SELF-EVALUATIONS OF THE CHOSEN STUDY PROGRAMMES

4.1.

EUROPEAN MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

<i>Title of the SP, study level, language of instruction</i>	European Modern Languages and Cultures BA, EST
<i>Academic unit responsible for conducting the SP</i>	School of Humanities
<i>Persons responsible for compiling the self-evaluation of the study programme, SPA</i>	Daniele Monticelli, Professor of Italian Studies and Semiotics, SPA of European Modern Languages and Cultures; Maris Saagpakk, Associate Professor of German Cultural History, Head of Western European Studies Study Area.
<i>Brief description of the process of self-evaluation of the SP</i>	January-February 2020 - internal discussions with teaching staff, agreement of the timeframe and distribution of work; March-August 2020 - writing the first draft of self-evaluation report, analysing students' feedback, previous programme self-evaluation analyses; August-September 2020 feedback from teaching staff, internal discussions to map strengths and areas of improvement; November 2020 final version of the self-evaluation report.

STATISTICS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov 1)</i>	105	176	209	235	248
<i>No. of students admitted</i>	105	111	86	100	87
<i>No. of applications (admission competition)</i>	303 (2,53)	405 (3,4)	365 (3,64)	365 (3,64)	396 (3,92)
<i>No. of students who dropped out</i>	11	43	55	57	45
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within the nominal period*</i>	-	-	-	25	36
<i>Mobility (outgoing students, e.g. short and long term)</i>	-	-	19	30	21
<i>Mobility (incoming students)</i>	55	43	28	41	27
<i>No. of academic employees</i>	47	45	42	41	44
<i>Mobility (academic staff)</i>	16	18	20	21	19

* standard duration of the SP + 1 year

The European Modern Languages and Cultures BA programme (ENKK) was launched in 2016 as a product of the large-scale study programme reform carried out at Tallinn University School of Humanities. The study programme consists of five major specialities (Spanish language and culture, English language and culture, Italian language and culture, French language and culture, and German language and culture) previously

taught under three different Bachelor's programmes: BA in English language and culture (2002-2019), BA in Romance languages and cultures (Spanish, Italian and French specialisations, 2005-2019), and BA in German language and culture (2002-2019). ENKK is the School's largest study programme both in terms of specialities and the number of students and lecturers involved in the teaching process.

4.1.1. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDIES

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The design and development of the study programme is based on the Development Plan of the University, its mission and vision, strategic goals and principles underlying its activities. Our Key Goals are listed in the following section of the TLU development plan 2020-2022: "Our goal is to help in developing such a society in Estonia that values languages, cultures and creativity, create possibilities for the Estonian cultural area to evolve in the conditions of openness and for every member of the society to participate in culture. /.../ In order to meet these goals, we study and teach /.../ the history, languages, cultures, art and thought traditions and societies of other nations. We integrate the knowledge of the languages and cultures and cultural studies of different countries into one interdisciplinary whole."

The development of the main specialities of the ENKK study programme has been based on the requirements of the Standard of Higher Education as well as the need to provide the knowledge required for Master's specialities. ENKK achieves this by bringing together innovative liberal arts-style practices and more traditional speciality-led study programme practices. General course modules (36 ECTS credits) offer an introduction to humanities in the broader sense, providing critical thinking skills and cultural competences vital for analysing societal issues and cultural phenomena and successfully coping with a globalising, rapidly changing world. The largest and most important part of the study programme is drawn up of subject-specific courses (for a total of 102 ECTS credits), which work together to develop broad-based specialists well prepared to enter either Master's studies or the labour market. The speciality studies combined with traineeships and speciality-specific research provide the graduates of the study programme with practical skills and knowledge allowing immediate occupation at non-specialised positions (such as beginner and intermediate-level language training at hobby schools, junior translators at translation agencies, assistants at foreign nations' diplomatic and cultural representations in Estonia,

linguistic and cultural agents at private companies with foreign business partners).

The structure and modules of the study programme and the subjects taught ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme. The foundational and advanced speciality modules along with practical language learning support the student in acquiring the foreign language central to their main field of study at least at B2 reference level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, key concepts and theories of literary and cultural research, along with gaining a systematic overview of subjects connected to the language, literature and culture of the speciality and a good awareness of topical social matters in the respective countries.

Practical language learning is supported by linguistic subjects or subject components that develop the students' metalinguistic competence. In subjects related to the history of literature and culture, seminars and essay-writing support an in-depth approach to topics of the students' choice, enable the application of acquired theoretical and methodological approaches and provide a vehicle for individual feedback. The general courses module of the study programme grants a broad base of knowledge and skills, along with the capacity to contextualise the speciality with other knowledge areas and to critically observe speciality-specific knowledge in a broader cultural and societal context.

The School of Humanities study programme reform replaced elective modules with a freely selected minor field of study (48 ECTS credits). The system of a main and a minor field of study offers students a broader range of options for designing their studies and significantly enhances the interdisciplinary aspect of the studies as well as the integration of modules in the (academic) unit's various study programmes. The option to e.g. study a second language and culture in depth at the Bachelor's level grants the graduates of the study programme a major advantage in proceeding to qualify as a foreign language teacher or to enter the translation or interpretation study programmes.

The SP sets a strong emphasis on the development of independent research skills and research paper writing skills. In the course of the Bachelor's seminar, students are introduced to various research methods and opportunities and plan their research papers. The academic writing course advances the student's skill of writing research papers in speciality-specific foreign language. In the process, the students will learn to draft a research paper project, discuss their research topic in the context of a seminar, and incorporate feedback.

Study programme development at the academic unit involves three interconnected levels. Proposals for amendments to the SP are directed top-down as well as bottom-up, whereas the final word remains exclusively with the collectives working directly with the speciality. The School's collegial board of studies handles matters related to the structure of the School's study programmes, the quality and integration of study programmes, and internal assessment. The second level includes the study programme administrator and the speciality administrators, who are responsible for the integration of specialities within the SP, development of joint activities, and study programme-specific problem solving. The third level includes the collectives working directly with the speciality, who are tasked with the development of the in-depth substantial aspects of the speciality and the subjects. Students are involved in all three levels of SP development.

After the structural reform, the main focus has remained on the establishment of new subjects (each granting 6 ECTS credits) and the development of a new Bachelor's degree exam. The reduction of the number of subject-specific courses and the expansion of their volume (6 credits) allowed to decrease the fragmentation of the studies. Rather than mechanically reorganise the content of the former 3-4 credit subjects into the new, more voluminous courses, the teaching staff carried out a conceptual overhaul of the content of the studies. A decisive shift has taken place from the former, primarily lecture-based system towards lecture-seminars, applying active learning and other innovative methods of teaching and learning, while also placing a greater emphasis on individual feedback, increasing the proportion of digital learning and the number of courses provided in collaboration between multiple lecturers. A joint seminar has been developed in cooperation between the specialities, bringing together students from different specialities each semester. The development of new courses has had a particular focus on integrating language learning with the respective subject-specific courses and integrating subjects taught in different academic years in order to support information contextualisation, systematisation and application skills.

The key change in the structure of the ENKK study programme was carried out in 2018, when the School decided to end teaching Finnish language and culture as a main field of study at Bachelor's level. A high-level round table met to discuss the further development of Finnish language teaching and learning; external parties, i.e. professional associations and employer representatives such as the Association of Teachers of Finnish and representatives of schools providing traineeship positions were included. As a result of the discussions, a completely overhauled minor field of study in Finnish was developed (48 ECTS credits), providing its graduates with a Finnish proficiency at B2 reference level, along with an insight into the Finnish culture, literature and society. The minor field of study also serves as a basis for the entry into Master's level studies, specialising as a Finnish teacher. The main field of study of Finnish teaching was opened in 2020 in the framework of the Master's level Foreign Language Teaching study programme. Finnish is also offered as a specialisation in the Master's level study programmes of translation and interpretation.

Following student feedback, we also changed the nominal distribution of courses in the study programme in 2019. Whereas the former distribution required most general courses to be completed in the first year of study, the new solution distributes general courses more evenly across the three years of study and increases the number of subject-specific courses during the first year of study. Student feedback suggests that this deepens first-year students' contact with the speciality and helps maintain their motivation. As the change was enacted starting from this academic year, its results are not yet ready for evaluation.

Study programme development takes into consideration the lecturers' research and development activities along with feedback from previous years' students, and introduces new courses or amends existing ones accordingly. As a rule, courses contain a general part (e.g., different periods in the cultural history of a specific country) as well as enough leeway to be able to focus on more specific subjects in lectures and seminars that can be changed and adapted each year. This allows the dissemination of the lecturers' research results (research efforts, publications) through introducing the relevant topics in existing course programmes, such as in environmental humanities/ecocriticism, gender and women's studies, translation studies and semiotics lectures and literature, culture and text analysis seminars. Several LIFE-projects (LIFE – Learning in Interdisciplinary Focused Environment) implemented by the academic staff teaching in the framework of the study programme (ecocriticism, lexicography, linguistic landscapes, language didactics,

languages and cultures of Spain's minority peoples, etc.) are directly linked to the lecturers' research projects. Publications by the academic staff have found frequent use as teaching materials. Students' research topics have also been connected to the teaching staff's research competences

COHERENCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The first two semesters offer broad-base introductory courses into the cultural and literary history of the respective countries, along with language courses at the relevant level. Big Questions and World Literature are offered as general courses. The second year places a much of emphasis on the minor field of study, also beginning preparations for writing the final thesis. This year is used by many students for an Erasmus exchange year. The third academic year focuses on in-depth subject-specific courses and intensive individual work with the thesis supervisor. The third year also includes traineeships and a LIFE-project requiring the student to apply the skills acquired. As students' language skills at the time of admission vary, all students are guaranteed language learning at their respective levels. Many courses require preliminary courses to be completed, enabling the logical structuring of teaching and learning.

The course-level coherence in courses taught in collaboration with several lecturers is ensured with proper planning. A good practice requires co-lecturers to attend their colleagues' lectures and seminars in the first year the course is offered, course requirements are coordinated together and joint feedback is given to students' works. Students' feedback regarding the coherence of the study programme is taken into account at all times and used in the study programme development (e.g., for the abovementioned change in the nominal distribution of courses across years).

Prior to initiating the development of the study programme, we first analysed the corresponding study programmes of our close neighbours University of Helsinki and University of Tartu. While the study programmes of language-related specialities at the University of Helsinki are not inspired by the liberal arts principles, their module and course distribution evidences certain parallels with the ENKK study programme. For instance, the Bachelor's degree programmes in English, German, Spanish and French include at least 70 credits' worth of courses specific to the main field of study (78 at our School), at least 25 credits' worth of courses in the minor field of study (48 at our School), and at least 20 credits in general courses (36 at our School). A major difference sees the Helsinki study programmes adopt a strong linguistic orientation, whereas our study programme places more emphasis on cultural knowledge.

In Estonia, specialities similar to the ENKK study programme are taught only at the University of Tartu. We have always made a point of comparing our programmes with those taught at Tartu in order to avoid duplicating the content of the specialities and to be able to offer an innovative concept standing out on its own merits. Key differences with the University of Tartu languages and cultures study programmes are as follows:

1. Specialities gathered into a single Bachelor's programme at our unit are taught under three different programmes at Tartu. Our abovementioned decision to focus these activities under a single study programme allows more intensive cooperation and integration in teaching languages and cultures.
2. The Italian language and culture offered by our study programme is not offered as a main field of study at Tartu or anywhere else in Estonia.
3. The study programme structures and proportional weight of modules between the ENKK study programme and the University of Tartu foreign languages and cultures study programmes differ significantly. Our study programme places greater emphasis on the main field of study (72 ECTS credits as compared to 60 credits at Tartu), whereas the volumes of non-specific foundational modules and the minor field of study are comparatively slightly smaller.

University of Tartu study programmes generally require an undergraduate thesis, with a volume corresponding to the volume of our written research paper requirement (6 ECTS credits). The ENKK programme requires a final exam in the main field of study.

The subject-specific courses of the University of Tartu study programmes vary by the number of credits and several foreign languages and cultures study programmes offer lower-volume courses (3 ECTS credits).

Over the last couple of years, we have made significant progress in creating closer contacts and comparisons with other Baltic states. At conferences held in Vilnius (2018) and Riga (2019) have been discussed and compared e.g. the German language study programmes in the Baltic states. In the framework of the Institutional German Studies Partnerships between German Universities and Eastern European Universities project, we collaborate with the German studies department of Vytautas-Magnus University, including organising joint student seminars. Comparisons with their activities have led to the application of certain ideas in the ENKK study programme.

Collaboration with the Italian studies department of the University of Latvia has allowed us to make use of their experience and materials on the integration of language learning with subject-specific courses beginning at basic reference levels. The planning of the Spanish culture courses has been inspired by the history and literature courses and treatment offered at the University of Valencia in Spain. For the purpose, the responsible lecturer paid a visit to the University of Valencia in order to explore the lectures and study programmes.

An enterprising attitude is fostered by group work, projects in various subjects, and traineeships requiring a close contact with the labour market and entrepreneurship sphere; motivation, teamwork skills, time planning, a sense of responsibility, etc., are also thus developed. ENKK students have completed traineeships in Estonian schools, companies and publishing houses as well as abroad (e.g., in Spain, Mexico, and Italy). Permanent job offers have also been earned at traineeships. An enterprising attitude and creativity are further supported by a special course titled LIFE, compulsory for all students at the study programme. The LIFE-project integrates a scientific approach, creativity, problem-based learning and teamwork, with transferable skills such as motivation, conflict resolution skills and digital competences. Academic staff and students at the ENKK study programme have been extremely active at creating and carrying out LIFE-projects, such as the university's [language landscape project](#) (Saagpakk, EST), *Deutsch macht Schule* (Heero, Frick), "100 sõna Eesti Vabariigile" (2017 Kotta, Sisask, EST), on whose basis a [learning video](#) was created, "Green Literature" (supervisors: Kuznetski, Liiv) producing the e-book "[Animal Talks](#)" and online exhibition "[The Artificial Construction Humanity](#)", "Reklaamikeel linnaruumis" (2019, Sisask, Kotta, Rebane), where the students collaborated on an article, "Raamat, maal ja naine" (2019 Kotta, Escudero), resulting in the creation of teaching materials, "[Galeegi-eesti veebisõnastik](#)" (2020 Kotta, López), and the "[Pruulitud ELU](#)" (Saagpakk) that has gained broad media coverage.

All lecture courses promote group work skills, public speaking skills and academic writing competences. For instance, language learning for the Italian speciality students includes immersion in the basics of creative writing: text construction, character and space creation, etc.; creative writing projects take place throughout the term, resulting in longer narrative texts across various genres. Creativity was also encouraged by the creative competition for students organised in the context of the Spanish-language courses, which called for Spanish-language haikus, gregerias and short stories (2020 Escudero). Creativity and testing one's skills is further possible by the national young translator contest organised by the Estonian Association of Translators with consistent input from the ENKK teaching staff.

Group work skills, creativity and public speaking skills are promoted by the now-traditional joint seminars of the different specialities of the study programme. Topics so far have included national anthems (2016), [manifestos](#) (2017, EST), utopia (2017), [androgyny](#) (2018, EST), animals in literature (2018), speeches by heads of state (2019), censorship (2019), the 1968 revolution (2020).

MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Students avail of the university's learning infrastructure; they are able to access the resources of the Academic Library, including research databases. The School of Humanities study fund accepts funding requests by teaching staff for course and study programme development purposes. The study fund has supported purchases of subject-specific literature and language learning materials, visits to events related to the studies and invitations extended to visiting lecturers. The School of Humanities has created a research fund offering grants for mobility-related activities, including sabbatical leave activities.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO STUDY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

A strength of the EKNN study programme is the deep involvement of course lecturers in the development of the study programme. Recent years' changes to the study programme have contributed a lot towards the integration of the subjects and improved achievement learning outcomes of the study programme.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
To decrease student drop-out rates.	<p>Introduction of a tutoring system assigning a lecturer to tutor each student, with whom goal-setting, results, challenges and potential solutions are discussed twice per semester.</p> <p>Enhanced coordination in planning and implementing the study loads and coursework between subject-specific courses taking place in the same semester.</p> <p>Analysing reasons for dropping out by speciality.</p>	<p>2022</p> <p>Speciality leaders, SPA, head of studies.</p>
A more systematic approach to teaching general competencies.	Constant analysis of general competency teaching in the study programme.	<p>2021</p> <p>SPA and speciality leaders in cooperation with the collegial board of studies.</p>
Improvement of the student involvement system.	Regular meetings with speciality groups and their representatives.	<p>2021</p> <p>Speciality leaders.</p>
Monitoring the nominal distribution of courses.	Analyse the impact of the 2019 distribution change on the results and graduation rates of students on the relevant courses.	<p>2023</p> <p>Speciality leaders and SPA.</p>

4.1.2. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT

Admissions are carried out based on the university general procedures and the admissions committee involves all lecturers involved with the courses. The content of the admission exam is updated annually, considering, among other things, candidate feedback. Attention is increasingly paid to identifying the motivation of the candidates: in addition to the motivational letter requirement, candidates are

thoroughly interviewed in the course of the admission exam on the goals for their prospective studies.

Before the commencement of studies, speciality selection can be supported by a work shadowing programme and participation at the Student Academy courses. Information is also available at each speciality's page on the university webpage and social media; specialities promote themselves through the organisation of subject olympiads and school visits (participation at school career fairs, etc.).

IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

Lecturers use highly varying, predominantly learner-centred, communicative, task-based and project-based teaching methods based on the changing approach to teaching and learning (collaborative writing, peer review, producing educational videos, group presentations). The effectiveness of the methods is ensured by the teaching staff attending continuing education trainings; in addition, every year, one central teaching-related topic is thoroughly discussed in the context of a teaching-related focus question of the study area.

The use of many different approaches, varied forms of study and diverse tasks (group work, seminars, lecture and reading diaries, podcasts, short videos, small projects, etc.) develops the students' teamwork skills and ability to interact with different target groups, their creativity and enterprising attitude as well as their capability to execute diverse tasks. The assessment of the course results is never limited to the final exam: all courses use formative assessment, developing the students' critical self-assessment capability and ability to analyse their improvement goals throughout the semester.

Provided lecturer consent, students are able to complete courses at a faster pace if necessary, carrying out individual tasks based on the study programme; reading lists include alternative options. Lecturers are available for individual consultations with students, and students receive individual counselling in the course of writing their research projects. Higher-performing students are offered an option to moderate events (such as meetings with filmmakers in the course of the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival), contribute to research projects and participate in speciality promotion. Future goals include adding additional links, recommended reading, research effort options, etc., into the course programmes to provide more choice.

A strong didactic preparation related to the traditions of Tallinn University enables our lecturers to use cutting-edge teaching methods (including new digital and e-learning possibilities) in language learning, while taking into account the students' individual needs. Significant support has been found in using native speaker trainees in language classes. Grading criteria have been developed on the basis of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the certification exams of the respective countries (Goethe Institute, Cambridge, CILS, DELF, ELE).

The 6 ECTS credit limit is based on the assumption that each credit corresponds to 26 student work hours. Student feedback regarding the time taken to complete tasks is considered. In order to harmonise literature

subjects, a literature working group was created in the 2019/2020 academic year, whose work included a review of the programmes of courses involving literature teaching and the reading volumes were harmonised: 100 pages = 1 ECTS credit.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS

Assessment includes both grading and formative assessment. Learning outcomes and competence levels to be attained by the end of the course have been formulated for each course. Exams and pass-fail assessments are considered as passed if the listed competences have been attained. Students are directed towards constant self-analysis in order to understand, and to be able to consider, their personal progress. Students are supported in setting personal study goals.

Formative assessment and the opportunity to monitor and direct the students' development is a major strength of the ENKK study programme as compared to similar programmes of major universities. Since our groups are usually small, the lecturers know the students well and vice versa, barriers are low and assistance is easy to request. Formative assessment is constantly ensured through feedback for written and oral tasks completed throughout the course, as well as through motivational interviews carried out whenever a student appears to start lagging behind. In order to allow students to observe their progress and learn to analyse it, study maps, analysis of forum posts, self-analysis at the beginning and end of the course, work in pairs, etc., are used. Many lecturers carry out end-of-semester feedback conversations, where students are expected to comment on the role of the lecturer, the group, and their own contribution. Intensive counselling and support is always provided in the course of the research effort.

Assessment criteria are explained at the beginning of the course and written down in the course programme. The course programme is available on the SIS web environment. Considering the special circumstances of spring 2020, assessment methods and assessment criteria could be changed in cooperation with the students, taking into account the changed learning conditions. Attention has been paid to the objectivity of assessment. Oral exams are always graded by two graders, the assessment criteria have been explained to the students and they are able to ask for clarifications regarding their grades. In the course of the studies, students write a research paper (6 ECTS credits) assessed by a committee of lecturers within the speciality. If necessary, external competence is included as reviewers, depending on the subject of the research work. The grade of the research paper is determined through the research paper assessment criteria and the defence process.

At the end of the semester, lecturers analyse the conduct of their courses; if necessary, decisions are taken to, e.g., increase the proportion of written work, carry out oral exams, etc.

Feedback may be group-focused or individual, take place verbally in a classroom, at an individual consultation or in a written form, for papers submitted digitally or as hard copies. The feedback process is based on the assessment criteria for the specific work. Feedback may be summative (grade-based) or formative (verbal) depending on the work. The goal of a formative grade is further development of the work and the elimination of bottlenecks. As a rule, feedback is individual.

Recognition of the students' previous learning and work experience takes place as per the university procedure. Students have access to counselling regarding recognition of prior learning, delivered by study counsellors, SPA or the head of speciality. Reasons for non-recognition generally relate to the fact that the material learned during previous studies or work experience do not cover the learning outcomes of the respective course.

STUDY MANAGEMENT AND MOBILITY

Each student has an advisor at the School to monitor their progress and offer counselling as necessary. Progress is also supported by the study programme's clear structure and a clearly determined sequence of courses as per the nominal distribution. Students may consult with the speciality administrators and study programme administrator, and this option is widely used by students. Matters relating to the study management are additionally considered by the collegial board of studies.

Due to the nature of the field, student mobility has a particularly important position in the ENKK programme, e.g. for language practice. The School employs an internationalisation coordinator, whose tasks include coordinating matters related to students' mobility abroad and carrying out related communication and information work. The example set, and advice offered, by the academic staff and fellow students are also found impactful. Since 2020, the German language speciality includes a mobility window, or a semester earmarked for studying abroad at a foreign university. A similar change is planned for the other ENKK main fields of study in 2021.

The study programme contains a compulsory traineeship (6 ECTS credits) to help students to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in a working environment. At the end of the traineeship, the trainee submits a self-analysis report, also containing feedback on the traineeship. As a development, a joint traineeship seminar is planned to be organised across all main fields of study of the ENKK, allowing students to talk about their traineeship experiences. Traineeships are found through personal contacts and long-time partners; however, it is a field requiring further input by the

unit and the study programme in the near future. Self-analyses and student feedback suggest that students are satisfied with the organisation of the traineeship; occasionally, they are disappointed with their level of fluency, if the latter is revealed as inadequate for the requirements of the labour market by the traineeship, hopefully providing further motivation for studies.

SUPPORT SERVICES, COUNSELLING

Numerous extracurricular activities, such as joint events, theme evenings, cinema and theatre visits and trips to Estonia and abroad are organised (e.g. the German language speciality group's participation at a seminar at the University of Kaunas and the Spanish language speciality group's spring cultural trips to Spain).

Lower-performing students receive consultations and supplementary lessons (including by trainees); certain students with special needs have been offered the option of lifting the time restriction for the exam. Students suffering from a heightened level of anxiety have been allowed to substitute a written presentation for the oral presentation. Multiple exam times are always provided. In certain cases, courses can, to some extent, be taken through distance learning. Supporting students whose native language is Russian with expressing themselves in writing remains a challenge. Solving it requires a centralised approach at the School level, and has been added as an agenda item for the 2020/2021 academic year of the collegial board of studies.

Students are expected to be able, or to learn, to manage their time so as to complete tasks related to their studies on time, and that any problems would be solved on the initiative of the student. To that end, the courses include discussions of time management, effective learning skills, the university's expectations for the learners, and efficient learning strategies.

Students are in charge of choosing their minor fields of study, time and date of the key exam, traineeship, and research topic. Offering options within the main fields of study of the study programme is a point for potential development to be reconsidered for the future, particularly as concerns specialities with bigger study groups. Rules are laid down at the beginning of each course regarding attendance and requirements, along with ways, and limits, of compensating for possible absences. Students' input on independent and mandatory work is solicited on multiple courses.

Topics for written research are generally related to the study and research fields of the teaching staff. ENKK students participate in student conferences and are also involved in organising speciality conferences (e.g., the Scandinavian Italianists' Conference 2019, Baltic students' meetings in Kaunas, 2019, Daugavpils, 2017, Rezekne, 2018).

Each theoretical and practical course is supported by digital solutions, i.e. course materials and tasks, frequently also the tests and feedback take place in a digital environment (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom, Edmodo). Various learning environments are used: wordpress.com, padlet, socrative, quizlet, learningapps, etc. Recorded lectures are available, along with live video lectures during the emergency period (over Zoom, Moodle).

Student feedback is considered as crucial by the School of Humanities, both as regards specific courses and study programmes and, more generally, the entirety of the studies. In addition to regular feedback, the School carried out focus group interviews with students in 2018, collecting a large amount of information towards the development of study programmes. The information has been used to adapt the content of single courses, the sequence of courses, and the organisation of studies.

Student representatives take part in the work of the council of the School and of the collegial board of studies, thus providing their input to discussions of each matter; among other things, students were involved in drafting this analysis.

COLLABORATION WITH ALUMNI

Alumni, employers, and various public and private sector institutions have been our valuable partners in study programme development and conduct of studies. Traineeships are the main collaboration topic, but other than traineeships, many other courses offer the opportunity to gain experience in institutions active in intermediating the respective language and culture or developing economic relationships. For instance, German language and culture students visit the Goethe-Institut, the BRD embassy, the Austrian embassy, Transferwise, Via Hansa AS and Estravel AS.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- A close integration between specialties can be considered as a particular strength.
- Provision of individual feedback to the students is prioritised and assessment includes a variety of tasks, competencies and skills.
- The courses in the study programme involve innovative methods and projects.
- Attention is increasingly paid to the use of a range of digital solutions in studies.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Broader promotion of the specialties.	In the future, promotion activities could include more students, also involving them in admission and in the conduct of the specialties' information days.	Constantly. Speciality administrators.
Further improvement of the assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes.	A closer discussion of assessment methods between specialties and between lecturers teaching different courses.	2021 SPA and lecturers.
Improvement of the organisation of traineeships.	Development of a joint traineeship seminar across the main fields of study. Improvement of traineeship guidance. Collaborating with external partners to improve the content and purposefulness of traineeships.	2022 Lecturers responsible for traineeships.
A more systematic inclusion of alumni and employers in the study programme development.	Consider potential ways for inclusion and draft a plan in collaboration with alumni and employers.	2021 Speciality administrators.

4.1.3. DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF, AGE STRUCTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

The study programme features a sufficient number of lecturers, the majority of whom have doctoral degrees. Master's degree holders are primarily language teachers. The composition has a good gender balance: 14 women (47%) and 16 men (53%), with an average age of 48 years. The composition of the key teaching staff of the ENKK is international; there are 7 foreign lecturers, i.e. 27% of the lecturers teaching the courses included in the study programme (the proportion of foreign lecturers across the TLU is 13%).

External partners continuously funding the activities of the ENKK are the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service; German lecturer), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Spain (Spanish lecturer), Finnish National Agency for Education (Finnish lecturer) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy and the Camoes Institute, partially funding the Italian and Portuguese lecturers' salaries respectively.

ENKK study programme lecturers participate in several research, creative and applied projects directly related to the courses taught in the study programme in the following fields:

1. Linguistics. Drafting of a major French-Estonian dictionary (in collaboration with the Estonian-French Lexicographic society, INALCO and the Institute of the Estonian Language). Our lecturers are responsible for the organisation of foreign language olympiads and the scientific analysis of their results. As the main organiser of the French olympiad, our lecturers have expanded it to an international event involving students from the three Baltic states.
2. Translation and translation studies. Tallinn University Press and other Estonian publishers have published a considerable amount of humanities-specific literature translated, edited and/or commented by our lecturers, which can also be used as study material. These include major translation projects and critiqued editions such as the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri. Our lecturers are involved in the organisation of the national youth translation contest. History and theory of translation are part of the key fields of research of our lecturers.
3. In the field of cultural and literary history, a particular focus has been laid on the research of Estonian and

Baltic German literature and literary contacts with Romance, English- and German-speaking countries. Theoretically and methodologically speaking, our lecturers utilise the following approaches in their research: ecocriticism, semiotic literary criticism, narratology, postcolonialism, feminism, cultural studies, discourse analysis, etc.

4. Foreign language didactics. Our researchers cooperate closely with the TLU School of Educational Sciences. The research projects are interdisciplinary by their nature and are connected to the disciplines of foreign language didactics and educational sciences: a) the development of plurilingualism and pluricultural competence; b) integrated subject and foreign language learning and teaching in Estonia; c) professional development of foreign language teachers through action research. Lecturers in the speciality of English language and culture (Suliko Liiv and Ene Alas) are involved in the project "Teaching English as a content subject at the tertiary level – modular approach" in the framework of the Erasmus+ strategic partnership programme.

All of the above competences are also employed towards the better organisation of learning and teaching. ENKK lecturers have been highly active in the organisation of research events, organising multiple international conferences in Tallinn (e.g., the Scandinavian Italianists Conference 2019, the international German Studies conferences 2018 and 2020), involving the Bachelor's SP students in the organisation and management of the conferences.

A shortage of major research projects with external funding has proven a challenge, as such funding would enable the lecturers to dedicate part of their time to research, as well as employ new doctoral student junior research fellows. For this reason, we have intensified and further coordinated project-writing activities within the last year. In spring 2020, two major research project applications have been submitted, led by Maris Saagpakk and Daniele Monticelli and involving multiple lecturers in the study programme (Kaia Sisask, Aigi Heero, Merilyn Meristo, Ene Alas, Andine Frick).

ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

The study programme follows the requirements for quality and publication established for the academic staff of TLU. Previously, academic dishonesty as a subject was introduced to students in the framework

of the Bachelor's seminar of their third academic year. However, students already made mistakes, failed exams and received warnings during the first and second academic years. From the academic year 2019/2020 onwards, academic dishonesty receives more attention during the first year of study. Students are instructed in this respect, they are informed of the zero tolerance principle for plagiarism, plagiarism recognition software along with ways to recognise and prevent plagiarism as well as the importance of referencing are introduced. Referencing systems are introduced during the first year of studies in the context of the written papers produced for several courses. Each semester, students read at least one subject with in-depth consideration of academic writing and ethics. All written papers and the research paper have to pass a plagiarism check using plagiarism detection software. The first identified case of plagiarism results in a warning, the second fails the course. More serious cases of plagiarism are handled by the academic committee and may lead to expulsion.

MOBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF, ITS OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

Students and lecturers at the ENKK study programme are active users of international mobility. A significant cooperation measure is the Erasmus contracts, through which we have developed strategic partnerships (for example, with Würzburg, Turku, Helsinki, Roma La Sapienza, Firenze, Pescara-Chieti, Bologna, Valencia).

The ENKK study programme receives numerous international exchange students every year. Each semester, several visiting lecturers deliver single lectures or lecture series via Erasmus as well as other programmes. During the last three years, we have been able to utilise approximately 20 foreign trainees in the studies of the Italian, Spanish and German language and culture specialities. Several former trainees have retained connections to the university via doctoral studies or formal employment.

Cooperation with foreign partners also includes mutual supervision and reviewing of the research papers of students or doctoral students (e.g. with the universities of Barcelona, Putra Malaysia, Zaragoza and Roma La Sapienza). Collaboration with foreign partners has been particularly intense regarding the organisation of research events (within the last three years, e.g., Scandinavian Italianists Conference, Dantists Conference) and production of joint publications.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

Regular development seminars are organised for lecturers, where subjects important for the university,

such as promotion of the quality of teaching and learning, are discussed. Enhancing the lecturers' teaching skills and digital competences receives significant attention. Another goal is to enhance interdisciplinary cooperation and include even more research staff in teaching. Several working groups have been created at the academic unit for the purpose, increasing, among other things, all staff members' opportunities for involvement in various development activities (e.g., modernisation of teaching and learning working group, humanities in the 21st century working group, etc.). Lecturers take part in training on assessment methods and share their experiences, e.g., in the course of development seminars of the study area.

The School has developed a system for calculating workloads, which attempts a comprehensive consideration of the staff members' contribution to teaching and supervision, RDC activities and administration. The calculation is used in the annual staff members' career development discussion with the head of the study area, discussing the employees' results in various components of the load, related problems and potential solutions. In the recent years, career development discussions have included focus topics, which are also discussed at the joint development seminars of the study programme's lecturers. In 2018, the focus topic was the provision of feedback to students, and in 2019, promotion of students' writing skills.

In order to promote collaboration among members of teaching staff, the School's load calculation system assigns a higher load coefficient for jointly taught courses. As a result, the number of jointly taught courses has steeply increased over the last three years. The majority of the content and study forms used in the courses in our study programme are rooted in collaboration, through which lecturers are able to constantly learn from one another. Lecturers teaching different specialities within the study programme also collaborate significantly through the conduct of joint seminars and general courses of the study programme, conducting LIFE-projects and writing articles and projects. In the course of these activities, they also collaborate with lecturers of other study programmes and areas of the School and other academic units of the University.

ENKK lecturers take part in numerous national and international professional networks (i.e., EVÖL, EATE, ESSE, NEDANTEN, IATIS) with the goal of professional self-development and development of other participants in the networks, as well as the creation of connections between institutions for future collaboration (e.g., organisation of traineeships and organisation and participation at conferences). Collaboration with partners in society takes place for

the purpose of development (e.g., drafting and assessment of national examinations, training and monitoring of task creators and assessors,

development of competence tests, consultations and review of student papers, organisation of language olympiads).

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

- Numerous lecturers are actively involved in research and various cooperation networks.
- A high level of didactic knowledge among the speciality lecturers.
- Collaboration among lecturers in teaching as well as research is becoming more common.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Improved inclusion and counselling of new lecturers.	To offer new lecturers a mentor from amongst the lecturers of the study area.	Constantly. Head of the study area, SPA, speciality administrator.
Improved training of future generations of lecturers.	Increasing the number of doctoral junior research fellows in the study programme's specialities, their inclusion in teaching and provision of career opportunities.	2023. Professors and teaching track associate professors.
Increasing the number of research staff.	To invest in writing research projects in order to be able to create new positions supported by projects.	Constantly. Professors and teaching track associate professors.
A systematic promotion and application of collegiate learning models among lecturers.	Through campaigns and career development discussions, turn collegiate learning and collegiate feedback into a regular activity among teaching staff.	Constantly. Collegial board of studies, head of the study area, lecturers.

APPENDICES:

[Appendix 1. Study programme form of the ENKK](#)

[Appendix 2. Course programmes of the 5 subjects of the ENKK](#)

[Appendix 3. Nominal division of the modules/subjects of the ENKK](#)

[Appendix 4. Information about academic staff of the ENKK](#)

4.2.

INTEGRATED NATURAL SCIENCES

<i>Title of the SP, study level, language of instruction</i>	Integrated Natural Sciences BA, EST
<i>Academic unit responsible for conducting the study programme</i>	School of Natural Sciences and Health (SNSH)
<i>Person responsible for compiling the self-evaluation of the study programme, SPA</i>	Principal compilers were Sirje Vaask, Head of Studies of SNSH; Katrin Laas, Study Programme Administrator, Associate Professor of Optics and Astronomy.
<i>Brief description of the process of self-evaluation of the SP</i>	<p>Self-evaluation of the SP occurred during the 2019-2020. Participants in the self-analysis included the SPA, Head of Studies and Head of the Study Area, lecturers (Neeme Lumi, lecturer of Physics Education, project leader for renewing study programme; module leaders and teaching staff Kairi Koort, Kert Martma, Reimo Ravis, Piret Vacht, Helen Sooväli-Sepping, Tiina Elvisto, etc.).</p> <p>Questions about the development of the SP have been discussed during the year, where attendance was high among teaching staff.</p> <p>12 meetings occurred during the analysis and development process, minutes of the meetings are available (in Estonian). Data was used from TLU databases, student and lecturer feedback.</p>

STATISTICS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov 1)</i>	50	48	55	58	59
<i>No. of students admitted</i>	14	23	19	15	19
<i>No. of applications</i>	86	66	45	36	43
<i>No. of students who dropped out*</i>	12	6	17	6	10
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within a nominal period**</i>	-	3%***	19%	13%	25%
<i>Mobility (outgoing students, e.g. short and long term)</i>	0	0	0	0	0****
<i>Mobility (incoming students)</i>	1	3	6	8	1
<i>No. of academic employees (considering all modules)</i>	Around 50	Around 50	Around 50	Around 30	Around 30
<i>Mobility (academic staff)</i>	13	0	3	4	0

* Drop-outs include students who switched speciality, e.g., transferred to the biology study programme or School of Digital Technologies' study programmes.

** Standard duration of the SP + 1 year. SP was opened on the 2015/2016 academic year, therefore the nominal period of studies for first applicants ended in 2018.

*** 1 student graduated within two years, part of the SP was considered to have been completed due to previous studies..

**** 1 student had to go to study and 1 had to go to professional placement, but mobility was not possible due to the emergency situation.

When observing the above statistical information, it must be considered that this study programme has one of the most complex constitution and structure in

TLU. Additionally, the generally low interest towards natural sciences must be considered as a reason for low admission endpoints.

4.2.1. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDIES

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The first admission to the Integrated Natural Sciences SP (INTNAT) was for the 2015/2016 academic year. This SP was created during an extensive development process; study programmes for various natural sciences were consolidated into one, with several options and three main fields of study: (I) classical natural sciences; (II) sustainable development and natural sciences; and (III) information communication technology (ICT) in natural sciences. The need to upgrade the SP stemmed from the fact that the number of applicants and students for the study programmes in the so-called narrow natural sciences was very low, on the account of which the educational activity was not effective. The main fields of study of ICT and sustainability were added in the hope of recruiting more students to the natural sciences speciality, and to differentiate from natural sciences specialities offered in other Estonian universities. In 2005, Estonia adopted the Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development 'Sustainable Estonia 21' and environmental sustainability is one of the core values and competencies specified in the national study programme. Therefore, the sustainability module supported the teaching of these significant competencies. Research in computer science followed the general science policy of Estonia, where applications of ICT in other areas have been declared as a major specialisation area for Estonia. Moreover, the Estonian Development Fund declared education as a major application area for ICT.

The SP created was one of the most complex ones in TLU, based on its structure, the number of possible options and combinations. As the SP had to provide the prerequisites for continuing on Master's level natural sciences' teacher studies, the programme was based on national study programmes and included 4 minor fields of study subjects for biology, chemistry, geoecology and physics. In 2016, Tallinn University-wide amendments to the Statute of Study Programme were enacted. These were also applied to the INTNAT SP (the addition of a university-wide course module, LIFE, speciality foreign language and traineeship). The Schools formed as a result of the structural reform in 2015 provided a much broader platform for learning, as well as research cooperation for most specialities.

A persistent problem of the INTNAT SP in 2015-2018 was the scarceness of applicants and the low number

of graduates within the nominal period of studies (only 22% and 6% of students who started their studies in 2015 and 2016 respectively graduated within the nominal period of studies – 6 semesters). Because of this, by the beginning of 2019, it was decided that the SP with many options is not sustainable in its current form. Additionally, as higher education funding has not been increased during the last five years, this decision supported the need to focus on teaching segments that should have a higher priority. The Ministry of Education and Research has specified that studies in natural sciences should provide an input for teacher education, which means biology, physics, geography and chemistry should be the priorities. In 2019, considering the previous developments, the SP was only opened for one main field of study (classical natural sciences) and four minor fields of study (biology, physics, geography, chemistry), plus a mathematics module. Concurrently with this decision, a 1.5-year SP development project was initiated. General courses were amended and intra-speciality elective modules were reviewed for the 2020 admission. As the INTNAT SP has a rather large common part with the undergraduate biology study programme, the required developments for both are implemented together.

The SP is managed by a study programme administrator and field modules have module managers (5) who are tasked with substantive speciality work in administering the module's field. Programme development in SNSH is systematic and regular, involving a number of different interest groups. Collaboration has mostly included School directors and teachers of natural sciences, scientists from the Institute of Ecology, students and alumni. Once a year, the Programme Administrator has to provide a progress report of all developments which took place during the previous year. INTNAT has an informal Study Programme Council which meets once per year. The SPA proposes amendments to the list of courses once a year to the Council of Studies of SNSH, they must also be approved by the Council of the SNSH. The amendments enter into force at the beginning of the following academic year.

The development activity for the 2020/2021 academic year is to assess the treatment of sustainability in various SNSH study programmes and subjects in order to better integrate sustainability in study programmes. This is one of the development objectives of TLU for 2020-2022.

STUDY PROGRAMME COHERENCE

To implement SP changes, students' main field of study choices were constantly assessed during 2015-2018. For example, 19 students were admitted in 2018, two of them selected ICT as their main field of study, two selected sustainability, and the rest opted for classical natural sciences. ICT was also selected by applicants in 2017 and 2016, but this main field of study has proven to be difficult for students or has not met their expectations. Changes to the main field of study or dropping out were very common. The 2020 version of the study programme only includes one main field of study, but the SP also contains ICT subjects that directly support natural sciences' ICT competences for future teachers (robotics) and scientists (R language data analyses, digital humanities, basics of programming).

Subject volumes and the balance between specialities has been amended based on the feedback from students and lecturers. Two of the study programme's speciality modules include basic professional knowledge and professional placement, and the third is based on a narrower and/or enhanced speciality direction. For example, in 2020, geography is focused on developing the hydrologist competence. According to the [OSKA](#) report, which analyses the needs for labour and skills necessary for Estonia's economic development over the next 10 years, this field is not covered in Estonia, yet the labour market requires people with the relevant competence. Physics and chemistry are mostly focused on theoretical physics or analytic and biochemistry (that also supports Master's studies for biochemistry, which is important in the context of exact sciences, contemporary technology and innovation).

Amendments are assessed based on the number of graduates within the nominal period of studies, course satisfaction, acquired competences, and work intensity. Students have primarily supported the options for a wide selection; they note the uneven level of applicants. For example, the first general courses are not directly necessary for competent students. From 2020, applicants take a knowledge test for general courses, and if a student demonstrates sufficient knowledge, he/she can immediately progress to speciality-specific courses. Interactions between different fields of the study programme are more random than systematic. Considering the feedback, the general courses part of the SP was amended from 2020, and the course from the School of Digital Technologies was replaced by the new course 'Laws of Nature' that covers the most significant and fundamental laws and processes in natural sciences. The course is prepared by lecturers of different fields and it should ensure the treatment of natural sciences as an integrated and unified system, without specific distinctions between various domains, and support the development of algorithmic thinking. This new general

course is a collaboration between lecturers, covering biology, physics, chemistry, geography, life in the context of the beginning and end of the Earth and the Universe, the evolution of chemical elements and their nature from the perspectives of physics and chemistry, as well as chemical elements and compounds in the domain of biology. More specific proposals to change the volume of a course or to create new courses are put forward by the appropriate study programme administrator, who also assesses and analyses study programmes (in the wider field of sustainability) from other countries.

Due to the wide basis of the INTNAT, graduates can continue their studies in various natural science or engineering Master's programmes across Estonia (for example, in medical physics, thermal engineering, geotechnics, environmental sciences etc. or Master's studies for biology, physics, chemistry or geography in all Estonian universities). Most students continue their studies in the field of natural studies in Estonian or foreign universities. Teachers of natural sciences are in high demand in the labour market, and school directors often look for new employees already from among the Bachelor's students. Most Master's students studying teaching already work as teachers. Several Bachelor's students are active teachers of natural sciences who are acquiring competency in an additional speciality. In addition to studying to be a teacher, interested persons can continue their studies in TLU, both on Master's study programmes for Molecular biochemistry and ecology or Environmental management and can specialise in fields requiring work in a laboratory. The School also offers doctoral programmes preparing students for a scientific career. The previous three natural sciences' doctoral programmes were combined into one programme - 'Complex Systems in Natural Sciences' - from 2021. This demonstrates the need for integrating disciplines on the highest level of studies.

MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Resources support the achievement of SP objectives. They may include learning environments, study materials, study aids and equipment, study rooms and financial resources. There is an agreement between the university and School (agreed between the Rector and the Director of the SNSH) of how the educational funding would be distributed. The agreement contains certain challenges the School is expected to meet and this performance is measured, for example, activities to specialities of natural sciences or preparation of teachers of natural sciences.. The School has a general provision of education budget and they primarily monitor changes (in specific study programmes or type of expenditure). For many years, popularising specialities of natural sciences has been a priority for the School's marketing activities. To introduce our good technical opportunities for studying

and research, the SNSH advertises itself to both upper secondary school students and university applicants.

Most teaching is performed in new buildings at TLU. The infrastructure is good and modern and students are satisfied with infrastructure and laboratory resources (described in Appendix 5). As the teaching of natural sciences has been a priority for the School and the university alike, technical possibilities have so far been either good or very good. The purchase of laboratory equipment is also supported by the School's research fund, but the procurement of more specific instruments is linked to specific research. The laboratory resources are used at all levels of teaching and research. University has public procurement for most of the reagents and laboratory supplies. Reagents and laboratory supplies are

bought mainly from them. Chemicals related to teaching are covered by educational funding. The SPs of the SNSH use more and more sustainable solutions, e.g., minimal printing of materials, reusable supplies (where possible).

The salaries are a big part of the costs, agreed between the Director of the SNSH and employees, yet there are lower limits decided at the University level. As study groups in this study programme have been small, the School has tried to find solutions for more effective teaching. In some cases, the size of laboratories restricts the number of participants. The lecturers' workload accounts for the specificity of natural sciences, e.g., the need for more contact hours, teaching in small groups or teaching by several lecturers (e.g., during nature-related practice).

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO STUDY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- The SP has very good infrastructure, including laboratories for teaching and research. Laboratory resources are used at all levels of teaching and research at the university, thereby increasing interest in continuing education.
- A graduate of this SP can continue his/her studies in Master's or doctoral studies, the SP has many options that ensure (that the teacher has) the necessary competence in his/her speciality.
- The School's scientists are involved in the studies.
- The number of students has not significantly decreased due to the reduced number of main fields of study during the restructuring of the study programme.
- There is a labour shortage in Estonia for teachers of natural sciences and teaching specialists in these fields is a national level priority. It has been a priority to advertise study programmes of natural sciences.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Reinforcing intra-study programme collaboration for the integrated teaching of natural sciences. Cooperation with partners from outside of the university to integrate the subjects of sustainable development.	Lecturer development meetings to ensure better planning of studies between various fields of natural sciences, cooperation with partners from outside of the university to develop the study programme.	2021-2024 SPA, teaching staff, head of studies.
To continue the popularisation of the study of natural sciences to increase the number of incoming learners.	To cooperate with alumni and scientists who show the labour market perspectives of natural sciences, to popularise the speciality.	2021-2023 Marketing and communication specialist in cooperation with lecturers and the TLU Marketing and Communication Office.
To consider scholarships as a possibility for supporting students studying a priority speciality in Estonia.	To consider financing possibilities for funding studies in the field of natural sciences.	2021-2022 Head of studies, director in collaboration with the management of the Tallinn University.

4.2.2. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT

Student admission is granted in accordance with TLU Study Regulations. The objective has been to increase the ratio of students studying natural sciences, as it is low throughout Europe. Therefore, admission has been threshold-based, i.e., everyone getting a result of 65 points or more is welcome to study. INTNAT and Biology share the admission exam. This enables to see the candidates' interest towards natural sciences more widely and they can be counselled to select the most suitable study programme. The admission exam consists of two alternative questions that the student selects based on his or her interest towards chemistry, physics, geography or biology. A committee discussion is used to assess logical thinking, understanding of natural sciences and the student's motivation to study natural sciences. Compared to other specialities, the ratio of students wishing to take up studies in the field is still tending to be low (satisfactory).

The SNSH has also developed Student Academy programmes, but due to a small target group they have not been opened. This trend - low interest in natural sciences - is also characteristic of other European states.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

Students feedback is discussed regularly during seminars, and analysed twice per year by teaching staff. Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the SPA. For all study programmes, ICT skills are centrally supported by the SDT. Speciality English competence is centrally ensured by the School of Humanities. After the first academic year, some students have expressed interest in changing modules and main fields of study, and this has been done without problems for the students. For example, a biology student has transferred to the Integrated Natural Sciences study programme and vice versa. This requires the mapping of individual interests and counselling by study programme administrators and the study counsellor. Transfers between SPs are encouraged, not obstructed, by the School.

In 2019, for the first time, first year students undertook a knowledge test at the beginning of the semester. This created a situation where students, who achieved 80% in a test repeating high school material, were immediately able to focus on more speciality-specific courses. This policy supports a student-based approach. For more extensive courses, the lecturers have been recommended to distribute the workload of natural sciences' students and conduct exams/work/tests on an ongoing basis to avoid overload at the end of the semester. Lectures

have been offered motivating feedback trainings and in addition to numeric feedback they are expected to provide substantiated verbal feedback to their students. Individual advice or the option to repeat the course are available where a course proves to be complicated. This has been most needed for courses in the field of mathematics. In individual cases or in the case of special educational needs, replacement courses or lecturers have been found for the student. Course volumes have been described in the course programmes (both for contact learning and independent work).

The seminar paper is a mandatory prerequisite for the final thesis and includes the theoretical part of the student's final thesis. The seminar paper is supervised and generally related to the scientific fields of the School's lecturers. The seminar paper is defended in front of a committee and reviewed just as a Bachelor's thesis. This should enable the student to distribute the workload during his/her studies, gain experience and be better prepared for defending the Bachelor's thesis.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS

Students are evaluated by using various methods: examinations, tests, reports, presentations, media labs, laboratory work defences, herbarium work, etc. In 2020, assessment methods were adjusted to the requirements posed by distance learning. As the SP includes a wide selection of various fields and subjects, the lecturers have also proposed multiple (e-)study environments. The learning outcomes and their assessment methods are included in course programmes, but the level of detail is different between programmes. The SP form was harmonised when the study information system SIS-2 was commissioned in 2016.

If the student is not happy with his/her grade or the assessment principles have not been clear, the student can contest the result, firstly with the lecturer, then, if necessary, with the head of studies. Questions have been resolved by communicating with the lecturer, and no appeals have been filed with the School's head of studies during this reporting period. In two cases, the School had to centrally intervene in a violation of academic customs (plagiarism and the use of prohibited material during an examination). In both cases, the students were issued a warning and there have been no repeated infringements.

Recognition of prior learning and work experience is regulated by the TLU Study Regulations. In the recognition process, compatibility of previously-acquired knowledge and the skills/experience with the content of the study programme is taken into account. RPL is used by a few students who have studied before or have dropped out previously.

STUDY MANAGEMENT (INCLUDING MOBILITY)

Teaching is conducted pursuant to the timetable; nominal study work distributions are compiled for each student individually - initially based on a standard schedule and then based on the student's academic progress or his/her elective courses.

Due to the emergency situation in 2020, the School implemented distance learning, used recorded or live lectures and discussions, seminars. The School purchased graphics tablets that can be used to demonstrate e.g., derivations or tasks and their solutions on screen during distance learning. The university solved contact learning (e.g., laboratories and practical courses) by extending the courses; the practical activities of several courses were arranged during June 2020 and were extended until August 2020 for a few courses. Preliminary defences of seminar papers and Bachelor's theses were arranged in ZOOM; preliminary defences and defences of Bachelor's theses were arranged on site implementing social distancing. Interested observers and supervisors were able to participate in Bachelor's theses defences over ZOOM.

Feedback to courses and professional placements is collected at the end of the semester. Course feedback is predominantly positive; proposals for improvements include practical arrangements for a few courses (being late to teaching, outdated study materials, unclear information).

Practical courses, e.g., field practices, have established principles regarding the responsibilities of the School (transport, accommodation, etc.) and of the students. Students are informed of their opportunity to apply to the SNSH for support to cover the expenditure related to their practical courses. During the last two years, traineeship has been arranged in practice bases with good conditions and a known natural environment. The objective of the university is to find permanent partners for traineeship abroad; to ensure that all arrangements are tested and as expected. The Erasmus coordinator for natural sciences arranges regular information sessions; mobility opportunities are also covered in the first-year students' general course. In addition to the coordinator, opportunities and experiences are introduced by the study programme administrator or students who have already been through studies or traineeship abroad. The university has partner universities; information is available on the webpage. Most obstacles come from the students' personal issues and preferences.

SUPPORT SERVICES, COUNSELLING

Students have access to the University support systems, described in general part of the report. Students are counselled by study specialist M. Paapstel and study programme administrator K. Laas. The administrator helps in compiling a study plan (nominal distribution) that follows the students' individual progression. Every student and study counsellor can access these plans from Drive. The study programme administrator and the student can adjust these plans according to their progression and choices. The study counsellor provides advice regarding learning processes (academic leave, study plan compilation, study load, timetable variations etc.), the administrator and module administrators, where appropriate, provide counselling in subject-specific situations. Counselling is individual and student-focused. Integrated Natural Sciences' students assess their study counsellor's assistance very highly.

Whereas the dropout rate for the 2015-2017 study programme applicants was 50-56%, the dropout rate for the 2018-2019 study programme version has remained at the level of 35-38%. The nominal period of studies for 2018-2019 is still ongoing. Three-year statistics show that the ratio of late dropouts (leaving the study programme after semester 4) is low. For example, six students, i.e., 13% of all applicants, dropped out from the 2015 study programme version after semester 4. As of November 2020, there were zero late dropouts from the 2017 and 2018 study programme versions. The decreased dropout rates can also be explained by the fact that these courses have or have previously had active course representatives to motivate and inform the course. Dropouts have been related to the complexity of studies in natural subjects. In these cases, the students have been counselled to e.g., change their main field of study, and they have used this opportunity. Students from the ICT main field of study have transferred to the classical natural sciences and sustainability main fields of study. The study counsellor calls all students who have announced their intention in dropping out and a discussion will be agreed, after which several students have decided to continue their studies.

To support graduating within the nominal period of studies, second year seminar paper seminars were started for students in the 2017 and later versions of the SP. These help the students manage their schedule and issues within the framework of the seminar paper. The SNSH's student council has also been of help. The student council includes students from various fields of natural sciences, and they have provided peer support to support studies and social inclusion.

COLLABORATION WITH ALUMNI

Alumni have been included in SP discussions, but the number of alumni is low as the SP is relatively new. Alumni, who have continued their Master's or doctoral studies in TLU or elsewhere are regularly included in advertising the studies.

Alumni work in the practice bases, supervise students or mediate professional placement opportunities. As

speciality traineeship for students was only integrated since the 2019 version of the study programme, the first students will be reaching their traineeship during the spring of 2020 or autumn of 2021. Professional placement is regulated by the guidelines and contract for professional placement. The guidelines and contract for professional placement are common with the Biology SP, and published on the [School's website \(EST\)](#).

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- Within this study programme, the students have many choices and study possibilities according to their individual interests.
- Students have access to personal counselling and support from the study counsellor and study programme administrator.
- Systematic information is provided about mobility opportunities, and the School provides extensive support for mobility.
- Long-term cooperation has been started for having permanent practice bases.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
The development of course programmes and the clarity of assessment criteria in learning.	To clarify the planned evaluations and criteria during the course, and harmonise the presentation of course programmes.	2021-2022 SPA, head of studies, cooperation with the TLU's Academic Affairs Office.
To increase the number of students that complete their studies within the nominal period.	Counselling and motivating students in the course of the seminar of seminar papers and Bachelor's theses. To include more sub-administrators and supervisors. To assess students' motivation during admissions, support students' studies and social inclusion in collaboration with the SNSH's student council.	2021-2024 Programme administrators, Study Counsellor and Specialist, lecturer, head of studies with the student council.
Uneven utilisation of study environments, their plurality and quality of usability.	To direct lecturers to use more convenient learning environments (Moodle).	2021-2022 Head of Studies, E-learning Centre.
To enrich the teaching methods used by lecturers of various subjects.	To hold regular seminars with lecturers to discuss teaching and learning, to enrich the teaching methods used by the lecturers.	2021- 2023 SPA, head of studies, cooperation with the TLU's Personnel Office.

4.2.3. DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF, AGE STRUCTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

As the SP used to have three main fields of study and currently has one main field of study with four natural sciences directions and minor fields of study, the number of lecturers teaching in the study programme is rather significant and can reach 30-50 in different years. Most lecturers are the School's employees who need to pass an evaluation every five years. Additionally, from 2019, the university uses a new career model that provides clear objectives and structure for applying to academic positions. Most of the members of the teaching staff have doctoral degrees, and most are actively carrying out their own research. The publication record of the teaching staff shows a significant upward trend with large numbers of high-level publications in respected international peer-reviewed journals (see 1.1 and 3.1 of the [Estonian classification of publications](#)). Over the years, the Institute of Ecology and its [scientists](#) have also been involved in the study processes of the SP: lectures, supervising fieldwork and laboratory work, supervising term papers and theses, etc. Doctoral students of natural sciences are also included in the teaching process, e.g., as supervisors of laboratory work.

As the SP has many options and few students, it is characterised by teaching in small groups (5-10). The SP also uses teaching by multiple lecturers, e.g., during field practice or in the main field of study of sustainability. This ensures better supervision or discussion with students. The low number of students means that there are no issues with finding individual solutions.

Considering the reduction of the main fields of study from three to one and the limited elective course selection for cost-efficiency, some natural sciences lecturers have moved from a full-time study load to part-time (J. Priimets, T. Ploompuu, E. Rajandu, T. Elvisto, etc.), and several lecturers work in multiple positions (mostly also as teachers of natural sciences). This complicates the formulation of a universally suitable timetable. The SP also includes lecturers from outside of the university, less in the classical natural sciences main field of study, more in the sustainability main field of study.

ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

During their first semester at TLU, students are informed about the ethical principles of academic writing and other legal issues applicable to all subjects and areas of study. Since 2017, the TLU has a programme [Urkund](#) available for plagiarism detection. The importance of ethical research practices is also emphasised throughout the courses ([Estonian Code of Conduct for Research](#)

[Integrity](#)). In separate trainings, lecturers were trained in using Urkund during courses and the possibilities to use this in Moodle, but the use of plagiarism detection programmes is uneven. Seminar papers and Bachelor's theses go through the plagiarism prevention programme Urkund; the report is sent from the system to the study programme administrator or study counsellor. The latter will forward the results to the defence committee and reviewer with the final thesis. Plagiarism in seminar papers and final theses has not been discovered. There have been unintentional mistakes with references and they are adjusted accordingly.

From 2019, TLU has an ethics committee. The purpose of this committee is to assess the data protection and ethical principles of scientific research conducted in the university, to ensure compliance with internationally acknowledged ethical principles, and the protection of human health, dignity, identity, integrity and other fundamental rights and freedoms. Good scientific work practices and ethical principles have been thoroughly observed in natural sciences; the consent of the ethical committee is obtained where needed or environmental protections are applied where necessary. For example, the School has the permits necessary for researching hallucinogenic mushrooms.

In 2020, the university started to compile the good academic guidelines of TLU. This document corresponds to the previous, but describes good scientific practices, good practices of teaching and supervision, good practice of learning, their institutional support and implementation, and relevant actions where good practices are breached.

MOBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF, ITS OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

For years, lecturer and student mobility has been a priority for the School. SNSH teaching staff make frequent international contacts, including participation in a number of international research projects and other types of cooperation. Staff visit other groups abroad, participate in projects and in the doctoral defence process at foreign universities. In 2020, defences and collaborations mostly used virtual mobility.

The frequency of natural science lecturers of the SNSH giving guest lectures in other universities is relatively low, but there are some research cooperation projects. The teaching workload in the university is high and long-term mobility requires reorganisation of work. The School's management supports and helps to arrange mobility. Issues with long-term mobility are more likely to be related to persons' private lives. To support international mobility readiness, the university also offers language courses to the lecturers. The university arranges central short-term mobility projects, e.g., in 2019 a delegation

from the TLU visited Swedish universities to map their activities and teachings in the field of sustainability. As the Integrated Natural Sciences study programme mainly teaches basic knowledge in natural science, there are not many specialised international lecturers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

TLU provides various training courses for its teaching staff. These courses focus on the analysis and improvement of course design, the principle of constructive alignment (learning outcomes – teaching – evaluation) and the application of appropriate teaching, learning, and assessment methods. In addition, TLU offers several courses to improve ICT and language skills, and annual courses for supervisors to enhance their supervising skills.

In 2019, a new career model was implemented in TLU. According to that, the work of academic employees is assessed via Career Development Discussion. The SNSH began with employee development interviews in 2019, initially with academic employees who were approaching their attestation deadline. The study programme administrator provided substantive advice and feedback

to the lecturer and reviewed possible scientific activities to ensure compliance with the position's requirements.

Formal evaluations take place once every five years. When assessing the work of teaching staff, the following factors are considered: teaching feedback; research feedback; actions taken toward personal and professional development; and international mobility. Unfortunately, not all lecturers met the requirements and they had to be transferred to a lower position.

TLU offers courses and support on e-learning to its lecturers, but the share of e-learning courses is increasing slowly and the use of e-learning opportunities is uneven in natural sciences. However, electronic course materials are available for everyone in Moodle, SIS, Drive, Dropbox, Google Classroom, etc. Other possibilities (e-tests, surveys, forums, think tanks, Wikis, simulations, etc.) are used more unevenly. The emergency situation during the autumn of 2020 created a need for distance learning and significantly increased the lecturers' readiness for using e-solutions in the future. Many courses started using hybrid learning solutions in autumn 2020.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

- A sufficient amount of staff is involved in teaching and supervising the Integrated Natural Sciences SP.
- The overall infrastructure is good. Laboratory resources are used at all levels of teaching and research at the university, thereby increasing interest in continuing education.
- Educators use more ICT and e-learning options.
- Good communication about mobility options and funding.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Limited use of ICT and e-learning options.	To improve staff knowledge and skills regarding ICT and e-learning options. To increase the number of courses offered via e-learning environments. Modernisation of existing courses.	2021-2025 Teaching staff, Head of Studies, in cooperation with the SDT.
Mobility for teaching staff.	More active use of the opportunities provided by Erasmus+.	2021-2024 Teaching staff, Coordinator of Erasmus in the SNSH.
The number of foreign lecturers should be increased.	More active use of the opportunities provided by Erasmus+.	2021-2024 Teaching staff, Coordinator of Erasmus in the SNSH.

[Appendix 5. Study programme form of the INTNAT](#)

[Appendix 6. Course programmes of the INTNAT](#)

[Appendix 7. Scheme of the INTNAT](#)

[Appendix 8. Academic staff of the INTNAT 2019-2020](#)

[Appendix 9. Laboratory resources for teaching and research of INTNAT](#)

4.3.

LAW PROGRAMMES

<i>Titles of the study programmes, study level, languages of instruction</i>	Law, BA AKOB (Estonian medium SP) AKLB (English medium SP)
<i>Academic unit responsible for conducting the SP</i>	School of Governance, Law and Society
<i>Persons responsible for compiling the self-evaluation of the study programme, SPA</i>	Mart Susi, Professor of Human Rights Law, Head of the law study area; Tiina Pajuste, Associate Professor of European and International Law, AKOB SPA; Phillip Webb Graves, Lecturer of Private Law, AKLB SPA.
<i>Brief description of the process of self-evaluation of the SP</i>	January 2020 - internal discussions with the law study area teaching staff, agreement of the timeframe and distribution of work; February-May 2020 - writing the first draft of self-evaluation report, analysing students' feedback, previous programme self-evaluation analyses; June-August 2020 - feedback from teaching staff, internal discussions to map the strengths and areas of improvement; September-October 2020 - final version of the self-evaluation report.

STATISTICS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMMES

AKOB (EST)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov 1)</i>	176	142	113	92	94
<i>No. of students admitted</i>	48	45	26	29	30
<i>No. of applications</i>	399	413	180	192	298
<i>No. of students who dropped out</i>	35	36	23	18	5
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within the nominal period*</i>	38	51	60	51	57
<i>Mobility (outgoing students, e.g. short and long term)</i>	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Mobility (incoming students)</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>No. of members of academic staff</i>	18	16	16	14	16
<i>Erasmus mobility (academic staff)</i>	1	2	0	0	0

* standard duration of SP + 1 year

AKLB (ENG)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov. 1)</i>	237	240	207	176	170
<i>No. of students admitted</i>	69	96	55	59	46
<i>No. of applications</i>	120	169	126	138	117
<i>No. of students who dropped out</i>	36	30	25	13	29
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within the nominal period*</i>	56	44	58	53	62
<i>Mobility (outgoing students, e.g. short and long term)</i>	6	6	6	1	2
<i>Mobility (incoming students)</i>	20	15	18	28	22
<i>No. of members of academic staff</i>	18	16	16	14	16
<i>Erasmus mobility (academic staff)</i>	1	2	0	0	0

* standard duration of SP + 1 year

4.3.1. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDIES

This report will cover both the Estonian and English language medium undergraduate law programmes (AKOB and AKLB), because there is a significant amount of overlap in the information about these SPs. This is due to the law study area taking a cohesive approach to study programme development (as the basic legal knowledge and skills they need to acquire are the same, irrespective of the language of study). Moreover, the academic and administrative staff overlap to a large extent; thus, the processes and teaching methods overlap as well. Possible differences between the two SPs will be explicitly highlighted in the report.

STUDY PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The design and development of SPs are based on international and domestic standards. In particular, the following principles are adhered to: the programmes prepare the graduates

- to enter into the legal job market with skills necessary for assuming starting positions in the chosen fields;
- for a successful entry into graduate law programmes in leading universities of the world.

The Higher Education Act and Standard are taken into account in the general design of all study programmes at Tallinn University, which likewise applies to law SPs.

The needs of the legal labour market are always considered when changes are made to the law SPs. Entry level jobs (like legal clerks and government administrative positions) that the law undergraduate SPs provide access to, need a specific skill-set and specialised knowledge. During the SP development process, the study programme is assessed to verify

whether such skills and knowledge are indeed provided to our students during the three years of study. Part of the process of considering what the legal labour market needs is engaging with the reports of [OSKA](#), which undertook a comprehensive analysis of legal higher education in Estonia in 2019. Representatives of TLU law study area participated in all stages of the analysis and were given the possibility to provide their input and suggestions. The report did not analyse the English medium study programmes, but recommended for the Estonian medium SP, inter alia, to strengthen the practical aspect thereof which is needed for a successful entry into the job market. TLU took these recommendations fully into account during its recent law SP development (in the beginning of 2020), for example, by adding courses in relation to non-contractual obligations, methodology of solving cases and increasing the ECTS of some of the core courses (e.g. general part of the civil law, administrative law and procedure, labour law and property law). Moreover, the structure of the Estonian medium SP (AKOB) was changed to place courses in thematic modules (general courses, public law and civil law) and the amount of ECTS that courses provide was made more uniform. Professional organisations in Estonia such as the Lawyers' Association, the Chamber of Court Bailiffs and Bankruptcy Receivers, Notaries, etc. also provide recommendations on how to better structure the Estonian medium SP. Members of TLU law study area participate as experts in working groups in several of the aforementioned associations, which, acting in this capacity, are directly involved with professional standard development within these organisations and communicate relevant developments to the School to ensure that the Estonian medium SP corresponds to professional expectations. One of

the main inputs that came from the abovementioned organisations was the need to increase the practical skills of students in solving cases in a systematic and methodical way. Because of this, the course on the methodology of solving cases was added to the Estonian medium SP and it was agreed amongst staff members to add more practical case-based assignments in core courses.

Feedback from the graduates is consistently obtained both via formal and informal methods. For example, our School maintains contact with the alumni and discusses their assessment of how the education obtained corresponds to the expectations of the employers. More needs to be done to maintain effective connections with the alumni so that the opinions voiced about the programmes represent the majority view.

In the programme design it was taken into account that legal practice in many countries is specific and necessitates that potential novices entering into different fields have acquired sufficient knowledge of the domestic law. In the development of the English medium SP (AKLB), the study programme was critically evaluated against the SP of Finnish law schools, as well as SPs in law schools from selected EU countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK (e.g. University of Helsinki, University of Turku, Leiden University, Maastricht University, KU Leuven, Ghent University, Cambridge University). The analysis results are reflected in the SP, which illustrates that our SP is fully comparable to SPs in the best law schools in Europe. The module of Finnish law was developed with input from the members of our teaching staff in Helsinki, most of whom are practicing lawyers in Finland, or teaching law also at Finnish universities. Their input centred on the core requirements of the Finnish legal job market, professional organisations and core competence in Finnish law necessary for continuing one's studies at the Master's level at a Finnish law school centred on Finnish domestic legal practice.

The Estonian medium SP (AKOB) is taught in the main campus in Tallinn. The English medium SP (AKLB) is taught in parallel in the main campus in Tallinn and the branch campus in Helsinki. The students entering the AKLB can choose the location of their studies and have the option of switching from one location to another. The educational experience the students receive in Tallinn and Helsinki campuses are comparable, although the academic staff teaching some courses may differ. For the core courses, regular academic staff is used, for the elective courses, visiting academic staff from Tallinn and Helsinki are used respectively.

Both quantitative and qualitative indicators are used to assess the quality of the SPs. Quantitative indicators include measuring the employment of graduates after graduation or continuation of their studies at MA

levels. The quantitative indicator demonstrates that around 95% of the graduates either find employment (those who actively seek it) or continue their studies (this rough number is based on informal contacts with the alumni by staff members as there is currently no comprehensive database of alumni). Qualitative indicators include the assessment of the SPs by professional communities and the "success" of our graduates. The overall assessment by professional organisations is positive and supporting, evidenced by our alumni being hired in both the public and private sectors (law firms, ministries, courts etc.). Graduates of the AKLB have been admitted into law schools around Europe (e.g. Leiden University, University of Helsinki, King's College, London, Tilburg University, University of Amsterdam). The school monitors these indicators consistently, maintaining contact with professional organisations and the alumni.

STUDY PROGRAMME COHERENCE

When the SPs are created, they are thoroughly analysed and compared with similar SPs of other Estonian and international universities, in addition to assessing the needs of the local "legal market" and consulting with representatives from diverse legal fields. This analysis ensures that different modules of the SP form a logical and consistent whole. The SPs both in the Estonian and English language are developed following the principles of:

1. input from the stakeholders, alumni and students;
2. comparative analysis of SPs in other universities in neighbouring countries and in the best law schools in the world - practice-oriented approach;
3. internally developed understanding what is required from a highly qualified legal professional in today's challenging environment, where lawyers need to be attentive to social norms and it is more and more difficult to differentiate domestic and international legal practice - conceptual approach.

The main goal of the law SPs is to meet the need of Estonian and other societies for highly qualified legal professionals with comprehensive theoretical understanding of law and practical skills, who at the same time are capable to look beyond the surface of legal norms and understand the connectivity of law to larger social processes.

The concrete objective of both law BA SPs is to prepare legal specialists, who: (a) have an understanding of general principles of law in fundamental legal subjects; (b) understand the differences between the application of fundamental legal subjects in civil and common legal systems; (c) understand the main factors influencing legal and social developments in Europe and globally; (d) have acquired the ability to independently solve legal problems and work with relevant sources; and (e) are able to apply the acquired knowledge in practical

situations that require legal reasoning. Additionally, the English medium SP offers students the option to concentrate their studies in Finnish domestic law or in European and international law. The specific aim is to provide the students with a broad understanding of law and prepare them for a successful entry into Master's studies and/or the labour market.

The modules of both SPs reflect these objectives. Each module has its own study aims and learning outcomes, which the individual courses of the module have to contribute to. Accordingly, the module system helps to ensure the coherence of the SP as a whole. The module of university-wide courses provides students with the preconditions necessary for acquiring knowledge in the field of social sciences and participating in discussions regarding societal issues. The module of mandatory courses of SOGOLAS gives the students a broad perspective of the connections between law, society, economy and culture, and facilitates problem-solving regarding issues that are not contained neatly in only one discipline. Lawyers today need such skills as issues become more interconnected. The interdisciplinary courses are sometimes criticised by both students and members of the academic staff from two aspects: firstly, this limits offering students more law-oriented courses necessary for the profession, and secondly, these courses are taught to law and non-law students together, thereby the law students get too general and non-essential information. Following the input from the previous accreditation committee report, the content of these interdisciplinary courses has been geared to incorporate more legal issues as opposed to issues from other fields of social sciences. For example, the course Critical Thinking uses court cases as examples, in the course LIFE (Learning in Interdisciplinary Focused Environment) students are working on projects involving law-related issues (like prison conditions, custody matters). This approach aims to maximise the legal component of interdisciplinary courses, maintaining the objective of providing diverse educational experiences at the same time.

In the English medium SP, the mandatory law courses' module provides students with the fundamental knowledge and skills that every lawyer needs and it is taught from a comparative perspective. The Finnish law module covers Finnish procedural and substantive law. The European and international law module covers European procedural and substantive law, and the international law module covers procedural and substantive law in private and public international law topics. The module of elective law courses gives the students the opportunity to choose from a variety of European and international law topics. The SP is aimed at providing the foundation necessary for continuing law studies at the MA level.

In the Estonian medium SP, the substantive courses are

divided between general legal courses module, public law module and private law module. The courses within the modules form a logical continuity from general knowledge to more specialised knowledge (for example, criminal procedure follows the core course of criminal law; bankruptcy and family law follow courses focusing on the general principles of private law). Public law and private law modules contain compulsory and elective courses; compulsory courses are viewed as constituting the essential part of every lawyer's education regardless of the area of future employment.

It is the task of the SPA to compile the nominal division of the SP to ensure that students have the necessary knowledge base to participate in more advanced courses and that the courses are sequenced in the optimal order. For example, the first law courses that students take are Law and Society and Legal Research and Writing. The former ensures that the students have an understanding of the relationship between law and society, the functioning of the legal system and an understanding of basic legal concepts, while the latter instils the skillset to identify research and apply the law to practical legal issues. These courses provide a firm foundation before students move on to take more advanced subjects.

All the law SPs are developed according to the needs of the labour market. At least once a year the SPA analyses the functioning of the SP to assess, among other things, whether the content of the SP is compatible with its aims and learning outcomes, and the needs of the labour market and stakeholders. These reviews have not revealed any problems with regard to the objectives of the study programme matching the content of the SP.

The Estonian medium law studies end with a final exam, composed of two case studies and an oral exam. The students are given preparatory materials on both parts at the beginning of the final academic year and there are consultations with staff members that provide an opportunity to practice and ask questions about the exam. The exam ensures that students have acquired all the learning outcomes of the SP. The exam is conducted in the form of a commission of four to six staff members.

The English medium SP concludes with a BA thesis, which is publicly defended. This constitutes the first comprehensive step towards independent academic research and is necessitated by:

1. the need to solidify the capability of all graduates for conducting high-level legal research, critically evaluating the results and engaging in argumentation, expressed in written English, and orally defending the written thesis at a public defence;
2. the precondition for admittance to several MA programmes abroad is a BA thesis defence, as most Bachelor law programmes of three years elsewhere

(outside of Estonia) end with a Bachelor's thesis and defence rather than an exam.

The evaluation of the SPs is also provided continuously through the involvement of the TLU teaching staff in law with the professional legal community, which ensures the prompt possibility to address the concerns and/or proposals from different legal fields for the improvement of various organisational and/or substantive aspects of the programmes. The SPs are also evaluated via collegial visits of the TLU teaching staff to partner universities, where various aspects of law programmes are comparatively discussed. These methods enable us to ensure that the SPs remain up-to-date and consistent with the developments in society.

The indicators used to assess the compatibility of the SPs with the articulated goals are:

1. feedback from the stakeholders, such as direct employers of the graduates, as well as professional organisations. This indicator is qualitative and is ongoing when the faculty is interacting with their legal community colleagues. Due to the smallness of Estonian legal community, such informal recommendations are easy to obtain and valuable. A separate aspect in this feedback is the information obtained from legal organisations after a student has completed the compulsory practical training. The feedback has been positive both as regards the development and content of both SPs;
2. graduation time in nominal time. This indicator is quantitative and indicates, among other things, whether the students find the study programmes useful and competitive for the purpose of their future careers. The graduation within the nominal period is among the highest in the University, thus giving a positive signal;
3. the success rate in entering MA programmes at TLU or other universities. This indicator is both qualitative and quantitative and allows to measure how well the graduates from TLU law SPs can compete with the graduates from other universities. Although TLU could gather information more systematically, our data indicates that the majority of graduates pursue MA studies, which confirms the understanding of the high quality of their BA education;
4. employment rate in the legal field after graduation. This indicator is quantitative and allows to measure the competitiveness and usefulness of legal education provided by TLU. The information at the disposal of TLU indicates that more than 95% of graduates from both SPs either work in the legal field and/or continue their studies in MA level legal programmes after one year from graduation.

Overall, the indicators reveal that the goals of both SPs are in accordance with the expectations of the stakeholders and the community at large and the goals are met in the course of implementing the programmes.

MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The goals regarding material and financial sustainability are:

1. to secure financial independence of the English medium study SP from the state funding allocated to the University (a requirement under the agreement between the University and the Ministry of Education and Research);
2. to enable competitive compensation to the academic staff in both SPs;
3. to enable sufficient resources for the study area for professional development in both SPs, including time for research activities.

The first goal is quantitative and the indicator is the tuition income from the students measured against the expenditures for the academic staff teaching the SP and proportionate allocation of resources for the administrative services by SOGOLAS. This goal is consistently achieved and maintained (e.g. in 2019/2020 academic year law, the tuition fees contributed 50% to all SOGOLAS English medium tuition income). AKLB generates funds in excess of the financial needs and surplus is allocated for achieving other purposes of the School. Both full-time and part-time faculty are committed to their performance in TLU.

The second goal is fully met. The school relies on the delivery of the SP on full-time academic staff and legal professionals teaching on contractual basis. Salaries for the full-time academic staff are relatively high in comparison with other academic personnel in the School, which is necessitated by the job market for individuals working in the field of law. This approach has enabled the School to retain committed colleagues and the fluctuation rate of academic staff is low. The same goes for academic staff teaching on the contractual basis.

The third goal is also fully met. It is measurable by qualitative and quantitative indicators in conjunction. The quantitative indicators refer to the number of high-quality academic writings published by reputable law periodicals or publishers. For example, the law academic staff in the last years is publishing, on average, around 2.0 high-level publications per year. This figure is comparable to the publication and research activity of faculty in other academic areas at TLU. Many full-time faculty members are involved in world-class research projects (cf. App.18).

This combination of research and teaching has a positive impact on the whole study process, specifically:

1. students are encouraged to attend events related to research projects, such as conferences, public lectures and workshops;
2. academic staff convey in the classes state-of-the-art research results originating from various projects, for example, in relation to the changing meaning of international contracts, or to the phenomenon of new human rights, including the usage of scholarly publications as study materials;
3. selected students have the possibility to work closely with the faculty in preparation of scientific events.

The qualitative indicator is student satisfaction with their study environment and resources. TLU measures academic performance at the end of each semester,

where the students are asked to evaluate the quality of teaching. The results for the law faculty are relatively high, as the average student satisfaction in both programmes is around 4.5 on the scale of 5.0. All indicators mentioned above are consistently analysed by the SOGOLAS management in cooperation with the SPA and Head of law study area. Where necessary, individual measures are suggested and implemented involving concrete faculty members; for example, suggesting to a member of the academic staff to attend University organised training or discussing concrete matters at the study area meeting. The approach to modify the performance of the faculty is always inclusive, based on mutual dialogue, grounded in the concept of reasonableness, focused on an achievable outcome, while ensuring academic freedom.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDIES

- The development of law SPs is based on the standards developed by professional organisations, comparisons with leading law schools in Europe, and feedback from the alumni and students.
- The SP design corresponds to the needs of the job market, demonstrated by the high employability of the graduates and success in being admitted into MA programmes.
- There are stable financial resources available, generated from the state support (AKOB) and tuition (AKLB). The financial stability allows to offer competitive compensation to the faculty and enables their professional and academic development.
- There are effective communication channels in place with professional organisations inter alia, through participation by members of the academic staff in professional working groups in sectoral standard development.
- Maintaining relations with the alumni is improving, and should be expanded.

Areas for improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Interdisciplinary courses need to reflect the legal element more.	Interdisciplinary courses are only taught to law students, programme descriptions reflecting their needs.	Deadline: beginning of 2021 autumn semester. Faculty teaching these courses in consultation with the entire law faculty.
Effective engagement of the alumni into SP assessment.	Develop and maintain database of alumni, organise events involving alumni.	Deadline: summer 2021. Head of the law study area together with administrative staff.
Strengthening links with the stakeholders for the purposes of SP development and quality assessment.	Regular communication channels in each professional legal organisation, sending of information, focus group yearly interviews.	Deadline: summer 2021. Head of the law study area together with SPAs and administrative staff.

4.3.2. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

The admission procedure and requirements for the two SPs are different, due to the different profiles of the candidates (AKLB - mostly foreigners, not residents of Estonia; AKOB - local candidates). The admission requirements for the AKOB are clearly formulated and published on the TLU homepage: (a) high school diploma, a certificate proving vocational secondary education, or the equivalent, (b) proof of English language proficiency that corresponds to the level of B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and (c) an entrance examination consisting of two components (admission is threshold-based). The first component is the submission and assessment of a written assignment about the candidate's motivation and desire to study law, and the candidate is also asked to identify and discuss a social issue in their country and describe what are possible solutions to it. The second component is an oral interview by a member of the law faculty. The maximum number of points for the entrance exam is 100; these are equally divided between the assessment of the written assignment and the oral interview. Law faculty members teaching in the AKLB SP participate in the assessment of candidates. A candidate's written assignment is evaluated by a member of the law faculty and candidates receiving at least 30 points are allowed to proceed to the oral interview. The oral interview is conducted electronically via Skype. Although the assessment of a candidate is done by one faculty member, objectivity is ensured by following a detailed list of criteria that are assessed in the two exam stages. In addition, the staff involved in this process routinely discuss the criteria in order to maintain a uniform approach to this procedure. To be admitted to the SP, candidates need to have a score of at least 65 points. The entrance exam is used to assess the candidates' level of knowledge, motivation, fluency in the English language, and predisposition to become a lawyer. Both components of the entrance exam are evaluated independently, thus assuring fair access to legal studies with no possibility of discrimination.

Admission to the AKOB SP is also based on two components: (a) 25% Estonian language high school graduation state exam, and (b) a computer-based entrance examination. In addition, students also need to have B2 level English language proficiency. The entrance examination is done in the computer rooms of TLU. The test (conducted in co-operation with the Estonian Education and Youth Authority) is an electronic test that requires general knowledge of the state, society and law. The duration of the exam is one hour. SA Innove provides SOGOLAS with the admission exam

statistics, the analysis of which is used for improving the admission exam annually.

Prospective students are advised and their questions answered at TLU Orientation Days that are organised to introduce the SPs and the admission requirements of admittance for prospective students. During these events, requirements for practicing law are also discussed, so prospective students have an understanding of the process involved and how it differs by countries. This helps to ensure that misinformation does not lead to many drop-outs in the first semester. Law studies continue to be popular and there have been no problems receiving a sufficient number of candidates.

IMPLEMENTING A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

The aim of the law study area is to provide students with a combination of both structure and flexibility during their studies. The structure is provided partly by the nominal division of studies. While compulsory law courses encompass the foundational subjects in law, the SP is based on its objectives, aims, and values that put learners at the heart of the process via a coherent teaching system, which essentially means coordinating the objectives of the programme with the objectives of the University through a learner-centred approach. The system accommodates flexibility and the needs of individual students. Each student is in charge of compiling his/her study plan, which is a list of courses that the student wishes to take depending on the study programme, possibilities offered by the timetable and personal development needs. The law study area tries to actively implement the TLU vision "I change teaching/learning", which focuses on student-centred learning and cooperation. Students are treated as independent actors, empowered to take responsibility for their learning, to make targeted contributions to their learning environment and to address the problems that arise in the world around them. Moreover, the staff try to take into account the individual needs and experiences of the students enrolled in their courses. Such teaching methods are used, which allow for tailoring according to the profiles of the students. Small group discussions utilise the work experience of the more senior students and the latter are encouraged to present lessons learned from their professional experiences. If students have extensive practical knowledge in the subject of the course, they may be permitted to do alternative assignments or have their experience taken into account as part of their course work.

The students have elective law courses, allowing them to expand their knowledge in various European and international law topics. Their other interests are also

accommodated as they can freely choose courses worth of 18 ECTS from any other academic unit (or take further law courses from the electives). Moreover, they can choose the location of their practical training on the basis of their individual interests and can freely pick amongst the interdisciplinary university-wide projects, which provides both an opportunity to utilise legal knowledge and skills and learn from students of other disciplines.

If there are students with special needs, the staff creates special arrangements with them at the beginning of the course (if necessary) to accommodate those needs. The teaching staff is constantly encouraged to develop their teaching skills and knowledge of different teaching/assessment methods. There are a multitude of different digital skills and teaching methodology training courses provided centrally by the University. Participation in these training events is considered in the annual reviews of staff performance. Staff members share experiences amongst them and collaborate, where possible.

Technology is a learning tool that expands the teaching repertoire; it is also a vehicle that maximises the capacity of both teachers and learners. Members of the law academic staff have introduced, monitored, adapted, and improved digital learning for students in a manner that personalises learning through the effective use of technology. Most courses have digital support (e.g. Zoom, Moodle). Moodle is the platform most widely utilised by staff in the law study area. It is utilised to give access to reading materials, online assignments and videos and discussions in forums. Homework assignments are often uploaded there and lecturers can provide feedback to students through the Moodle system. Depending on the number of students enrolled in a course, feedback can be either individual or collective (generalisations based on common strengths and weaknesses, if the student group is too large to provide individual feedback).

The main assignment in the English medium SP where students receive individual supervision is the BA thesis, which students write in their final term of studies. Students have the opportunity to select their own topics for research. If a student is struggling with finding their own topic, they can select one from a list of topics provided by all permanent academic staff (this list is updated annually and reflects the research areas of the staff members, balanced with topical legal issues). Students may select a thesis supervisor from among the members of permanent academic employees or the SPA will assign a supervisor. The aim of the supervision is to develop students' research and writing skills necessary for the writing of prolonged legal arguments and instilling confidence in students through oral defence of the written thesis.

Students are systematically asked for feedback via TLU electronic system [SIS](#). The SPAs regularly discuss with the

law faculty the results of student feedback and the need to incorporate the vision of a learner-centred approach into all courses. At the beginning of each semester, the SPAs evaluate the course programmes and student feedback to determine the effectiveness in individual courses from the previous semester. The SOGOLAS Head of Studies conducts regular monthly SPAs' meetings where different study issues are discussed.

To allow academic staff to use new teaching methods and various different techniques, it is up to each lecturer to decide how much and what kind of independent work to give to students in order to ensure that they acquire the necessary learning outcomes. In doing so, the staff is encouraged to take into consideration the guidance that 1 ECTS corresponds to up to 13 hours of contact studies and at least 13 hours of the student's independent work. All of the course programmes have to include a description of the independent work necessary for that course. This can take the form of essays, research papers, visits to courts (and subsequent writing up of reports on the basis of the relevant hearing), preparing presentations, group assignments, mandatory readings, etc. The Socratic method is frequently used in courses, which challenges students to think and adjust to changing fact patterns. Case briefs are also used to enable students to understand the legal principle in practice. This vision of learning articulates SOGOLAS aspirations and beliefs in teaching and learning.

Deadlines for independent assignments and the assessment criteria and methods for each assignment have to be specified in the course programme. Completion of independent work can be a condition for being allowed to take the exam at the end of the course. The students are given a guidance document on how to format, write, and defend independent writing assignments. Each of the lecturers will instruct the students on the requirements for the independent work and give advice on how to complete the assignments. Each member of the academic staff has office hours (information on the specific hours is online and easily accessible) when students can approach them for advice on the independent work or other issues.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The assessment of students is considered an essential part of the learning process where the assessment methods are evaluated annually, at the start of the new academic year, to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving the learning outcomes of the course. There are training opportunities for TLU staff that focus on assessment methods to provide up-to-date information on the theoretical foundations and practical methods of assessment to the lecturers (participation in training is encouraged and remains popular, especially amongst younger staff members with less practical experience).

The assessment methods for each of the courses are selected on the basis of the required learning outcomes of the course. For example, the acquisition of knowledge can be assessed with a test, open-ended questions or in any other form; whereas the ability to present the knowledge in a systematic and confident manner can only be assessed through an oral presentation of some kind. In most courses, the assessment of the fulfilment of learning outcomes is done internally by the relevant lecturer(s). The assessment methods are written down in the course programme, so that students are aware of them prior to confirming their study plan. This means that current students do not get to fundamentally influence the assessment methods. But they can give feedback at the end of the course that can augment the methods for the next year. In the first session of each course, the lecturer introduces the assessment methods and the prerequisites for being allowed to the assessment or exam.

Different teaching methods are used in courses to ensure the balance between providing theoretical legal knowledge and giving the students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge by solving problem questions or cases. The courses include seminars where students complete group work assignments, present their independent work, critically discuss the work of others and solve cases. These tasks help to fulfil both the learning outcomes of the specific course and the SP in general. To better support each student's individual development, formative assessment that considers mistakes as learning steps, is used during these seminars.

The procedure for the RPL is laid down in the Study Regulations (paragraphs 22-25). Student feedback reveals that they believe that the requirements for RPL are too strict. They would prefer not having to supply the University with official course descriptions and transcripts and the required forms. However, these documents are necessary to eliminate fraud and to be able to properly assess the compatibility of learning outcomes. Not many English language undergraduate students utilise RPL, as they often come to study straight from high school. In the Estonian language programme, it is more common for students to have some previous higher level studies or relevant work experience, but RPL remains underutilised (one or two instances annually). The students are not fully aware of the complete extent of occasions when RPL can be used or they are discouraged by the formalities (or struggle to analyse how the learning outcomes have been fulfilled exactly).

ORGANISATION OF STUDIES, INCLUDING MOBILITY

As mentioned above, at the beginning of each course, the organisational aspects of the course, learning outcomes and assessment methods are introduced in detail and student input is taken into account, where

possible. As learning outcomes are coordinated within the framework of the SP, through the harmonisation activities of the SPA and collaborative actions of academic staff, the courses should complement each other and the learning outcomes should build upon the outcomes of previous courses, all in an effort to achieve broader learning outcomes of the SP itself. This coordinated system and the overviews at the beginning of each course ensures support for students in achieving the learning outcomes.

Practical training fulfils an important role in the SP. It is especially relevant in helping to reach two of the SP learning outcomes: (a) creating the basis for developing the skills necessary for critical thinking, analysing and interpreting, and applying these skills in solving simple legal questions; and (b) creating the conditions for being prepared for teamwork and its direction and creating tolerance towards the multitude of values and opinions. The documents relating to the practical training are available online at the [homepage of SOGOLAS](#). Students are advised and assisted for finding the practical training places by the faculty as well as the alumni.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of practical training, a student has two supervisors – a lecturer responsible for practical training on the side of the law study area and a supervisor on the side of the training venue. The external supervisor has to be an experienced lawyer with at least a MA degree in law. At the end of the practical training, the student has to write a report on it. Along with the report, students also have to provide an opinion of the external supervisor on how the student performed during the practical training. In the reports, they also have to give their opinion on the organisation of the practical training and give suggestions for future improvements. This report also includes feedback and proposals on the relevant law SP, and hence constitutes another mechanism to get student input. Student feedback has shown that some of them are unsatisfied with the strict requirements as regards the documentation of the internship (that a formal contract has to be concluded), but these contracts ensure that both parties are aware of their rights and obligations and that there are no misunderstandings during the practical training. Sometimes students try to start the training before concluding the contract and then are unhappy if the University does not accept the practical training (since the formal requirements were not met). Many students do their practical training with the Estonian Society of Lawyers (Eesti Juristide Liit), which provides free legal aid in various locations – the students can contribute to that service. The feedback from the practical training is positive overall from both the students and the partner institutions and the level of students' engagement with the given tasks is appreciated in individual evaluation reports (which also assess the

fulfilment of the goals of practical training; these are almost always positive). Suggestions from the practical training venues are taken into account in the process of study programme development, for example, regarding the need to pay more attention to specific questions like the formalities of composing legal documents.

Domestic mobility is supported through accepting previous studies at other Estonian universities, if the subject matter and learning outcomes of similar courses are comparable. If a course is not available in the TLU law study area, students can participate in the course of another law school in Estonia. The credits from that course can then be transferred into free electives and used as part of studies at TLU.

The AKLB is an active and, in institutional terms, major participant in the University's international cooperation. We host students via Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus (Alrakis I, Iraklis II, Humeria, Hermes), DoRa as well as bilateral agreements. Law students can take advantage of the many agreements with European universities that TLU or SOGOLAS specifically have. Most popular destinations tend to be Dutch, Spanish and Italian universities. Not many students from the Estonian medium SP (AKOB) choose to go on Erasmus exchange. This is mostly due to students working full-time or part-time and being unable to take a semester off from work. To facilitate going on exchange, the nominal division of studies has a "mobility window" - one semester (spring of the 2nd year) where there are no other mandatory law courses except for international law and EU law (which are courses that can be recognised most easily from other international universities). As this was just recently implemented, it is hard to predict whether this will have any impact on the number of students using international mobility programmes.

SUPPORT SERVICES, COUNSELLING

The general goal for supporting students during their studies is to maximise conditions for the realisation of their individual academic goals in conjunction with the general social goal of ever increasing the level of education in the society. The concrete goals for achieving this general goal are:

1. to engage students in the planning of their SP;
2. to provide general guidance on University policies to the students, following the principles of transparency, immediacy, openness and accessibility;
3. to provide individual attention through counselling and other necessary services to the students;
4. to secure that the students in Helsinki campus receive comparable services.

These goals can be secured via general and individual measures. The measurement of the effectiveness of both the general and individual measures is primarily

obtained from semi-annual questionnaires where the student satisfaction with support measures is assessed. In addition, study counsellors obtain individual views from students in the course of advising. In the event when the student decides to terminate the studies, one of the open-ended questions addressed among the reasons is related to the adequacy of support services. Student satisfaction with the support services is therefore continuously assessed throughout the year. If needed, corrective measures are implemented. In addition, the SOGOLAS director and Head of Studies conduct semi-annual meetings with student associations - respectively for Estonian and English medium studies. This enables the management to directly hear possible complaints and areas for improvement which then are followed by concrete activities.

General measures to support the students are university websites, including specific homepages for each academic unit; Study Information System; timetable programme ASIO; e-Learning environments (e.g. Moodle, Google Classroom.)

Individual measures are:

- *Study Counsellor and Specialist* – organises study-related processes; provides operational support in the event of any problems; supports students with any technical issues concerning the SIS;
- *SPA* – advises students on compiling individual study plans; coordinates the whole SP;
- *Coordinator of International Cooperation (Erasmus)* – advises students on international relations and study abroad;
- *Head of Studies* – advises students in regard to the Study Regulations; cooperates with other positions when implementing changes based on feedback; cooperates with other positions for the development of SP content.
- Furthermore, students can seek assistance directly from the Career and Counselling Centre, which offers a number of services that help students to develop personal skills and achieve success in the labour market.

The specific goal regarding the SP conducted in Helsinki to provide to students such services that are comparable to the services provided to students in Tallinn has been met since the in-class teaching special counsellor has been at the premises. The Head of Studies, SPA and Head of law study area conduct regular meetings with the students and student union.

To support student learning, there is a system in place to acknowledge and accept previous studies and work experience as part of their studies at TLU (if the necessary conditions are fulfilled – e.g. study objectives covered). Students also have an opportunity to compile

an individual study plan if they have been on academic leave or are enrolling again (after being deleted from the matriculation register). This study plan has to be coordinated with the SPA and presented to the Head of Studies of the academic unit for approval.

The information on the reasons for students dropping out comes from the Study Counsellors, who advise the students and process their applications. The main reason for the voluntary withdrawal of students is the realisation by the students that the subject is not really what they wanted to specialise in. Often the students are pressured by their family to study law as it is seen as a reputable and lucrative profession. A lack of motivation often cannot be overcome and so the students end up withdrawing from the studies. In order to prevent this, students are advised at open days so that they could be completely aware of what legal studies involve and whether it would suit them. TLU study regulations are also introduced at these events and information provided on the main difficulties that may arise.

Overall, the analysis of the support services on the basis of student feedback points to a high degree of satisfaction and allows to conclude the adequacy of the general and individual measures in conjunction.

COOPERATION WITH ALUMNI

The goals in cooperation with the alumni of both SPs are the following:

1. to obtain consistent feedback about the compatibility of the SP with the changing needs of the job market, including predicting how the needs of concrete legal professions may change in the future;
2. to strengthen the public image of law study programmes in Estonian and Finnish societies;
3. to provide practical training (with the view of future employment) opportunities;
4. motivation of the current students.

The indicators are both qualitative and quantitative. The feedback regarding SPs' content can be measured through qualitative criteria and has primarily been conducted when the faculty engages with professional organisations. On the basis of the "I change learning" vision, a plan of action will be generated to conduct at least focus group yearly interviews both in Estonia and Finland for different legal professions (attorneys, judges, law-enforcement officials, notaries and bailiffs, corporate lawyers). The second goal is achieved through the participation of alumni in public discussions in Estonia and Finland involving legally and socially relevant issues. The alumni are encouraged to identify themselves as the graduates of TLU. The third goal can be measured via quantitative indicators. It can be

demonstrated that alumni are responsive to the requests to provide practical training possibilities. The fourth goal is achieved when alumni are involved in teaching while visiting faculty. It can be measured qualitatively.

The alumni of Estonian medium SP of the law study area (and its predecessor Nord Academy) have become active participants in the Estonian administrative and legal systems. Alumni include the current or former ministers of the Estonian Republic such as Mailis Reps, Kristen Michal, Keit Pentus-Rosimannus and Maret Maripuu, and high level officials of state agencies (Elmar Vaher, Priit Pärna, Maret Maripuu, Rainer Osanik). Alumni fill the positions of judges (e.g. Meelis Eerik, Piret Mõistlik), prosecutors (e.g. Silja Seeder, Kadri Hõövel, Robert Saareke), attorneys (e.g. Viktor Särgava, Ardi Rebane, Siiri Malmberg, Veikko Puolakainen, Gennadi Kull) and notaries (e.g. Andrus Ruul). They work in all areas of law: as administrative lawyers, commercial lawyers, legal advisers, bankruptcy registrars, bailiffs, police authorities, in the tax and customs department, in local councils, ministries, etc. (For example, Kadri Elias is the Vice-Chancellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Argo Kangro is an adviser and diplomat; Tanel Kalmet is an adviser in the Ministry of Justice; Priit Heinsoo is the director of the Police College of the Estonian Academy of Security Services; Tiia Tammeleht is the legal adviser of the Estonian Trade Union Confederation.)

The alumni are politically and socially active. For example, M. Maripuu has been a member of the Parliament. M. Eerik acted as the head of the Estonian Association of Judges for an extended period of time. M. Kadak has been the chairman of the Estonian Chamber of Bailiffs and Trustees in Bankruptcy. K. Vast has been the head of the Estonian Seamen's Union.

The alumni from the English medium SP have not yet reached comparable levels with counterparts in Estonia since the first students graduated only five years ago. However, the alumni of the AKLB maintain strong contacts via social media channels and it is to be expected that their career successes will be communicated to TLU as well.

Unfortunately, there has not been a systematic collection of information regarding Estonian alumni. A new system was created this year, but its effects will only start to show from the next academic year. But because the staff of the law study area is involved in several professional organisations, there are informal contacts with the alumni that are utilised to receive feedback from them. Cooperation with the alumni of the AKLB is diversified between the cohorts studying in Tallinn and Helsinki campuses. There are special coordinators for these two groups, as well as ad hoc events involving the current students and faculty.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- Admissions system works well and ensures the admission of solid candidates.
- TLU provides various possibilities for teaching staff training and development.
- The system of practical training is well-designed and produces good results.
- Graduates find employment in professional capacity and are admitted into MA programmes.
- The law study area has been recognised by professional organisations for its contribution to life-long learning.

Areas for improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Communication with the alumni.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual focus group interviews with at least 6 groups. 2. To develop the strategy for alumni engagement (part of this is including alumni relations into the job responsibilities of an employee). 3. To hold at least one event per semester integrating the alumni (a workshop, a seminar, etc.). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starting from Spring 2021 - SPAs. 2. Ready by summer 2021 - Head of law study area. 3. Starting from autumn 2021 - SPAs, administrative personnel, alumni relations manager.
Increasing effectiveness of individual study counselling.	To develop a strategy, in cooperation with student associations, for how to connect each student to a faculty member who can become an academic mentor for the study period.	Strategy ready by autumn 2021, activities start from autumn 2021 - responsible persons are SPAs, Head of Studies, Head of law study area.
Awareness of RPL among students is limited.	Increase knowledge of the opportunity and requirements of RPL. Provide easier access to the RPA form.	Starting autumn 2020. Responsible persons are the SPA and the study counsellor.
Not many students take advantage of the opportunity of participating in Erasmus exchange.	Encourage students to utilise the newly-created "mobility window". The SPA will advise students on finding an appropriate partner university and matching courses.	Counselling starting from autumn 2020. Responsible person is the SPA.
Ensuring that student-centered learning is at the forefront in all the courses.	Discuss matters relating to learner-centred studies amongst academic staff to exchange best practices. Encourage staff to participate in teaching method training events.	Starting autumn 2020. Responsible persons - Head of Studies, academic staff.
Transparent feedback to students regarding their performance.	Develop concrete guidelines to give feedback regarding individual course performance.	Ongoing, effective from autumn 2021, SPAs in conjunction with the study counsellors and all faculty.

4.3.3. DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

NUMBER OF LECTURERS, AGE STRUCTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

The law study area is sufficiently staffed: the academic staff comprises 16 faculty members with an employment contract (filling 12.65 full time positions) and 11 practitioners with a work contract. 70 % of the academic staff hold a PhD degree.

The goal in the development of the TLU law academic staff composition and development is to achieve a reasonable and effective combination of academics and professionals working in the judicial sector. This approach is fully compatible with the approaches taken by the leading law schools in Europe and around the world. Such a combination will support the general goal of the SPs to provide students with a state-of-the-art theoretical knowledge with practice-influenced considerations and experience. A separate goal is to increase the diversity of the academic staff according to age (right now 44% of the staff are below 50), that is, to involve younger academics and professionals as well as maintain an appropriate gender balance (in 2020, two female faculty members were employed). An additional aspect is the involvement of academic staff from abroad: either current residents of Estonia or persons who teach courses while maintaining other academic or professional obligations within organisations outside Estonia (in 2020, two professors and one associate professor are foreign citizens living abroad). This approach enables the students to study under the supervision of a mixed group of academic staff, which is an enabling factor for a successful legal career.

In the selection of new academic positions, open competition is used. The capability of new academic staff for high-quality teaching is the primary criterion, which is measured against previous publications, involvement in research and development projects, and/or more generally potential positive impact upon the SPs.

Students' SIS feedback to teaching is collected and analysed each semester. SPAs and the Head of Studies monitor the feedback regularly and address the students' comments and proposals. All lecturers have a possibility to respond to students' feedback in SIS during two weeks after the feedback deadline. The law students' feedback has always been around the SOGOLAS average (in 2019: English medium SPs-4.42; Estonian medium SPs-4.47 on a max. 5-point scale). In the spring semester 2019/20, law students' SIS feedback to AKLB was 4.3 and AKOB 4.5.

Although it is challenging to motivate younger people to choose the academic career, TLU law study area has

successfully recruited young scholars, for example, T. Pajuste, K. Pormeister, M. Nimmo, C. Wulff, to name just a few. The Head of law study area, SPAs and the SOGOLAS administration consistently communicate with the stakeholders to identify possible new candidates for strengthening the faculty.

ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

The goal regarding academic ethics is to uphold good academic standards in teaching, communication between the academic and administrative staff, with the students and stakeholders. These standards include the principles of openness and transparency, accountability, non-discrimination and honesty. Adherence to these principles is assumed. The upholding of academic ethics is one aspect addressed during the annual evaluation of academic staff. Action is taken when there are formal or informal signals concerning deviance from these principles. Students are also able to comment on these aspects following the principle of anonymity.

Faculty are attentive to the matter of plagiarism and explain during the supervision of theses the academic standards to be followed in academic writing. Occasionally issues connected to possible plagiarism or non-observance of the principles emerge in the process of thesis supervision and/or defense, and are always addressed with the utmost diligence.

During their first semester at TLU, students are informed of the ethical principles of academic writing and other legal issues applicable to all subjects and study areas. This is also done in the mandatory course "Studying at the University". Paragraph 30 of TLU [Study Regulations](#) lays down the bases for deletion from the matriculation register, which include "inappropriate behaviour of the student". This includes disregard for academic practice, which includes, e.g., plagiarism. To avoid violations of academic practice, students are warned of the severe consequences of such actions and they are also provided with guidance material on rules regarding independent work (which include guidance on how to avoid plagiarism, etc.). To avoid plagiarism in written work, teaching staff can use software to check whether the students have referenced their assignments properly. In order to reduce and avoid academic fraud, [The Education and Youth Authority](#) has created a plagiarism detection system, KRATT, which enabled authors and evaluators of written work to screen for plagiarism. Since 2017, TLU has a programme - [Urkund](#) - available for plagiarism detection. The importance of ethical research practices is also emphasised through

students' courses. Issues of intellectual property and copyright matters have been regulated at TLU since 2014. In 2017, TLU signed the Estonian Code of Conduct for Research Integrity together with the other Estonian universities.

In case academic misconduct takes place, and depending on the seriousness of the violation, the director of a school has the right to issue a letter of reprimand to the student or make a proposal to delete the student from the matriculation register.

MOBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF, ITS GOALS AND RESULTS

The goal in academic staff mobility is to maximise the integration into professional and academic networks at home and abroad, leading to enhanced teaching and research capabilities. We have set the specific goal to enable each full-time academic staff member participate in at least one academic international conference, preferably by making a presentation. The School provides funding for this mobility. The indicator is a figure of how many full-time members of faculty have taken advantage of this possibility. The School and TLU also encourage short-term scientific visits to universities abroad. However, as usual in today's academic environment, such possibilities are, as a rule, funded by various national/international projects. Law study area has several funded projects that provide the staff with various mobility options (cf. App 3). The use of school-paid academic mobility by the academic staff is mixed. About 50% of the faculty are taking advantage of this possibility.

The image of academic mobility is influenced by the large proportion of law academic staff members from abroad. For them, teaching and participation in TLU academic life itself represents mobility from the side of their residence country. If the goal of academic mobility is to foster communication with colleagues from other countries and universities, then the presence of international faculty serves this goal. Overall, it might be considered that the law faculty of TLU is one of the most international and diverse faculties in any Estonian university.

DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

The general goal of academic staff development is to enhance individual capabilities for combining high quality teaching with beyond state-of-the art research. For high quality teaching aspect, this general goal is manifest in more specific goals of:

1. Capability building through continuous training. TLU provides various courses for professional development for its teaching staff. These courses focus on the analysis and improvement of course design, the principle of constructive alignment

(learning outcomes – teaching – assessment) and the application of appropriate teaching, learning, and assessment methods. In addition, TLU offers several courses to improve information communication technology (ICT) and language skills (e.g. "English for academic purposes"), and annual courses for supervisors to enhance their supervising skills.

2. Capability building through dialogue and open feedback. During the annual career development interviews (held by the director of the school and head of the academic field) with the academic staff, actions taken toward personal and professional development are discussed and plans are agreed to support the staff members' professional development for the next year. In 2017, TLU began developing a new career model that will be applied in the coming years. This career model will specify future career pathways for all academic staff, including teaching staff, research staff, and doctoral students. Formal evaluations take place once every five years. To enhance the dialogue in the society, the law study area is responsible for managing and publishing two English language academic journals (cf. App 18).
3. Creating flexible employment conditions. Academic staff has diverse individual habits and needs for maximising academic performance in teaching. Employment conditions enable faculty to manage their time - the faculty is required to be present at the University for teaching and office hours (required number of contact hours per week), but for the rest of the time the faculty has the freedom to choose where they undertake their academic duties. We see diverse behaviour - as in any university, where some faculty prefer to conduct research and prepare for classes in their office at the University, whereas others prefer to do this at home or at the library premises.

The main indicator to evaluate academic staff development is the qualitative and quantitative feedback from individual faculty members, which is obtained annually through formal and anonymous University surveys and on individual basis through development interviews.

One area where staff development could be improved is the integration of the faculty teaching Finnish law courses in Helsinki into the TLU academic community, to ensure that those lecturers also benefit from the training events and networking opportunities available. Logistical reasons tend to be the main cause of the limited integration (Finnish law courses are taught only in Helsinki, thus the staff based in Finland have no need to travel to Tallinn).

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF ACADEMIC STAFF

- The composition of the faculty represents an appropriate mix of:
early career lecturers and well-established scholars;
full-time faculty and professionals from the field;
Estonian faculty and academic staff from abroad.
- Appropriate gender balance of the faculty is attained.
- Measures are in place to advise academic staff on matters of academic and professional development. Upholding the principles of academic ethics are followed in all areas of communication and teaching.
- Academic staff participates in and initiates internationally and domestically funded research and development projects and networks.

Areas for improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
More young academic staff needs to be involved.	Measures to increase the visibility of TLU among young academics, including dissemination of new research directions.	Ongoing. Responsible: Head of law study area, SOGOLAS administration, law professors.
Strengthening interest towards mobility.	Working individually with faculty to advise them on mobility possibilities.	Ongoing. Responsible: Head of law study area, SOGOLAS administration, law professors.
Integration of the faculty teaching Finnish law courses in Helsinki into TLU academic community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular academic staff meetings in Helsinki and organisation of off-campus seminars involving all faculty. 2. Involving Finnish faculty in project-related development process. 	Ongoing. Head of law study area.
Encouragement of young and visiting faculty members towards research activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organising brain-storming sessions for the faculty. 2. Integration of this target group into research networks led by senior faculty. 	Ongoing. All senior faculty, overseen by Head of law study area.

APPENDICES:

[Appendix 10. Study programme form of AKOB](#)

[Appendix 11. Course programmes of AKOB](#)

[Appendix 12. Nominal division of AKOB](#)

[Appendix 13. Academic staff of AKOB](#)

[Appendix 14. Study programme form of AKLB](#)

[Appendix 15. Course programmes of AKLB](#)

[Appendix 16. Nominal division of AKLB](#)

[Appendix 17. Academic staff of AKLB](#)

[Appendix 18. List of funded projects AKOB, AKLB](#)

4.4.

DIGITAL LEARNING GAMES

<i>Title of the SP, study level, language of instruction</i>	Digital Learning Games, Master's studies, ENG
<i>Academic unit responsible for conducting the study programme</i>	School of Digital Technologies
<i>Person responsible for compiling the self-evaluation, SPA</i>	Martin Sillaots, study programme administrator
<i>Brief description of the process of self-evaluation of the SP</i>	<p><i>Team:</i> Martin Sillaots (core), Mikhail Fiadotau (editing), Kristi Oikimus (study management and support), Merily Mürsepp (academic mobilities)</p> <p><i>Process</i> May - Aug 2020 - first draft of the report. Sept - Nov 2020 - editing the report by team members and experts. Dec 2020 - final draft.</p>

STATISTICS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov 1)</i>	22	30	38	50	51
<i>No. of students admitted</i>	12	11	20	27	11
<i>No. of applications</i>	19	36	30	94	44
<i>No. of students who dropped out</i>	3	1	7	6	3
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within the nominal period*</i>			39%	54%	82%
<i>Mobility (outgoing students, e.g. short and long term)</i>	0	3	1	2	2
<i>Mobility (incoming students)</i>	3	8	8	2	5
<i>No. of academic employees</i>	21	18	22	21	19
<i>Mobility (academic staff)</i>	NA	NA	8	7	2

* standard duration of the SP + 1 year

4.4.1. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE STUDIES

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Digital Learning Games (DLG) is a MSc degree programme that was launched in 2015. The initiation of starting this programme came from the TLU management board. The goal was to increase the cooperation between different schools within TLU – to create and run a joint programme based on existing strengths and competencies at the university. DLG was created in cooperation between SDT, BFM and the SES. In the development stage, business partners such as IGDA Estonia and Game Founders were involved. The main idea was to design a programme that would be equally attractive for teachers, software developers and artists. In its first year, the programme was led by BFM and courses were provided by all three schools. The following year, management moved to SDT because split management generated several unsolvable challenges.

The focus of the DLG is on the conceptual design of learning games. Game design is supported by other competencies: art, pedagogy, and coding.

Specialisation inside of the DLG is based on the core competencies needed for creating educational games: interaction and user experience design; pedagogy and educational psychology; software development. Corresponding to these, the DLG offers 3 elective modules focusing on each of the above areas. Other competency areas such as art and marketing are covered by individual elective courses but do not have dedicated elective modules as of yet. However, the introduction of additional elective modules is a consideration for the future, subject to student intake and availability of competent instructors.

In the initial stage of the programme, we had collaboration with the universities in Europe that had similar SPs, including joint seminars with Skövde and Södertön universities in Sweden. The goal of this collaboration was to study what courses or core modules are commonly provided in games education in order to follow the best practices in the field. Additionally, we

sought to establish how these programmes are different from each other and what the unique selling point for TLU could be. This experience reinforced our decision to focus on educational games, making DLG unique in the region and Europe.

1. Collaboration with other EU universities in the field of serious games and game-related education started already in 2012 and continues in the framework of various EU-funded research and development projects. Currently ongoing projects include [G.A.STEM](#), [ALIEN](#), and [MAGnUS](#).

COHERENCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The DLG aims to follow the logic of the game development process. All subjects are connected – the output of one subject can be input for others. This simplifies the creation of the nominal distribution of the subjects, but comes at the expense of flexibility. DLG subjects cannot be taught in any order, and some of them are prerequisites for others.

The clearest indicator of the internal balance of the programme is the number of students who have selected a specific elective course module. We expect students to be distributed evenly between three elective modules. In 2019, the Game Development module was more popular compared to others, reflecting the high demand for game developers both globally and in the Baltic region, where TLU is the only public university to offer a study module dedicated to the subject.

While educational game design remains an emerging field and is limited as a job market (the gaming industry in Estonia is growing, but only a handful of studios focus on educational games), the need for people with design and development skills is constantly increasing (web designers, software designers, UI and UX designers, instructional designers, etc.). Feedback is regularly collected from our students, academic staff members, and industry representatives (IGDA), and is acted upon. Examples of responding to suggestions from students and industry professionals include the inauguration of the Game Development elective module in 2019.

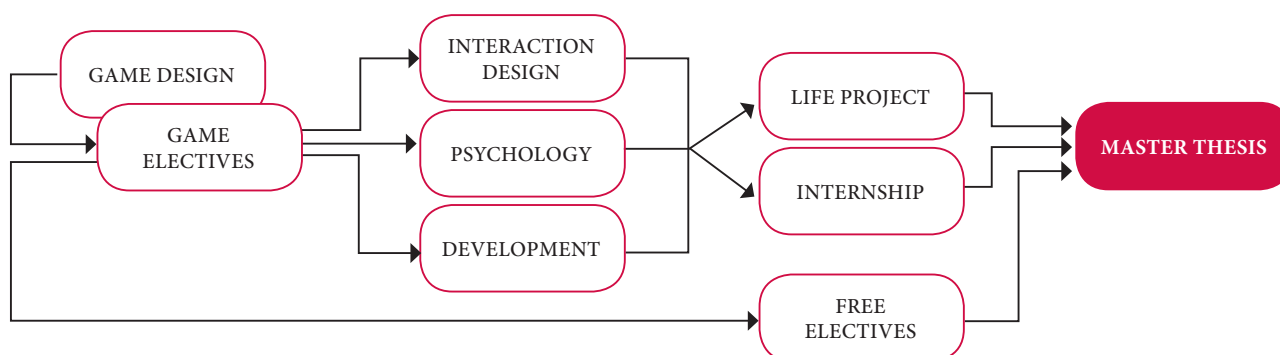


Figure 11. DLG programme general structure. For more details, see Appendix 19.

Coherence between the learning objectives, outcomes, course content, evaluation criteria and teaching and evaluation methods are achieved through holistic course programme design and evaluation. Academic staff members, often following the students' and industry professionals' feedback, have initiated the addition of new subjects to the programme (for example, agile project management, gamification design, etc.).

The study language in the DLG programme is English. This makes it an excellent basis for academic mobility and cooperation with the industry (which is highly cosmopolitan even within Estonia). We have involved several international and local visiting lecturers and experts from the game industry in the teaching process. These include:

1. Prof. John Nietfeld (North Carolina State University, USA)
2. Dr. Nuno Correia (University of Greenwich, UK)
3. Brandon Marsh (Creative Mobile, Estonia)

MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

DLG has to rely on a tuition fee. In order to cover all study-related expenses and maintain optimal standards of teaching and study management, the optimal number of students is 30 (10 per every elective module). This number is checked by the study counsellor at the beginning of every academic year. If the number of students is significantly smaller than 30, then the opening of all three elective modules becomes impractical. Because we have not reached this target yet, we implement several strategies to reduce the study-related costs: providing joint elective modules (1 module for 2 study programmes), some elective courses are provided over 2 years for both 1st and 2nd year students.

In order to recruit a sufficient number of qualified applicants, it is crucial to disseminate information about the DLG over various channels. Such channels have included the following:

1. Several one-week continuing education courses offered as part of Tallinn Summer School: [Design of Serious Games](#), [Gamification Workshop](#) and [Basics of Game Development](#). These courses double as an introduction to some of the content offered in DLG, while providing an additional revenue stream for the programme.
2. Coverage on education portals such as [MastersPortal.com](#).
3. DLG promotion project in 2017.
4. DLG Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/digitallearninggames/>).
5. DLG gamified landing page (<http://dlg.tlu.ee/>).

As any programme related to computer science and technology, DLG is strongly reliant on technological infrastructure such as computer labs. An expectation when joining the programme is for each student to own, or be ready to acquire, their own laptop, which allows instructors in many DLG courses to rely on a bring-your-own-device policy; this also makes it easier to continue work started in class as part of a home assignment, or to adopt distance and hybrid learning strategies, such as those necessitated by the COVID-19 crisis. That being said, SDT has a variety of labs designed and equipped for more specific study and project tasks: Software Development (SD) Lab, Game Lab, UX lab, Robotics Lab. Most classes in DLG's core module take place in the SD Lab, and students are encouraged to book the Game Lab for extracurricular and project work. The sufficiency of the technology base is reviewed by SDT administration at the end of each school year based on students' feedback. New lab equipment and software are purchased depending on the increased needs (and gaming technology changes fast). For example, a cutting edge computer lab with 16 gaming computers and an assortment of VR headsets was equipped in September 2020.

The Game Lab is part of the DLG office in room A421. It has a game computer with an Oculus Rift headset and graphics tablet. It also has a space for meetings and teamwork. Students can book this space via an online calendar. This space is actively used by DLG students and academic staff members. Student feedback indicates that they would prefer to have a larger meeting and working space that could accommodate bigger teams and offer more comfortable working conditions (e.g. sofas, a kitchenette, and a game console to test ongoing projects). Currently, no such option is easily available to DLG students. One potential solution could be transforming an existing classroom into a modern open workspace, akin to the LIFE space in the Mare building.

A social learning environment is actively developed by DLG students and faculty with active support from the TLU administration. In 2019, DLG students initiated the Game Society, an informal social club that organises monthly events dedicated to tabletop, pen-and-paper, and digital games. During its brief existence, the Game Society has successfully cooperated with the university Student Union, and its events have attracted attendees from other SPs, as well as from outside of TLU. Coordinators of the Game Society have requested more practical support, including help in purchasing tabletop and video games and creating a space for the Game Society headquarters (which could be combined with a larger Game Lab, as outlined above). Purchase of such equipment and materials is subject to ongoing discussion.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO STUDY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- DLG is an interdisciplinary programme the strength of which lies in its ability to bring together people from different backgrounds (teachers, artists, developers, etc.) and motivate them to collaborate on projects, build relationships and network. This both matches the interdisciplinary nature of the game design process and lays the groundwork for future collaborations.
- Continuous development of the programme has led to its forming a stable structural core. As such, while minor changes and additions are likely to continue based on student feedback and market demands, the programme retains its continuity from one year to another and should be able to avoid larger changes in upcoming years.
- Since its inauguration, the programme has involved professionals from the industry and partner institutions as visiting lecturers and guest speakers. These have included professors from the US and the UK, as well as practitioners from game studios, ensuring that the programme remains in touch with current developments in the field.
- A major milestone was achieving the desired number of students admitted to the programme in 2019: 27.
- Furthermore, the programme has been able to translate its staff members' involvement in research and development projects to opportunities for students to gain practical experience in the field through project-based learning. DLG students have contributed to several projects, e.g. creating mini-games for the Erasmus+ funded G.A.STEM project and taking on most of the responsibilities for the national Methodyca project. This helps students to gain real-life experience of designing and developing educational games while studying in DLG.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Material support for the Game Society.	To look into the options for expanding the Game Lab. To set up a space in the Game Lab. To request funding to procure materials: games and books.	May 2021 P. Callaghan.
Art elective module.	To define module objectives. To create course list. To formulate course programmes. Will be launched only if the no. of students reaches 40.	Dec 31, 2021 A. Hõ.

4.4.2. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT

Admission related KPI's are the number of applications (90 in 2019), the number of admitted students (60), the number of students who choose to start their studies on DLG (30), the number of students who drop out and the number of students who graduate within the nominal period of studies (over 50%). In 2019, the number of students who started their studies was little less than the target (27). Ratio of graduated students is 82%. Unfortunately, those numbers will drop dramatically for 2020 due to Covid. To streamline the application process and increase the overall quality of applications, a guideline

for writing the motivation letter was created. In the nearest future, we plan to add a gamified solution to support candidates: an admission interview simulation.

In the programme's first years, the quality of accepted candidates varied from very strong to somewhat weak. One recurrent issue has been that many candidates, while interested in developing games, demonstrated little interest in or knowledge of game-based learning and educational games. Conversely, many of the stronger applicants purposely selected the programme due to its unique focus. Introducing the application guidelines appears to have helped raise candidates' awareness of the programme's scope and expectations, while the

increasing number of applicants has enabled the admission committee to be more selective.

As DLG has a study fee, applicants are queried on whether they have the resources to cover their tuition and (for international candidates) living expenses in Estonia. Limited financial support is offered to the highest-scoring applicants by TLU and the IT Academy. After the first semester, candidates for financial support are decided based on their academic performance.

At the beginning of each academic year, an orientation is organised for the newly enrolled students, both to introduce the study regulations and practicalities, as well as to help students get to know each other and their instructors. Over the course of the studies, we organise extracurricular activities, including game jams and informal parties. Mailing lists and social media platforms (such as Facebook and Discord) are used to communicate with the students on a regular basis.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

The DLG has from its start been student-oriented. Students have a chance to initiate their own ideas, choose development methods and responsibilities in a team. The goal is to support creativity and self-expression as much as possible, while also providing constructive feedback and offering support.

Creating educational games is interdisciplinary and innovative by its nature. This calls for interdisciplinary and innovative teaching methods. Our academic staff members implement various methods, ranging from smaller activities such as gamified presentations or publicly open presentations of students' project results, to larger learning scenarios covering an entire course: project-based learning, flipped classroom and learning through teaching. Active teaching methods are preferred to passive lecture-based learning. We organise regular seminars for academic staff members to exchange best teaching practices and discuss study-related issues.

To support students' individual abilities and needs, we have established different mechanics: elective courses, elective modules, project-based study assignments and involving the more active students in university research projects and courses. The most advanced students are asked to (co-)teach a class or an entire course. The courses' reliance on team-based learning gives students flexibility in choosing roles and distributing responsibilities, enabling them to build on their individual skills. All learning materials are published online, making them available for individual studies and refreshing one's knowledge later.

Teachers provide regular feedback to students. Teamwork results are mostly presented in the classroom and immediate feedback is provided by the teacher and

fellow students. Written assignments are commented upon by the teachers on a weekly basis. Results of project-based activities are tested and evaluated by the stakeholders. For the final thesis, every student has a supervisor. The process of conducting research for one's Master's thesis and writing it are also supported by the Master's seminar, which is a compulsory course in the study programme. The biggest challenge at the moment is the limited number of supervisors, leading to a big number of students per teacher. In order to mitigate this issue, we are collecting contacts of potential supervisors (both in and outside of the university) and offering them to provide suggestions for research topics.

In DLG, the study, research and project work are deeply integrated. Course assignments are related to the research questions. Research project results are tested by DLG students. Research is also conducted based on the learning process and practices, with academic articles based on the experience being written and published on a regular basis. For example, in 2020 alone:

- Fiadotau M, Sillaots M, [Comparing Ideation Techniques for Games Education: SCAMPER, Gami-cards, Brainstorming](#);
- Sillaots M, Jesmin T, Fiadotau M, Khulbe M, [Gamifying Classroom Presentations: Evaluating the Effects on Engagement Across Demographic Factors](#);
- Sillaots M, Fiadotau M, Söthe-Garnier R, Upshall D, Callaghan P, Norak K, Anwar A, Emiroğlu O, Gorshkova E, Selina I, Hõ A, Alawode O, Methodyca: [A Digital Game to Teach Research Methods](#).

Students can help to raise the quality of teaching by providing their feedback about study courses and instructors' performance. At the end of every academic year, students can share their thoughts through an [online questionnaire](#) and a group interview. Based on the collected data, suggestions for updating the programme are made and discussed with full-time lecturers. For example, based on the end-year feedback in 2017, we realised that the SP did not provide enough courses on game development. As a result, the Game Development course module was designed in 2018 and launched in 2019. In 2020, we already modified some of its courses based on input from students taking its first version. Our goal is to satisfy the needs of current students but to respond to the job market's demands. (The need for more game development courses was pointed out by the industry representatives.)

To further improve the quality of learning, students organise gaming events and attend game jams and hackathons. In this way, they implement their academic knowledge in the context of informal education. Learning how to make games is not only an academic activity but also a hobby and a passion for many, which we aim for the programme to build upon.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS

DLG implements innovative evaluation methods such as game fests, elevator pitches, peer reviews, discussions, exhibitions, public presentations and learning by teaching. Instead of tests we use gamified quizzes (Kahoot!). Innovative evaluation methods are in line with one of the programme's underlying principles: academic innovation. The main reason for using alternative evaluation methods is to inspire learning game creators to implement non-traditional solutions. We also invite academic staff members and external partners to attend evaluation events. Most DLG courses do not end with the traditional exam. The final assessment is a presentation of the final works or another related activity.

All assignments and evaluation criteria are introduced at the beginning of every course through the course programme. Teachers are autonomous in defining the evaluation criteria and conducting the assessment for their courses. In some courses, students are involved in peer review and peer grading. At the end of the teamwork, students are asked to conduct team self-evaluation by defining the scope of the contribution of every individual team member.

DLG does not have a final exam or a specialisation exam. The ultimate summative evaluation is based on the defence of the final thesis. The rules and requirements for the Master's thesis and its defence are regulated by the study documents: [Requirements for Final Theses in the School of Digital Technologies](#) and [Assessment criteria of Master's thesis](#). These regulations are introduced during the Master's Thesis Seminar. External experts are involved in the final thesis evaluation process: 1–2 defence committee members are external experts from Sweden or Finland.

STUDY MANAGEMENT

DLG is an international programme – most of the students are not from Estonia. In this sense, the majority of students are already receiving an international experience by studying on the programme. Various measures have been taken to support the international mobility of students. These have mostly been advanced by the mobility coordinator of the SDT. The coordinator advises each student who is interested in mobility individually according to the specifics of their SP. Information letters are regularly sent out to students and information sessions are organised to draw their attention to existing opportunities. The SP is structured in a way that allows academic mobility.

The traineeship is mandatory for every TLU programme. In DLG, the internship provides valuable insight into how the game industry operates or how games can be used in the school. Students are asked to find the traineeship destination and position themselves. This is the first task of an traineeship: study the market and reach

out to potential employers. Some students have reported finding this task difficult due to failing to find a position that is suitable for their skills or expectations. In these cases, DLG academic staff members support students by providing contacts and help in finding an traineeship position. An alternative option is to provide an traineeship position at TLU. Some companies also advertise their traineeship positions using TLU mailing lists, which DLG students also receive. Traineeship supervisors are instructed via traineeship guidelines.

Feedback on the traineeship is collected at the end of the practice period through a self-evaluation report and presented and discussed during the defence presentation. Most students agree that traineeship is necessary, but sometimes they are critical of the limited range of traineeship positions. Another challenge relates to the content of the work as such, since in some cases, the tasks interns are presented with only partially relate to the DLG programme objectives. In order to simplify the traineeship coordination process and finding suitable traineeship positions we are setting up a database of traineeship contacts.

SUPPORT SERVICES, COUNSELLING

The goal of study support is to provide answers to questions and concerns raised by students and to provide help on any study-related issues. In SDT we have nominated one study counsellor for all international programmes (4). Her job is to act as the first contact for students. She is also tasked with solving study management related questions. For more specific questions, she will forward the requests to SPA of the DLG programme or to the head of studies.

Students are informed about the SP and regulations at the beginning of their studies during the initial briefing. Later they are asked to put together and submit their semester study plan. This process is supported by the study counsellor. The need for additional consultation is estimated based on the meetings between the student and study counsellor. Students have the freedom to report about any study or management related issues to the study counsellor or the SPA or any academic staff member.

The numbers of students who have dropped out have varied through the years. Based on the existing data, it is premature to make any judgement on what the trend is. We have personally contacted all students who chose to quit their studies. This is done in order to investigate the reasons why they made the decision but also to see if any of the factors that had contributed to that decision could be addressed, allowing them to resume their studies. The most commonly cited reasons are personal life issues, increased workload at their job (many students work while studying), losing interest in the subject, and running out of finances to support their

studies. As a result, we have tried to be more selective during the admission interviews and try to find out if the applicant is motivated.

COLLABORATION WITH ALUMNI

Our goal has been keeping in touch with our graduates and keeping track of their professional achievements. It is partly for this reason that we have established a social network channel (<https://www.facebook.com/digitallearninggames/>) for communication. We encourage DLG students to join this channel and contribute updates to it. So far the communication on that channel has mostly been unidirectional. We maintain informal

contacts with many of our alumni, including those who have moved abroad after graduation. We have involved several of our graduates as contract lecturers, allowing them to work on other endeavours while sharing their expertise with current students.

Since the DLG is relatively young (we have had 4 rounds of graduates) we have not yet studied how successful our graduates are in the job market. This survey among alumni should be conducted in the nearest future with the aim of collecting information on how the DLG courses and learning activities supported their professional lives, as well as how they could be improved. This information can be used to update the DLG curriculum.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED WITH THE LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- International programme: students from different countries create a culturally diverse environment, which also helps to attract and engage Erasmus exchange students.
- Innovative teaching strategies: project-based learning, flipped classroom, learning through teaching.
- Innovative evaluation methods: students' public presentations, exhibitions, game fests and testing.
- Integration of formal and informal learning: game fests, game jams, game playing events.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Alumni feedback.	Create a questionnaire. Ask for feedback.	May 2021, SPA.
Too many students per supervisor.	Set up a database of research topics and potential supervisors (involve supervisors outside TLU).	Dec 2020, SPA.
Connection between evaluation methods and learning objectives.	Check the coherence between the learning outcomes and teaching/evaluation methods.	May 2021 M. Fiadotau

4.4.3. DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF, AGE STRUCTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

Our main goal is to increase the number of competent academic staff members. At the same time, we try to involve experts from the industry and other DLG-related fields as much as possible. Currently we have 21 staff members who are involved with teaching DLG courses. 10 of them are teaching game related courses.

To increase the number of game-related academic staff members we have mostly reached out to the most

competent DLG alumni and students. In this way, we have involved 5 faculty members: 2 with a permanent contract and 3 with a temporary contract. For involving industry members, we have contacted them during IGDA monthly gatherings. First, they are invited as visiting presenters. If this goes well and we can find an agreement, they are invited as a provider of an entire course. In this way, we have involved 3 teachers-practitioners. Our international lecturers are mostly residents of Estonia (7), except two of them who are based abroad.

A balance is sought between higher academic degrees, which are par for the course for Master-level programmes, and involving practitioners and experts who possess invaluable practical experience, skills and knowledge of the industry. This means that some (4) of our teachers only have a Bachelor's degree, which they make up for with their professional experience. To guarantee a high standard of teaching when involving practitioners from the industry, they are supported by the university's academic staff members. Training courses are offered and short discussions about teaching matters are organised. For more details, see Appendix 21: Academic staff.

ACCEPTING PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

TLU has established an ethics committee and principles of study ethics. The same principles are followed in DLG courses. Every teacher is responsible for introducing aspects relating to ethics and plagiarism in their course. In line with standard practice at TLU, we use the Urkund service to check student submissions for plagiarism. All final papers are compared and checked with Urkund. In some cases, when there is a risk of plagiarism, regular course submissions are also monitored. The programme has a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism. In the case of plagiarism, course results are nullified and students are requested to retake the course. In 2020 spring we had our first plagiarism case. This ended with the cancellation of the student's course results.

Most of the DLG courses are based on creativity and collaboration. We hope this method will reduce the risk of plagiarism, but this also serves to help students build their personal portfolio. In addition, presenting to the broader community encourages students to be considerate of representation and other ethical issues at stake in game design. Other ethically fraught aspects in the game industry (inclusivity, hate speech, etc.) are discussed during courses related to game research.

ACADEMIC STAFF MOBILITY, OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

The nature of the DLG programme is international. Therefore, it is important to be part of international projects and communities. Mobility related KPIs are: the number of international projects (currently 7); number of international staff members (9); number of visiting lectures and seminars abroad (2 in the year 2020).

TLU academic staff members attend international project meetings and contribute to activities ranging from project management to software development. Contacts created in these projects build valuable networks for further study-related activities. DLG faculty have also been involved in academic mobility,

guest-teaching at partner universities (2 mobility visits in 2019).

Due to active game studies and game design communities existing in Finland and Sweden, we have been able to involve experts from these countries. This has included them offering short visiting lectures (1 from Skövde University and 1 from Aalto University) and experts from international universities being part of the Master's thesis defence committee (1 from Aalto and 1 from Södertörn). A professor from the US and another from the UK are teaching full courses in DLG, offered on a biannual basis.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

Our goal is to build a community of game designers and scholars who together are competent and experienced in all facets of making serious games: research, storytelling, design, art, animation and coding. We develop our academic staff by recruiting people with the necessary skills but also through improving the competences of existing staff members. Most of the professional development is related to academic studies on Master's or doctoral levels, but also to taking short courses. Professional development is the most intensive when conducting research and design activities, therefore we prioritise participating in research and development projects related to games.

The goals related to professional development are as follows:

- The number of seminars or conferences per staff member per year: 1.
- The number of peer reviewed articles per staff member per 5 years: 3.
- The number of games per staff member per 5 years (involvement as a designer, developer, etc. depending on their skillset): 3.

Every academic staff member is responsible for their professional development. Conditions and requirements for this development are outlined in the job descriptions and agreed upon through the job contract. More detailed plans are discussed and refined during the annual self-development report and interviews. Compliance with the requirements is checked during the accreditation (takes place every 5 years). Internship of the academic staff is mostly organised during their academic studies. For example, several DLG lecturers are doctoral students or have recently graduated from PhD studies. Their study internship is usually integrated with DLG needs.

For international collaboration, we have started and submitted several project proposals together with our

EU partners. If the proposal is successful, the collaboration continues through several years. Our academic staff members are interested in those projects in order to learn from colleagues worldwide and also in order to build a network of contacts. These contacts lead to new projects, learning games and joint publications. At the national level, we collaborate with IGDA Estonia. We have provided support for organising an annual gaming conference (Game Dev Days) and attend monthly IGDA gatherings. IGDA Estonia mediates the game

industry contacts. Collaboration between different TLU schools takes place during the LIFE projects where faculty members from different schools supervise joint study projects.

Academic staff members distribute the gained knowledge through academic articles but also popular science articles, radio shows and TV news. Some of them have been involved in teaching and giving talks abroad.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

- The DLG is international – it is easy to involve international staff members. Currently, we have 9 international staff members.
- The DLG is strongly connected with practical skills. This simplifies the involvement of practitioners from the game industry. Currently, we have 3 teacher-practitioners.
- DLG is heavily based on creativity and teamwork. This reduces the risk of plagiarism.
- DLG academic staff members and students are members of several international research or design and study projects, as well as scholarly communities.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Increase the number of international presentations, seminars and workshops offered by DLG academic staff members.	Build stronger contacts with nearby game studies institutions (U. of Jyväskylä, Skövde, Utrecht) and offer international short courses.	May 2021, SPA
Increase informal engagement with experts in game studies and industry practitioners.	Create a plan for setting up a series of regular guest talks by visiting game designers and scholars. Look into funding options to support the talks (e.g. transportation and accommodation for the speakers).	May 2021 M. Fiadotau
Increase the number of long term internships for DLG academic staff.	Send DLG academic staff members on 1 or 0.5 year long traineeship to academic institutions that offer similar study programmes.	May 2022 SPA

APPENDICES:

[Appendix 19. Study programme form of DLG](#)

[Appendix 20. Course programmes of DLG](#)

[Appendix 21. Scheme describing the interrelations between modules/subjects of DLG](#)

[Appendix 22. Academic staff of DLG](#)

4.5.

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP

<i>Title of the study programme, study level, language of instruction</i>	Educational Innovation and Leadership, MA, ENG
<i>Academic unit responsible for conducting the study programme</i>	School of Educational Sciences
<i>Principal compiler of self-evaluation of the study programme, SPA</i>	Eve Eisenschmidt, Prof. Educational Leadership, SPA Reet Sillavee, International Education Development Coordinator, study counsellor
<i>Brief description of the process of self-evaluation of the study programme</i>	January 2020 – internal discussions in the team of teaching staff, agreement of the timeframe and distribution of work, the SPA and study counsellor were responsible for keeping timeline and writing the first draft; February-March 2020 – interviews with students; March-May 2020 – writing the first draft of the self-evaluation report, analysing students' feedback, self-evaluation analysis of the previous programme, teaching staff memos of monthly meetings; June-August 2020 – feedback from the teaching staff, internal discussions to map strengths and areas of improvement; August 2020 – discussions with students; September 2020 – final version of the self-evaluation.

STATISTICS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov 1)</i>	11	22	15
<i>No. of students admitted (of whom enrolled)</i>	13 (11)	14 (12)	-
<i>No. of applications</i>	31	45	-
<i>No. of students who dropped out</i>	0	1	1
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within the nominal period*</i>	-	-	54,55%
<i>Mobility - students: outgoing/ incoming**</i>	0/0	1/0	0/0
<i>No. of academic employees</i>	17	19	17
<i>Mobility (academic staff)</i>	described in section 4.3.		

* Standard duration of the SP + 1 year

** International students in the SP may take certain courses (e.g. internships) in their home country.

This variety of mobility is not reflected in the table. See more under section 3.4.

4.5.1. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE STUDIES

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The SP of Educational Innovation and Leadership (KAEIM) was developed in accordance with international trends, national laws and regulations, e.g. in line with the Standard of Higher Education in Estonia (EST). The emphasis was put on developing general competences like teamwork (including working in multicultural teams), problem solving, proactivity, critical thinking and communication skills – 21st century leadership skills - which are much needed in today's rapidly changing educational situation.

We aimed to create a SP that would stand out from others taught in the neighbouring countries. For that, we mapped the field in the programme creation phase and a year after. The key difference in the study programme lies in its focus: the management of evidence-based change in the education system. Another difference lies in the design of the learning process, where the learning structure is based on the learner's individual interests and subject areas, on the basis of which the learner will be able to choose the focus of their studies and carry out a practical implementation along with its assessment.

One of the strongest base-lines for us was to use the R&D of Tallinn University, especially the School of Educational Sciences. We aim with our SP to strengthen the so-called border-crossing between the academic units and the university in collaboration with the university's research center CEITER, their Living Labs and EduSpace conceptions. The Master's programme is also very strongly supporting one of Tallinn University's strategic goals - educational innovation. We have taken the responsibility in one hand to share Estonian educational success stories with our international students, and in the other hand create international learning experiences for our local students.

Based on international 21st century leadership skills trends, all our courses aim at strengthening critical thinking and academically justified argumentation. Teaching staff is constantly updating their courses based on new research developments and support to achieve the learning outcomes. One of the latest developments is a joint course with University of Helsinki.

Based on mapping similar SPs and asking input from students, researchers and professionals, we decided to take a different approach to the final thesis and so are the students supported to develop and implement an intervention in an educational setting, gather data and defend action research as their final work. Higher-performing students are encouraged to write already in an article format and later submit their works to

academic journals. In 2020, two students wrote their works in article format. Based on students' feedback, the practical approach supports their motivation and helps to implement theoretical knowledge in actual "field work". During admission interviews, candidates have stressed that hands-on approach allows to create new solutions and test these in real life contexts.

Lecturers from two Schools (SDT, SES) along with researchers from two research groups (CEITER, Future School) have actively collaborated in the implementation of the SP. Certain subjects are also taught in collaboration between lecturers from two Schools (Innovation in Leadership, E. Eisenschmidt & K. Tammets). Working with the research teams in question and other activities by the centre of competence has opened up cooperation opportunities to the Master's students, students were included in their supervisor's bigger research projects.

To support TLU's strategic goal of educational innovation, we have developed new high level subjects in collaboration with the colleagues from other countries (University of Helsinki, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, Bath Spa University etc.). We include local students in Educational Innovation and Leadership courses (Innovation in Education, Educational Policy and Leadership, Learner Reflection and Group Identity). There are also joint courses with other disciplines in TLU (Learning Analytics and Educational Technology, ELU-projects). We have arranged sessions with visiting international professors and researchers (Marco Snoek, Helen Timperly, Raisa Ahtiainen, Mihhaela Stingu).

General competences are supported throughout the programme as is also stated in the study programme learning outcomes. The students understand the role and responsibilities of the leader of the educational institution in forming a learning environment to support the learner's development; are able to create strategic plans for educational institutions and to lead evidence-based implementation processes.

Learning process is designed following the learning approach where students work in teams, several learning tasks are required to propose the solutions to real life problems in their own cultural context, but also critically compare chosen practices in other countries.

COHERENCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The programme design focuses on three main fields of competence: 1) developing educational innovation that includes understanding future trends in education, latest findings in learning and development; 2) inquiry and evidence based decision making where one has to analyse his/her actions in comparison with educational

policies, meso- and macro-level learning analytics, socio-economic context and learning culture principles; 3) leading development processes combining planning, carrying out and evaluating the intervention. Those three focus fields have a strong research and evidence-based focus and are strongly combined throughout the two years of studies as shown in the [division of subjects table](#). All the courses give 6 ECTS credits, final thesis is 24 ECTS credits.

The programme puts emphasis on facilitating the development of the learner's personality - the leader of future trends, who understands the principal processes in education and knows how to build a learning environment that supports the development of students. One of the standards we use is the [competencies for leadership in Estonia \(EST\)](#).

We focus on the changed learning paradigm but not so much on one right approach, rather on the skills to critically analyse and develop a suitable version for a specific context. This approach aims at and asks from the teaching staff for supported student autonomy, possibilities for collaboration in different groups, developing social skills and skills working in teams, entrepreneurial and creative mind-set.

To secure the coherence and constant improvement of the programme, we aim at keeping the communication running smoothly, teaching on a high level and learning process as coherent as possible for the students, including all the main stakeholders in the process.

Half of the courses (7 out of 14) are taught in pairs or teams, some lecturers are involved in several courses, this helps to strengthen coherence and continuity in the programme. During the regular development interviews, the students have expressed their appreciation over the collaboration between the lecturer and subjects.

To increase the coherence of evaluation in different subjects, there are some subjects where most of the lecturers collaborate in the evaluation of students such as Research Seminar or Personal Educational Project. Each semester, there are some subjects that end with joint assignments - Educational Policy and Leadership and Global Educational Change; Research Seminar and Personal Educational Project I; Personal Educational Project II and Learning Culture and Leadership.

An overarching goal of the SP is to raise the understanding for the need of evidence based decision making and critical thinking. For that, all the courses, where possible, ask the students to analyse the academic argumentation in their written works. Next to usual teaching staff, there are many visits to sites and many visiting practitioners to seminars to help the students to build strong links between theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

To support the entrepreneurial skills and creative thinking, there are three compulsory courses in the SP. The Personal Educational Project I and II, where students develop the intervention based on [Design Thinking](#) principles, are precisely aimed finding a solution to an educational problem and executing it. As a pan-university course, [LIFE](#) invites students to work in interdisciplinary groups to solve real life problems using their theoretical knowledge.

Research plans developed in the context of the subjects Personal Educational Project I and Research Seminar I are used to develop a practical Master's thesis. Student feedback revealed that both the creation and implementation of a complex research plan remains challenging. They also highlighted a need for further support in the fields of academic literacy, referencing, and statistical analysis. To support the teaching staff, there are monthly meetings where bigger obstacles and victories are shared, joint problems can be solved and extra support for student development decided upon. As a supportive material, there is an [overview table of all the courses](#) with their main outcomes, readings, homeworks so the lecturers know better what other topics are on the table at the same time.

MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Students use the university's learning infrastructure; they have access to research databases and the resources of the Academic Library.

The study programmes are implemented using the modern teaching and learning environment and technology established at the Centre for Innovation in Education and the [EDUSPACE research laboratory](#). Other resources used include the newest mapped practices in Estonian educational innovation, accessed through visits to schools and kindergartens with recognised achievements.

In the context of the project CEITER, research-based solutions supporting the dissemination of learning analytics and educational innovation, as well as educational innovation testing methodology such as Living Labs, etc., are developed. The Centre of Excellence in Educational Innovation, funded within the framework of the university's Astra programme, allows the involvement of foreign lecturers and researchers in the field of study programme development, as well as fostering a broader collaboration network.

In general, based on interviews and discussions, the students are satisfied with the learning environment in TLU. They have brought out the lack of after class group work spaces. There are few in the Study Centre and mostly already booked.

To offer more flexible conditions, most of the documents, including learning materials, are shared via Google Drive that enables many people to work simultaneously, give constant feedback and assign tasks to specific people.

Critical thinking and searching for reliable information is needed and assisted in every course. This includes workshops on how to use databases and other sources the university has to use. Students are also introduced to different learning analytical tools (ProLearning, Observata, Digipeegel, etc.).

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO STUDY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- Strong international collaboration via various networks and individual professional contacts enables the SP team to be aware of the recent trends in R&D and incorporate them into the teaching. The vitality of the team brings in information and offers opportunities to share our ideas - for example one of the visiting lecturers participated in designing the [EU document Supporting teacher and school leader careers – A Policy Guide](#), which gives us access to up to date information and resources.
- On one hand, we broaden our local students' view in joint seminars and thus support internationalisation at home. On the other hand, we strongly aim for joint research and teaching collaboration with other leading universities in the field - for example a joint Erasmus+ Credit Mobility project was initiated in 2020 with the University of British Columbia.
- Internal collaboration is also one of our main values - regular staff meetings to reflect and monitor the flow of the programme, larger development meetings to improve our teaching for the following years, taking the student feedback into consideration as well. As a result, there is a growing interest in team-teaching, having joint assignments and final works between courses.
- Joining the forces of the SES' Centre for Innovation in Education and the Centre of Excellence in Educational Innovation has given us the resources to take our students to various study visits, bring in visiting high level academics and include them in university level R&D activities.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
The complex thesis system required by the study programme does not offer sufficient support for the students. Some students experience difficulties with finding a suitable topic or an environment for implementing the innovation.	To initiate the process of finding thesis topics earlier on; to add students to existing research projects and facilitate e.g. thesis writing in pairs. To use efficiently the the Research Lab EduSpace environment.	2022 – at least 2 students will write their work in pairs, at least 80% students involved in research groups, SPA.
Several online environments are in use, confusing the students and failing to provide a holistic overview of the studies.	To discuss possible improvements together with the lecturers. To implement an environment that helps students manage their learning process.	2021 – to map different environments, test with some courses and to take into use.
Varying levels of argumentation skill.	Different courses add the development of the skill of academic writing as one of the learning goals; all lecturers follow a single argued writing logic (see argumentation scheme, EST).	autumn 2021, course programmes are renewed, follow up based on students' feedback –SPA.

4.5.2. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT

Admission requirements (see also on [webpage](#)) state that we don't expect prior educational background as a prerequisite to apply to our programme, rather we expect a willingness to contribute to the development of education in future. We have put effort in designing a system of entrance exams that gives us a thorough overview of the applicant.

We have had a small yearly increase in application numbers (see Statistics of the Programme) and also a growing interest in various countries. Based on the DreamApply environment, lately there has been a growing interest especially from South-America (Brazil, Argentina) and Asia (Japan, South-Korea). Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was decided not to open the programme in 2020/2021.

The entrance exam allows us to choose academically capable and motivated students. The exam has three components - 1) analytical motivation letter; 2) analytical assignment; 3) and an interview. We have developed an [evaluation form](#). The entrance committee comprises at least four teaching staff members that also gives us a more objective view. We have also asked feedback from our current students, and they expressed that they consider the composition and content of the entrance exam relevant.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

According to the regulations set by the university, each student designs their own study plan for the upcoming semester. There are suggestions by the programme in what order the courses could be taken.

Considering the relatively small study group, we aim for the development of a strong group identity, an attitude of mutual support and joint learning. We apply such learning methods that enable to take into consideration the learner's individual needs, including the information collected regarding the learners' expectations in the course of the admission process. Considering the goal of the SP – to train responsible and proactive drivers of change – we support learners' autonomy and responsibility-taking throughout the learning process.

The SP includes a subject Learner Reflection and Group Identity, in the course of which various introductory activities such as a group hike at the bog, common activities with upper years, and a development interview with the heads of the SP are organised. In addition, also other learning activities like Winter camp to work with practical projects and research plans support collabora-

tive learning and receiving support from coursemates.

Course assignments also try to take into consideration the students' individual needs and qualities (e.g. country-specific or area-specific focuses and prior knowledge).

Individual consultations and interviews with students confirmed that they received authentic attention from the lecturers as well as a very adequate academic support, and they found the lecturers very helpful and attentive to students' well-being.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS

The evaluation criteria are clear and driven by the general goals of the SP. We encourage students to view studying as a process and not as something that only has to happen at the end of the semester. That is why in many courses we practice cumulative evaluation. With some works, students also receive a mid-evaluation based on what they can improve in their final version.

During the first meeting/lesson, the course programme, including the assessment criteria, is discussed with students. Based on student interviews, most of the students think that the grading system is very satisfying and good.

The final grade does not depend on a single assignment: 1) the final assignment is developed by linking various smaller tasks and generalising them (e.g. Educational Policy and Leadership); 2) works completed during the studies in total form the aggregate grade (Innovation in Leadership). Mutual evaluation is also used to enable the students to gain additional feedback. In the interviews, some students mentioned that they appreciate receiving very detailed feedback and not solely grades with no further details. The students really appreciate that they have a chance to learn from the feedback during the course and thus improve for their final assignment.

The Master's thesis process is built up so that students get the chance to present their ideas and collect feedback multiple times over the two-year period. In the beginning of the second semester, there is a winter camp where students start with brainstorming their initial ideas. During the second semester, they work with their ideas in three subjects - Personal Educational Project I, Research Seminar I and Research Methods. In this stage, also peer feedback plays an important part. Those three subjects end with a joint written research proposal and oral presentation, both the written part and presentation get feedback from the lecturers. During the third semester, students discuss the obstacles they encounter during the intervention in the course Personal Educational Project II and, with the help of teachers, try to improve their plans. The course ends again with a written analysis and an oral presentation. The fourth semester and Research Seminar II focus

mainly on the individual plans and developments of students' research, this includes regular feedback also from the supervisor. The course ends with a pre-defence, by which the thesis needs to be ~85% completed. That version of written work and also the presentation get very thorough feedback from the lecturers as this is the last stage before the submission of the thesis.

The university-level regulations and activities related to RPL are detailed under Chapter 3 (3.9 Evaluation).

STUDY MANAGEMENT AND MOBILITY

The SP has three thematic modules which aim to support achieving the programme level learning outcomes such as evidence-driven school improvement and readiness for leadership. It is important to create opportunities for collaboration with Estonian students and organisations. Second year students are welcome to participate in different mobilities, and also carry out their intervention in another country.

Study programme design and implementation draw heavily on international cooperation in teaching, research and development, in which all core lecturers involved with the study programme actively participate.

Readiness for leadership and evidence-driven school improvement are closely linked in the programme (see [Overview of the programme design](#)). Based on students' feedback, more one-to-one consultations have been used to support designing their practical projects.

Quite a heavy workload during the first year enables the students to have more time and opportunities to use mobilities during the second year. From the first cohort, one student participated in an international summer

school. She also went for a full semester Erasmus+ mobility (Czech Republic) and to a winter school (Germany) after that. There was also one student who decided to implement his innovation back home and spent the third semester in Pakistan. Second cohort has not been able to use the summer school option as Covid-19 restrictions prohibited that for summer 2020. Two students carry out their intervention back home, one in Slovakia and the other in Ukraine.

SUPPORT SERVICES, COUNSELLING

In addition to the central University-level activities, students also receive support at the School level and, naturally, at the study programme level. Best practices supporting student progress are, as a rule, discussed by the School's collegial board of studies once per semester. The aim of the SP is to create a strong group feeling and to monitor the development of each student individually, creating a safe environment where they feel supported in their decisions.

Based on the students' responses in interviews, the students described diverse aspects regarding support. The students kept mentioning mentoring frequently during diverse topics that were discussed in the interview. Some students expressed their wish for peer mentoring, others mentioned alumni or a professional mentor / supervisor / teacher support.

COLLABORATION WITH ALUMNI

We aim to grow a strong collaborative alumni network but as we are still a very new programme, there are no concrete actions taken.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- The complex entrance exam has shown effect as a tool with what is possible to evaluate the academic capability of the candidate from different perspectives.
- The small group size enables individual approach and the development of a group identity, as well as individual consultations.
- There has been an increasing interest abroad in joining the study programme, from South America and Japan in particular.
- Students' self-analysis and taking responsibility for their own learning is supported by mutual evaluation and an ability to develop their work based on the feedback gained. The final assignment is prepared in stages, during which students receive a large amount of feedback. The interlinked nature of the subjects supports the achievement of the key aims of the programme.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
The evaluation criteria and the process of preparing the Master's thesis rose questions in some of the students. The general criteria needs to be adjusted to meet the aims of the programme.	During feedback and development seminars with supervisors and evaluation committee, the amendments will be created and implemented.	The final theses of 2021 are evaluated according to new, clearly worded and broadly discussed criteria. SPA.
The levels of the students' previous academic experience vary.	To offer more optional courses based on students' individual needs, e.g. extra course on academic writing.	All students have the chance to improve their academic writing skills. SPA.
There is no active alumni community that would act as a feedback body for the general programme and possible mentoring system for the students.	Alumni inclusion system will be worked out – newsletters, invitations to open online seminars, participation as critical friends in the process of preparing the Master thesis, etc.	New alumni activities are initiated regularly and they are included in different aspects of the programme. SPA.

4.5.3. DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF, AGE STRUCTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

The capacity for creating the study programme had been created, and a team for carrying out teaching in the field of research-based educational innovation had been assembled. This offered an excellent basis for composing a strong team of lecturers.

To strengthen the teaching team, we aim to involve doctoral students and early-stage researchers, build stronger collaboration among different fields at the university and strategic partnership internationally.

Through the support of the [Centre for Innovation in Education](#) and the Era-Chair project [Learning Analytics and Educational Innovation](#) CEITER supporting the enhancement of research of capacity, as well as the EU project "Competence centre for educational innovation at Tallinn University", a school development team possessing a large amount of experience and knowledge to share within Estonia and internationally has been assembled. The projects involve doctoral students as assistants and co-supervisors in order to educate new generations of educators and ensure sustainability. Altogether 17 lecturers are involved in teaching, the average age is 45 years. Almost all courses are taught in teams, only one course is taught by one lecturer.

Joint research projects are carried out with the University of Helsinki (Leaders empowering behaviour, Distance learning, a joint course is expected to start in autumn 2020: "Educational Policy and Leadership" (with Raisa Ahtiainen)). Several lectures of visiting outstanding experts have been organised, e.g. Helen Timperley, University of Auckland, Marco Snoek, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, etc.

Internal joint courses with the School of Digital Technology (Educational Technology and Learning Analytics, Research methods in evidence-based development in education) and the School of Governance and Law (Educational Policy and Leadership).

ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

The study programme follows the quality and publication requirements set for Tallinn University lecturers. Each semester, students take at least one course offering in-depth insight into academic writing and ethics. The first plagiarism offense is penalised with a warning, the second offense with failing the course. More serious plagiarism cases are discussed by the academic committee of the School and may lead to the deletion from the matriculation register.

For first-semester written assignments, particular attention is paid to referencing and common errors, and

students are given individual feedback if errors do occur. In 2019/2020, referencing errors occurred in the written assignments of two first-year students; they were given individual support and resubmitted their works.

Lecturers discuss academic ethics at seminars; ethics, including the use of Urkund, are part of the Research seminar I, II courses. Academic ethics have also come up at the School's general assembly as well as at the collegial board of studies discussions.

MOBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF, ITS OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

Our lecturers are actively engaged in international collaboration, working at foreign universities in the framework of various projects and research networks.

As lecturers work at foreign universities in the context of projects, they do not directly use the opportunities provided by mobility programmes. For instance, M. Heidmets has a broad network as an external assessor and expert in former Eastern bloc countries (Azerbaijan, Moldova, Russia, etc.); T. T. Ley has work experience from a number of foreign universities and is highly renowned as a top researcher in a very broad circle of researchers; E. Eisenschmidt – expert in the evaluation of study programmes in Estonian higher education, but also internationally (e.g. Lithuania, Kosovo, Moldova, Kazakhstan and Georgia); she is currently working as expert in Twinning project in Georgia to develop quality assurance systems for general education in Georgia, keynotes (e.g. recently in Masaryk University, Czech Republic in 2018, in Jyväskylä, Finland, in 2019, Helsinki, 2020 etc.); K. Kumpas-Lenk is leading a Twinning project in Georgia to develop quality assurance systems for all levels in education – general, vocational and higher education; R. Sillavee has experience coordinating and working internationally in the frame of two Erasmus+ projects: 1) Education for future with partnership of the Amsterdam Applied University and Zurich Pedagogical University; 2) Education for Democratic Intercultural Citizenship Education (EDIC+) with partnership of the University of Barcelona, Bath-Spa University, the University of Helsinki, Charles University Prague, Aristotle University Thessaloniki and the University of Humanistic Studies Utrecht; A. Veispak

– has over a decade of experience working at foreign universities and possesses a broad research collaboration network; M. Linde – defended her Master's degree in Oulu University, Finland. M. Jesús Rodríguez-Triana has been involved in various educational research projects at the international level dealing with the application of learning analytics in physical and digital spaces (PREATY) to support decision making from classroom to institutional levels (CEITER), and to reinforce different pedagogical approaches such as collaborative (METIS, SOFOCLES) or inquiry learning (GO-LAB, IMAILE, Next-Lab, GO-GA). Currently, she is actively collaborating with several European universities including the University of Valladolid (Spain), École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland), and Twente University (Netherlands). She has recently been involved in the organisation of several international conferences such as [EC-TEL](#), [ICALT](#), [Collabtech](#). L. P. Prieto Santos obtained his doctoral degree from the University of Valladolid (Spain) and was a Marie Curie Fellow at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (Switzerland); he has extensive experience working in European projects (XtreemOS, METIS, DE-TEL) and is a well-known researcher in the learning analytics and technology-enhanced learning international community (e.g., co-organising several doctoral consortia in international conferences in those areas).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

Lecturers work as a team, developing a coherent study programme and engaging in mutual learning. A regularly scheduled lecturer meeting takes place on a monthly basis, allowing the discussion of problems that have occurred or deadlines ahead. Lecturers extract potential topics for Master's theses from their research topics and introduce them to students. In 2019/2020, a doctoral seminar was initiated to strengthen the research community of the area, where doctoral students presented their research projects and got feedback from senior researchers.

Jointly organised Summer School for developing research topics with the University of Helsinki (June 2019) and future plans for developing educational leadership research area.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

- Strong internationally active teaching staff, who themselves have experience working in international teams, teaching and learning in multicultural and -lingual environments;
- balanced inclusion of the teaching staff of different age groups, involvement of doctoral students (e.g. co-teaching and supervision of Master's theses). Novice teachers are supported by experienced colleagues. The inclusion of visiting lecturers and field experts, to support the overall goal of the SP.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Excessive workload of responsible lecturers, implementation of a new study programme and work with international students requires large amounts of time and energy.	Closer integration of students' final theses with the lecturers' research projects; involving Master's students in research seminars.	At least 50% students carry out their practical work in research and development teams (by 2022); SPA.
Development of the Leadership area is a new initiative, and therefore, strong connections to top universities in the field of leadership and involvement in networks have not yet been developed.	International mobility and a joint online course with the University of British Columbia, in the frame of Horizon 2020 project Accelerating Digital Innovation in Schools and a Whole-School Mentoring Model to strengthen international network.	One online course will be developed and an agreement for student exchange by 2023; SPA.

APPENDICES:

[Appendix 23. Study programme form of KAEIM](#)

[Appendix 24. Course programmes of KAEIM](#)

[Appendix 25. Scheme describing the interrelations of modules and subjects, KAEIM](#)

[Appendix 26. Academic staff of KAEIM](#)

4.6.

HEALTH BEHAVIOUR AND WELLBEING

<i>Title of the study programme, study level, language of instruction</i>	Health Behaviour and Wellbeing, PhD, EST/ENG
<i>Academic unit responsible for conducting the SP</i>	School of Natural Sciences and Health
<i>Persons responsible for compiling the self-evaluation of the study programme, SPA</i>	Principal compiler was Sirje Vaask, Head of Studies of SNSH together with Study Programme Administrators Airi Värnik (until June 2020) and Aleksander Pulver (since July 2020).
<i>Brief description of the process of self-evaluation of the SP</i>	Self-evaluation of the S occurred during 2020. Participants in the self-analysis included the SPA, Head of Studies and Head of the Study Area, teaching staff, researchers. Questions about the development of the SP have been discussed during the studies at seminars, where attendance was high among PhD students (interdisciplinary seminars). Data was used from TLU, databases, student and lecturer feedback.

STATISTICS ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>No. of students (as of Nov 1)</i>	4	7	11	14	15
<i>No. of students admitted</i>	4	3	4	3	1
<i>No. of applications</i>	7	5	12	9	4
<i>No. of students who dropped out</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Percentage of students who completed their studies within the nominal period*</i>	-	-	-	-	25%
<i>Mobility (outgoing students, e.g. short and long term)</i>	0	1	2	5	1
<i>Mobility (incoming students)</i>	-	-	-	-	-
<i>No. of academic employees</i>	13	13	12	11	11
<i>Mobility (academic staff)</i>	2	2	3	4	-

* standard duration of the SP + 1 year

4.6.1. PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF THE STUDIES

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The Health Behaviour and Wellbeing (HBW) SP was created by SNSH in 2016. The development plan for the SNSH was confirmed by the council of the School and was approved by the Senate of TLU in 2016. The main objectives and actions of the SNSH are available on the [SNSH webpage](#) and comprise the following: promoting wellbeing and a healthy lifestyle; empowerment and social development; promoting education for sustainable development; development of health promoting and green university. In Estonia, the [National Health Plan 2009-2020](#) formed the basis for health promotion actions, and this document establishes the main objectives for the health sector in Estonia, including the quality of health. The Ministry of Social Affairs also compiled the [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023](#), which mainly sets priorities and actions in the social protection and social welfare sector. Consultations with stakeholders were held during the planning process as well as with the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) and the [Institute for Health Development](#), along with the University of Tartu (UT) supported formation of HBW SP. The HBW SP is based on the TLU SP Statute and documents mentioned above in accordance with the Standard of Higher Education with regard to the acquisition of general and specific competencies. The objective of this study programme is to use doctoral studies to develop natural sciences and health research at TLU, to create stronger research groups, and to increase scientific capacity. An additional objective is to increase the qualifications of the School's lecturers; several regular lecturers from the SNSH are studying based on this study programme. The first graduate of this study programme was the SNSH's lecturer I. Rannama.

There are no doctoral study programmes for welfare in nearby universities, but the topic of welfare is gaining traction in society. Based on objectives set in national strategies, this doctoral study programme should support research in health behaviour and wellbeing and effectuate evidence-based interventions in the fields of health and wellbeing.

Programme Administrators are responsible for the SP development process, and they cooperate with the Council of Studies of the SNSH. Once a year, the SPA has to provide a progress report of all developments which took place during the previous year. The SP development requirements are discussed yearly with the teaching staff and throughout the student evaluation process. Still, the SPAs have to cooperate with respective interest groups in the development process (e.g. employers, stakeholders).

Doctoral students are admitted to the study programme in relation to research, i.e. the School must have the capacity for supervision, and the subjects should correspond to the research topics of the SNSH. During the last three years, there has been enhanced cooperation with the East Tallinn Central Hospital; for instance, from 2020, neurologist T. Toomsoo is a SNSH professor. This change supports the research done for the prevention of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, both burdensome for society. A study 'Technology and health behaviour – social media addiction discourses in Estonia' is currently conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs. SNSH has five [research groups](#), the activities of some doctoral students are connected to these. In 2020, doctoral students were included in the TLU longitudinal study regarding preventive measures, mental health indicators and coping mechanisms for COVID 19.

International lecturers have been invited for discussions with doctoral students during interdisciplinary seminars or as part of the speciality seminars funded through the doctoral schools. For example, at the end of 2019, speciality courses were arranged with lecturers from the University of Edinburgh.

COHERENCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

The HBW offers several subjects dedicated to the development of general competencies. These subjects are included in the General Courses module and include 'Academic Writing' and 'Planning and Running R & D Projects'. The development of teaching and supervising skills is supported by two compulsory courses: 'Learning and Teaching in University' and 'University Practice'. Throughout their studies, doctoral students must teach classes and/or supervise Bachelor or Master students. Acting as an opponent in research defences can also be considered part of the 'University Practice'. Electives from the Individual Subject module support the individual needs of doctoral students and the SP allows significant flexibility. Possibilities for flexibility for students as regards the completion of general courses, if the study programme's general courses do not fulfil the requirements of a specific research field, have been negotiated.

The objective is to ensure student satisfaction with teaching and supervision, and students' inclusion in research groups. 75% of the study volume is formed by research work, research papers and a final thesis. To show research progress, students are required to present their work each academic year in 'Interdisciplinary Seminars in HBW'. Students are also encouraged to present their work at international conferences. As the study programme's research paper subjects (incl.

those of sustainable development) also have actual implementation outcomes in the society, the doctoral students participate in science communication, e.g. doctoral students M. Kudeviita, K. Pedak, I. Rannama, and others, have provided input to the popular 'One Minute Lecture' format used by the Tallinn University.

According to both written and oral feedback, some changes will be made in HBW SP; for example, 'Interdisciplinary Seminar in HBW' has been changed to 4 ECTS credits. This seminar will be held during the studies. The course on ethical issues in human studies is under preparation and was tested during the 2018/2019 study year as a separate seminar for doctoral students (could be considered individual studies). Subsequently, that course will be included in the HBW SP instead of 'Academic Estonian and Terminology', which students did not find appropriate for their studies. In 2020, a change in general courses was undertaken and 'Modern Research Methods in Social-Behavioural Sciences' replaced 'Research Methodology' as a mandatory course, as the latter did not meet the speciality's needs. Good research practices and ethical questions have been an overarching topic during interdisciplinary seminars. The study programme's interdisciplinary seminar has also been attended by doctoral students from the specialities social work and psychology.

The student and supervisor first develop a detailed study plan that is consistent with the topic of the doctoral thesis. Courses from other universities or previous doctoral studies can be considered as replacements of electives or compulsory courses according to the RPL principles.

MATERIAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Resources (learning environments, study materials, study aids and equipment, study rooms, and financial resources) support the achievement of the SP objectives.

Before the SP was opened, the majority of necessary laboratory equipment was obtained, mainly focusing on analytical biochemistry, psychology or sports sciences in 2010-2015. Research could also be carried out elsewhere, such as in cooperation with UT and TalTech or Estonian hospitals and other institutions. Technical opportunities for teaching and research are extensive, and doctoral students are happy with the scientific opportunities in their field. Relevant laboratory resources are described in Appendix 31.

From 2019, doctoral students' national scholarships are supplemented by Tallinn University's doctoral scholarships that should allow the students to focus on research efforts and graduate within the nominal period of studies. This provides a prerequisite for linking research efforts to a research group's activity and significantly strengthens the research group itself. Doctoral students, who are also employees of the SNSH, have reviewed their teaching loads, which have been reduced in order to leave more time for studies (e.g., K. Kulbin, K. Pedak).

Students can apply for various scholarships to study abroad and/or participate in conferences, such as Dora+, Kristjan Jaak, and Erasmus+. The SNSH Research Fund and the Centre of Excellence in Behavioural and Neural Sciences (CEBNS) also support doctoral studies in the field social sciences. Students can participate in collaborative activities with students from other Estonian universities at the ASTRA Doctoral School of Behavioural, Social and Health Sciences. The SNSH obtained 260,000 euros of additional financing for the period of 2016-2022. This funding is intended to support four doctoral schools, including the Doctoral School of Behavioural, Social and Health Sciences (180,000 euros). The coordinator of this doctoral school in SNSH was professor A. Värnik, who was also the SPA of HWB together with A. Pulver (Head of the Study Area of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences).

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO STUDY PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

- The necessity of the SP has been recognised by national agencies and is a priority field for TLU.
- The SP covers a wide range of topics, thereby expanding general scientific competencies.
- The flexibility of the programme allows students to organise their own learning and mobility (together with their supervisors).
- Tallinn University's doctoral scholarships link research subjects to financed research projects and thus ensure the sustainability of these activities.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
Development of courses involving academics from other study areas.	To develop a course regarding ethics (as a General Course) in cooperation with other Schools in TLU.	2021-2022 SPA, academic staff (K. Koort, A. Pulver).
To increase the internationalisation of doctoral studies.	To include more international lecturers in courses, accounting, among other things, for the need of data analyses in behavioural and natural sciences.	2021-2024 SPA, Head of the Study Area of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences.
To use formal and informal feedback to improve courses within HBW SP, considering also the directions of international agencies.	To implement supervision and teaching method development seminars, allowing the lecturers to share experiences among peers. International cooperation in developing teaching. To analyse overlapping subjects in different courses.	2021-2023 Academic staff, SPA, Head of Studies.

4.6.2. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND MANAGEMENT

Doctoral student admissions comply with the general regulations of the university. Interested student candidates first contact the potential supervisor. Admission to the HBW programme requires a Master's degree in related field or medical education. Prospective students must first defend an approved draft of their doctoral project in front of a committee. Throughout the discussion, the candidate's knowledge of the topic, their motivation, and the existence of necessary resources is analysed. The students who apply are the ones with quite high motivation and pre-selected through quality screening of the research proposal. The application must be approved by a supervisor, so a significant part of the work is done already before applying. In 2018, the application procedure of doctoral students in SNSH was modified. Critical appraisal of doctoral study applicants is needed to ensure the admission of highly-motivated students. The application system allows flexibility amongst all doctoral SPs in SNSH – two doctoral (SNSH has 9 places) places will be decided according to the potential of the students, despite the study area in SNSH. The numbers of candidates have been: 2016 – 7 applications, 2017 – 5 applications. The number of applications reached 12 and 9 in 2018 and 2019, including several foreign applicants. Some applicants have

improved their study plan and started their studies next year (K. Pedak, K. Kulbin). There were 4 candidates in 2020, and one doctoral student was admitted.

From 2019, TLU introduced the obligation to pay Tallinn University's doctoral scholarship. Based on the relevant order, a doctoral scholarship (500 euros per month), supplementing the national scholarship, was paid to doctoral students during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years. The scholarship can be financed from research projects or from the research fund of the SNSH. The 2020 entry focused on research subjects where the doctoral scholarship could be financed from TLU or external research projects. This reduced the number of applicants as the applicant and his or her supervisor would have had to have a financed research project.

The School approves doctoral student supervisors (incl. external supervisors) and then concludes a doctoral studies contract. A few students have had to replace their supervisors during their studies e.g. if the research paper falls within the competency of another expert. This is done by the student filing a reasoned application, approved by the new supervisor and confirmed by the School's supervisory board.

In 2021, the school will open a new Master's studies programme 'Well-being and Health Behaviour'. This

provides better prerequisites for doctoral studies' candidates in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH

In the field of teaching and research, the goals of university include: positive research evaluation; the number of the staff that qualify as high-level researchers and supervisors; active research and development activities among the SP teaching staff; and high-quality publications in international journals (1.1 and 3.1 papers of the Estonian classification of publications). SNSH supports flexibility in studies and work at the same time - 5 of the doctoral students are academics in SNSH.

Students must submit an individual study plan at the beginning of each academic year and a year-end report at the end of each academic year. Student feedback is monitored with regard to the overall workload and the number of credits issued per course. The amount of individual work is scrutinised in annual progress reviews based on documents provided by the student and the supervisor's opinion of research progress. In general, similar research activities should provide the same number of credit points.

The teaching methods in General Courses include group work, interviews with students and teaching staff, discussions, and electronic media (e.g. Moodle). Members of the teaching staff are free to choose any teaching and assessment methods that best guarantee the fulfilment of the aims and learning outcomes of a particular subject. 'The Interdisciplinary Seminar of HBW' is the main seminar for enhancing cooperation between students and teaching and research staff. Once per year, each student must give a presentation on the topic of his/her thesis, but also critically analyse other students' work. Each seminar is focused on a certain study field connected to health issues. For example, causes of death, urban planning, environmental sustainability, education, mental health, the arts and health, but also the prevention measures of COVID-19 were discussed. This also provides peer support and strengthens teamwork within HBW SP.

The study area of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences has organised seminars for the staff of SNSH, but all doctoral students were also invited to enhance interdisciplinary cooperation. In 2018 and 2019, the interdisciplinary seminar was held in the field of health behaviour and wellbeing, where doctoral students from the Psychology SP of TLU and UT participated. Within the framework of the doctoral school, the School has supported joint writing camps for students of different specialities. This supports the progress of their research effort and the establishment of an interdisciplinary

professional network. At the end of 2019, data analysis courses for psychology, health behaviour and natural sciences were arranged, in collaboration with the lecturers of the University of Edinburgh, with the purpose of developing data analysis capacity in these fields. Such courses are arranged based on the needs and research subjects expressed by students. Participation is also open to doctoral students from other schools.

ASSESSMENT OF THE STUDENTS

At the end of each spring semester, members of a Progress Review Committee get an overview about each student's progress, including any problems they may have faced. The assessment criteria for doctoral students' progress review are developed by area-specific doctoral studies councils and then imposed by the Vice-Rector for Research. The developed form of the progress review enables to cumulatively monitor the credit points and progress made during the studies. Members of the Progress Review Committee can then offer feedback and possible solutions to any problems posed. The Progress Review Committee is composed of experts from different fields.

Course assessments are specified in course descriptions; for individual courses, the achievement of learning outcomes is decided with the supervisor. Doctoral student's Recognition of Prior Learning applications are governed by general university regulations. The achievement of learning outcomes by extra-course activities is decided in collaboration between the supervisor, SPA and other Schools where appropriate. For example, many doctoral students who are employed at the university have collaborated with their lecturers to find flexible solutions for the course 'Learning and Teaching in University'. Individual activities are also used to credit the course 'University Practice'.

Objections against the results of studies can be raised according to the university's established rules and regulations. No objections have been raised as regards the courses and results in this study programme. Academic customs (and traditions) have been described in the TLU Study Regulations. Academic customs have not been violated in this study programme.

STUDY MANAGEMENT

Precise requirements for doctoral studies are stated in the [TLU Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses](#). These require the inclusion of competent external partners in the processes of the preliminary defence and defence. Students have access to the following support systems: university websites, including specific homepages for each [academic unit](#); Study Information System; Timetable programme; e-Learning environments (e.g. [Moodle](#), [eDidaktikum](#),

Google Classroom, SPOOC). Individual counselling is offered by the Study Counsellor and Specialist or the SPA. Study Counsellor and Specialist organises study-related processes; provides operational support in the event of any problems; supports students with any technical issues concerning the SIS.

Collaborating activities include doctoral-level Summer Schools and doctoral student seminars. Different funds allow doctoral students to participate in short- or long-term visits to other universities. These international collaborations foster the development of international scientific student relations and encourage a uniform understanding of good research practices. Students are regularly informed of mobility opportunities via e-mail or directly from their supervisors. Long-term international visits are quite hard for students with families and/or children, and as most doctoral students are employed throughout their studies, visiting other institutions can be complicated by their inability to take off from work.

The statutes of the Research Fund of the TLU and of the SNSH provide doctoral students with the opportunities to file applications for writing their doctoral theses (up to 3,000 euros per project). SNSH's doctoral students are encouraged to apply, and support is available for drafting the application and filing reports after the project. As an additional benefit, this teaches doctoral students as early-stage researchers to apply for funding. The study programme's international partners have been selected on the basis of specific research efforts, e.g. doctoral student A. Lvovs conducted research in the University of Würzburg in autumn semester 2020, doctoral student L. Martma studied in the Intercultural Theatre Institute, based in Singapore, etc.

SUPPORT TO STUDIES (SUPPORT SERVICES, COUNSELLING)

The Study Counsellor and Specialist helps students with compiling the report according to university rules, with gathering all necessary documents and with any other study-related problems. TLU Support Units provide all necessary assistance, including access to research publications and technical/administrative support. The Division of Doctoral Studies from the TLU Research Administration Office regularly monitors and provides feedback about the doctoral studies. At least once per year, this information is also analysed and discussed with Head of Studies of the SNSH and the heads of other SPs in the SNSH.

Annual doctoral school conferences bring together doctoral students, lecturers/supervisors from various disciplines. Besides presentations by doctoral students, the conferences also entail a longer lecture, seminar or course by an international speaker. Including international lecturers and organising courses in Estonia are good alternatives for doctoral students who, due to employment or family related reasons, cannot use mobility.

COLLABORATION WITH ALUMNI

The number of graduates from this SP is still not significant. In December 2019, the first doctoral student was ready for pre-defence (I. Rannama), defence took place on 4 November 2020.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

- Although the SP started in 2016, there have been no dropouts yet.
- Motivated and professionally interested students have been willing to complete their doctoral studies.
- The study programme has the critical number of doctoral students in order to be able to organise interdisciplinary and specialised seminars in the necessary fields of study. 'Interdisciplinary Seminar of HBW' and annual reviews are good for monitoring student achievements and to give them oral feedback.
- Some of the students are also employed as researchers or lecturers at the university; doctoral studies support sustainable research-based teaching in the university.
- From the 2019/2020 academic year, TLU pays a doctoral scholarship that enables the students to commit more time to their studies and research but also promotes the emergence of stronger research groups.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
To increase student mobility in order to obtain experience in working in laboratories in other universities.	To reserve funds for doctoral students within the Research Fund of the SNSH, and to support their mobility; To find flexible solutions for rearranging the studies and providing mobility for doctoral students who teach themselves, and for students who cannot use long-term mobility due to obligations in their private lives.	2021-2025 SPA, supervisors, Head of Studies.
To implement a subject based admission to ensure the continued existence of the Tallinn University's doctoral scholarship and its connections to financed research projects.	To do preliminary work and provide interested candidates with information about possible subjects (projects) already during the previous autumn.	2021 onwards SPA with potential supervisors.
To support supervisors and doctoral students with area-specific courses (e.g. data analysis).	Collaboration with doctoral students and doctoral schools to plan and implement necessary courses – especially when it comes to including international lecturers.	2021-2023 SPA, Head of the Study Area of Psychology and Behavioural Sciences, Head of Studies.

4.6.3. DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF, AGE STRUCTURE AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

A sufficient amount of staff is involved in teaching speciality courses and supervising the HPW SP. Most academics (excluding lecturers of General Courses) participating in the HPW SP are employees of the SNSH. Some lecturers and supervisors come from outside of SNSH and TLU, for example, M. Sisask is a professor of School of Governance, Law and Society (SOGOLAS), there are courses in cooperation with the lecturers of UT ('Epidemiology and Systematic Reviews in Health Sciences'), etc.

Doctoral studies programmes in the SNSH, however, permit to have primary supervisor(s) from other universities or research institutions. The specificity of research subjects of the study programmes does not always ensure the availability of the best possible competence in TLU. Generally, a co-supervisor is included from a different university (e.g. UT) in such cases.

All lecturers who teach and supervise in the SP have a record of high-quality international publication. The administration, the council of the SNSH, and the SPA also monitor the quality and efficacy of supervision. The director of the SNSH monitors the activity of those doctoral students whose scholarship is funded from the School of Natural Sciences and Health's research fund. The director meets these students once a year to get an overview of their progress and to map possible issues and obstacles.

Student feedback is discussed regularly and analysed once per year with the teaching staff and students. Research Administration Office of TLU conducted a satisfaction survey among the doctoral students of TLU in 2017. Appropriate amendments to the study programmes have been described above. In 2020, the students' opinions were considered also in distance learning arrangements to reduce contacts due to COVID-19.

ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

SNSH has organised a series of seminars to improve supervisory skills for all five doctoral study programmes in the SNSH. An additional objective was to enhance scientific cooperation between SNSH supervisors in order to initiate interdisciplinary research projects. The methodology of scientific research, supervisory skills and implementation of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (approved in 2017) have been under discussion.

The new course on ethics in science was conducted in 2018 and 2019; it is open to students throughout the TLU and is credited as an individual learning course for doctoral students. The course on ethics in science will be developed as a general subject for 2023. The university has expanded plagiarism detection measures, and from 2019, the Study Regulations have made them mandatory for all final theses. Since 2019, the TLU has an ethics committee. The purpose of this committee is to assess the data protection and ethical principles of scientific research conducted in the university, to ensure compliance with internationally acknowledged ethical principles, and the protection of human health, dignity, identity, integrity and other fundamental rights and freedoms. In 2020, the university started to compile the good academic guidelines of the TLU. This document describes good scientific practices, good practices of teaching and supervision, good practice of learning, its institutional support and implementation, and relevant actions where good practices are breached.

MOBILITY OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF, ITS OBJECTIVES AND RESULTS

Most of the lecturers are established researchers in their own fields and authors of multiple scientific publications (H index). The publications of the study area of HBW indicate the areas in which research outcomes have been achieved. These areas are mental health, sports biology, educational and developmental psychology, cultural, organisational and personality psychology, cognitive neuropsychology, public health and health promotion. Lecturers of the SNSH have projects of cooperation with several universities. Cooperation and networking of the academic staff of HBW has been described in Annex 6. All possibilities to introduce international experts, and those working in related areas, are used to improve doctoral studies.

The doctoral school of Behavioural, Social and Health Sciences (EST) works together with other social sciences doctoral disciplines (social work, health behaviour and wellbeing) and acts internationally to bring in lecturers who are of interest to various parties. In 2018, the doctoral school of Behavioural, Social and Health Sciences arranged the international summer

school 'Doctoral Seminar: Learning and Development Across Cultures'. Additional courses in 2018 included the following: 'Short Course: Latent Class and Finite Mixture Models' (T. Gerber), 25 June 2018; 'Understanding Suicidal Behaviour' (R. O'Connor), and 'Calcium Channel Signalling and Stress'. Courses in 2019 were: 'Understanding the lives of immigrants and their descendants: From selection to adaptation' (Ben Wilson), 'Methods Masterclass: Causal Inference in the Social Sciences' (B. Wilson), 'Workshop on Technology and Cognition' (R. L. Zebrowski), 'The Origins, Development and Changing Demands of Education and Welfare in the 21st Century' (J. Gingrich) and 'Event-History Analysis with Stata: Regression for Longitudinal Event Data' (G. Andersson, S. Drefahl). In 2020, the course 'Social Work Practice in Between Theory, Research and Policy' (H. Van Ewijk, M. Payne) was arranged (EST).

Lecturer and student mobility has been the School's priority for years. The School supports its lecturers' international mobility by allowing for the reorganisation of work (teaching, projects). Long-term mobility has not been common for lecturers due to mainly private reasons. Many planned mobility projects were cancelled because of the emergency situation. Due to the working load, short visits abroad are more common than long term mobility. The university arranges central short-term mobility projects, e.g. in 2019 a delegation from Tallinn University visited Swedish universities to map their activities and teachings in the field of sustainability. In 2020, defences and collaborations were mostly virtual.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF

Providing opportunities for the professional development of supervisors is an institutional responsibility, whether organised through formal training or through an informal exchange of experiences among staff.

Seminars for improving supervisory skills were organised by the SNSH through the ASTRA project. Many supervisors also gained experience during Summer schools, seminars and conferences organised by Estonian universities. Cooperation within CEBNS gives additional possibilities for knowledge gaining. A seminar series, From Supervisor to Supervisor, takes place regularly to help to develop the skills of novice supervisors. This two-day seminar of the School of Educational Sciences covers topics such as the role of the supervisor, supervision to support the learning process, supervision as a collaborative process, feedback about learning outcomes, and how to solve problems and conflicts. The primary learning method was through the sharing of first-hand knowledge and experience. Most supervisors and teaching staff in TLU and SNSH participate in

international conferences and/or carry out joint experimental sessions with international staff and doctoral students; this too leads to the recognition of better supervision practices. All teaching staff can participate in courses to improve teaching capabilities and incorporate new active teaching methods. These courses are primarily organised by TLU Personnel Office. The staff can also use the option for a sabbatical semester every 5 years to concentrate on their research or for using mobility possibilities.

The career model implemented as of 2019 promotes

lecturers' self-development, mobility and research so that they can apply for higher positions in the career model. During 2017-2020, the focus for lecturers' self-development has also been on digital competence. Extensive courses and consultations have been provided in collaboration with the TLU's E-Learning Centre. In 2020, we shared experiences of good practices of distance learning and supervision in the School. Digital teaching methods have been used widely during 2020. The results of the feedback survey about the digital education implementation during the 2020 spring semester were good for the SNSH; students were content with the implemented solutions.

STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT, COOPERATION AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF

- Supervisors' general level is high. The researchers have been successful in receiving grants and producing high-level publications in respected international journals.
- Internationally known and acknowledged lecturers can be invited to Estonia for the doctoral school. Mobility is supported; solutions have been found for both short- and long-term mobility, incl. the possibility to rearrange teaching work.
- The university offers extensive opportunities for self-development and on-the-job learning, incl. e-learning.
- Tallinn University's enacted career model establishes a clear framework and objectives for the self-development of academic employees.

Areas of improvement and planned activities

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	DEADLINES AND PERSONS RESPONSIBLE
To support potential supervisors with development trainings to increase the number of possible supervisors.	To continue trainings and seminars to develop and discuss experiences between supervisors.	2021-2022 Doctoral school, Tallinn University's Personnel Office, academic units.
To support academic employees for promoting international mobility; primarily when it comes to teaching arrangements.	To support teaching work rearrangement to allow for long-term mobility.	2021-2023. Head of studies, SPA.
To support lecturers with international trainings on ethical questions in research, and on the development of data analysis and interpretation skills.	To cooperate with other universities regarding Erasmus exchanges of lecturers or webinars on recommended subjects.	2021-2024 Doctoral school, Tallinn University's Personnel Office, academic units.

APPENDICES:

[Appendix 27. Study programme form of HBW](#)

[Appendix 28. Course programmes of HBW](#)

[Appendix 29. Scheme of doctoral studies at TLU](#)

[Appendix 30. Academic staff of the HBW 2016-2020](#)

[Appendix 31. Laboratory resources for teaching and research of HBW](#)

[Appendix 32. Cooperation and networking of academic staff of HBW](#)

