

**Assessment Report on Meeting the
Requirements of the Secondary Condition**

Study programme group of
Business and Administration

**Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre
Estonian Business School**

June 2019

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Introduction

Background and aim of the assessment

Quality assessment of a study programme group involves the assessment of the conformity of study programmes and the studies and development activities that take place on their basis to legislation, national and international standards and developmental directions with the purpose of providing recommendations to improve the quality of studies.

The goal of quality assessment of a study programme group is supporting the internal evaluation and self-development of the institution of higher education. Quality assessment of study programme groups is not followed by sanctions: expert assessments should be considered recommendations.

Quality assessment of a study programme group takes place at least once every 7 years based on the regulation approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education *Quality Assessment of Study Programme Groups at the Level of Doctoral Studies*.

In 2017, international expert panel assessed the quality of the study programme group of Business and Administration at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and at the Estonian Business School. As a result, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education decided at its meeting on April 11, 2017, that the next assessment is to take place in seven years if the universities meets certain requirements set by the Council.

The aim of the current assessment committee was to evaluate whether the requirements (secondary condition) set by the Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education have been met by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre and the Estonian Business School.

Assessment committee

The following members formed the assessment committee:

Dr Tanja Dmitrović	Professor, Vice-Rector for Knowledge Transfer, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Dr M Abdul Rauf	Head, School of Business, Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences (The Netherlands)

Assessment process

Assessment Report on Fulfilment of the Secondary Condition

The universities sent their reports on fulfilment of the secondary conditions to EKKK on April 11, 2019.

The members of the assessment committee wrote the report based on the written materials presented by the universities.

In the following sections, the assessment committee summarises their findings regarding the fulfilment of the secondary condition, and also provides feedback on the progress the universities have made in connection with experts' recommendations made in their report in 2017.

The current report is a public document and made available on [EKKK website](#) after EKKK quality assessment Council has made its decision.

1. General progress report since last assessment of study programme group

1. General assessment of the actions taken by the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre with regard to improvement areas presented in the EKKA Council 11.04.2017 decision.

Comments

In quality assessment of a study programme group in 2017, international expert panel found that MA in Cultural management is a successful collaboration between Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre (EMTA) and the Estonian Business School (EBS). The panel found that: (1) the programme meets the standards of higher education; (2) the teaching staff is enthusiastic, efficient and highly motivated and demonstrate high levels of commitment to their work; (3) staff and students form an engaged academic community; (4) the graduates are engaged and enthusiastic cultural managers and entrepreneurs serving the Estonian cultural industries; (5) strong international focus of the programme guarantees a market advantage in Estonia.

While several strengths of the programme were identified, some recommendations on how to improve the shortcomings were also offered. These were highlighted also in in the EKKA Council 11.04.2017 decision.

Below we evaluate the actions taken by the EMTA in the past two years following the EKKA Council decision. The assessment is based on the documents submitted by the EMTA (see the list in Section 2.1). This report describes and evaluates progress achieved in 16 areas of improvement and recommendations outlined in the EKKA council decision from April 2017.

Overall, EMTA has made an effort to make improvements in almost all areas. The review panel commends the HEI for preparing a clear and concise Report on improvements.

1. *It is necessary to develop a strategy for the study programme in order to set clear objectives regarding the international cultural industries. Visibility of the programme in international markets should be enhanced and additional resources allocated for this purpose as needed. The programme's strengths should definitely be highlighted in the marketing materials and suitable media channels be chosen to reach the target groups.*

The Report on improvements indicates that in September 2018 EMTA underwent some organisational changes, and the programme has become part of a larger administrative unit (Department of Musicology, Music Pedagogy and Cultural Management). The change is reflected in the financing (the responsibility for assuring financial stability now lies at the higher unit level instead on programme managers), and also on operational level. Strategic planning process has started with benchmarking and analysing trends in order to identify the current needs in

cultural management. While some changes in curriculum have been introduced in spring 2018, it is planned that new vision and mission will be formulated by Fall 2019 together with strategic development plan for the programme for 2020-2025. At that time a revised curriculum will also be introduced.

Marketing efforts have been strengthened in 2018 by investing in several marketing communication tools and campaigns. EMTA now employs full time communication manager and part time marketing manager to support marketing of its programmes.

- 2. The Cultural Management programme should be better integrated with other programmes at the EMTA, for example, by conducting joint research or projects.*

The Report on improvements provides several examples, on how the changes in the academy's organisational structure were utilised as a vehicle to promote tighter collaboration with musicology department as well as EBS. Beside research in music and theatre, the EMTA is seeking the common ground with cultural management research and is actively contributing in finding funding schemes to promote doctoral studies and young researchers. Special focus is placed on strengthening research cooperation with EBS (which is also a strategic goal for 2020-2022 period) through EBS doctoral programme and joint research project applications.

- 3. The research component in the study programme should be strengthened and better integrated into the teaching and learning process. Students could also be offered research-focused practical training options.*

Several examples of integration of research in curriculum have been provided. A research component of the student internship has been reinforced in a way that the students have to relate their practical experience to academic content. In MAPSI internship - Challenge Solving Course, the students conduct a specially designed research activity for a chosen organisation and suggest solutions for existing challenges.

- 4. For the sake of sustainability of the study programme, the degree of staff's engagement in research should be increased. Staff research activities should therefore be strongly encouraged and supported at the Academy level, including by organising seminars on research topics. Members of the teaching staff should also be involved in international research cooperation, including practicing at universities abroad.*

The EMTA has addressed the major shortcoming, identified in the 2016 assessment – the qualifications and research output of its faculty – in two ways: by supporting current staff to pursue doctoral studies (and hence improve their academic qualification level), and by replacing teaching staff with faculty with higher academic qualifications. Several instruments have been introduced:

- fellowship positions and employing early-career researchers as temporary employees within the research projects of the academy.

- In spring 2019, EMTA introduced new career model which facilitates academic development of early stage teachers and researchers. It provides financial incentives for completing PhD studies and for rewarding research output.
- Support to academic staff has been provided in preparing the applications for international fellowships and grants.
- Some faculty members have spent some time abroad and they are also collaborating in international research through Erasmus+ strategic partnership programme.

5. *When determining workloads for the teaching staff, their research loads and administrative tasks should also be taken into account, in addition to their teaching loads. Equal distribution of workload among all staff members must be ensured.*

New organisational structure introduced in 2018 has allowed a better distribution of workload and responsibilities. The responsibility for the course leadership has been shared among more faculty. Three types of positions in the programme were established, and a tiered approach enabled separating responsibilities from academic leadership through programme management and administration.

6. *All members of the teaching staff should endeavour to enhance their pedagogical and professional skills on a regular basis.*

The new organisational structure enables all programme staff to focus on professional self-development through pedagogical and professional training and research opportunities. The permanent staff is encouraged to participate in various pedagogical trainings and life-long learning courses which support improvement of teaching skills, and the doctoral students who are engaged as teaching staff are required to pass the pedagogical module or course. Some funds are available for these purposes, including the access to ENCATC (European Network of Cultural Management Training Centres) events and services. Also, train the trainers-type workshop has been organized.

The teachers are encouraged to share their pedagogical practices with other teachers; directly or via the coordinator and head of studies.

7. *The EMTA should review the ECTS credit structure in the programme. In order to achieve international comparability of the programme, it must be ensured that the number of credits corresponds to a student's actual workload and is evenly distributed among the courses.*

Through curriculum changes prior to admission in 2018, ECTS credit structure has been changed in favour of larger modules in a way that the existing short (focused) courses have become integral parts of bigger modules with common learning objectives. Students can take the entire module or only a part of the module. Added flexibility can cater to several segments of students (regular, full-time students as well as exchange students and even some »outside« students with focused interest in specific topics) but it can also imply some inconsistencies

and shortcomings in designing learning objectives and outcomes. In additional clarification, EMTA explained that each course is graded separately and follows specific assessment criteria and methods. If this approach is kept in the new curriculum the appropriate hierarchy and matching of learning outcomes should be assured.

8. *The number of elective courses should be increased to provide students with more specialisation options.*

Report on improvements does not provide any specific information on elective courses. However, organisational changes in the EMTA have led to some changes in curriculum of the Cultural Management programme, including the introduction of new courses and revision of some of the existing courses. Some of the courses have been opened for the students from the EBS, and Cultural Management programme students have been encouraged to take some courses at EBS.

9. *The clarity and transparency of assessment criteria must be guaranteed. Students should be given written qualitative feedback more systematically on all the components of a grade received. For the sake of equal treatment of students, the assessment process should be clearly documented. It is advisable to establish uniform feedback rules for all assessments of students.*

According to the Report, the assessment of the courses has been reviewed, and feedback system has been revised. Now it is conducted immediately at the end of the semester. The student feedback is provided to the teachers. It is also discussed at the Curriculum Council in order to detect any inconsistencies and also to provide a feed-back loop. Students receive written feedback (in most cases) at the end of the course upon submitting their assignments.

In spring 2018 an extensive re-evaluation of assessment criteria and course content was performed, and as a result, the grading in five additional mandatory courses has been changed to mark-graded (from pass/fail).

10. *Software should be introduced that makes it possible to detect plagiarism in different languages and to check the originality of student papers.*

EMTA decided to obtain URKUND programme and it is in the process of implementation and setup.

11. *In view of the international focus of the programme, all key texts should also be translated from Estonian into English.*

While the recommendation referred to the KEY texts, the EMTA comments in the Report refer to the importance of the programme for Estonia, and its role in establishing terminology in the field. This endeavour is understandable and it is also appreciated. However, as the programme is run entirely in English and is aimed also at the international (primarily Eastern European) market, the required

readings for obligatory courses should be available in English language. The additional clarifications by EMTA indicates, that indeed all key texts are provided in English.

12. In addition to textbooks, other alternative learning materials should be offered to students, such as podcasts, documentaries and open lectures from other universities abroad.

Syllabi and course content were revised so that interactive methods and materials are now used to a greater extent. The study materials include videos, cases, voice presentations and various e-materials. Library has been updated in the last year following the recommendations provided by the course lecturers. Students can suggest to the programme managers which additional materials should be included in the library stock.

13. Means of extending the best practices of MAPSI to other modules should be considered (the alignment of teaching methods with programme content, e-learning). Digital learning opportunities for providing guest lecturing should be employed to a greater extent.

MAPSI academy format has been used as a benchmark for redesigning some other courses. As a part of the new project HEISE, a new approach has been implemented through a "Challenge Solving course" as a means for engaging with societal challenges. Moodle platform has been introduced, and the teachers have been advised to use more didactic online materials, group work in online environment, feedback rounds, videos, etc. In order to enhance the learning and evaluating processes, the EMTA is considering using Peergrade platform.

14. The Academy should fully support international staff and student mobility, to enable both to gain international experience and contacts. To this end, cooperation with other educational institutions with similar profiles would be useful.

Internationalisation of the EMTA and Cultural Management programme is still in the nascent stage. In terms of incoming teacher mobility, some steps have been made, and 50% of staff are visiting lecturers that come from abroad. While they can indeed enhance international dimension, the school should make sure that the core staff is employed full-time in order to avoid a syndrome of "the flying faculty". In terms of outgoing exchange, young lecturers that are pursuing their PhD degrees are encouraged to spend some time abroad. Staff is engaged in a few international projects, but this area continues to be underdeveloped.

No data on student mobility was provided.

15. It is recommended that a formal English language test be used (e.g. IELTS) to evaluate candidates' proficiency in English to ensure that all students have uniformly high levels of language skills.

This recommendation has not been followed. The Report on improvements states that the international target market is Eastern Europe, where access to formal language examination is either expensive or limited. English proficiency is tested during the admission interview, and to ensure the necessary language skills, extension of admission interview length is considered as well as writing/speaking assignment on spot during admission exam.

16. The student dropout rate should be further reduced and students should be motivated to complete their MA studies in a timely manner.

To reduce this problem, new courses related to preparing the master thesis have been introduced into the programme already in the first semester. Some additional opportunities for replacing missed courses are now provided. For example some courses can be replaced by courses offered by other universities (also abroad). The timetables are now coordinated with the students, and an effort was made to enhance flexibility of the schedules.

No data on dropout rates was provided in the report, but state statistics (provided by EKKA) indicate a decline in dropout. Due to a small cohort of students, the change from 2015-2016 to 2017-2018 in absolute numbers is small (6-4-3), and rather large percentagewise (from 26% to 13%). This indicates that the measures for increasing progression and completion rates were effective.

Commendations

- The organisational restructuring will likely increase financial stability and allow better integration of MA in Cultural Management into the EMTA programme portfolio, reaping benefits from interdisciplinary research and teaching.
- Closer collaboration with the EBS in terms of teaching and research has a potential for strengthening and enriching the Cultural Management programme, as well as extending its influence and reach.
- Introducing financial incentives for improved qualifications and increased research output is a step in the right direction. Further measures to increase research activity could include, for example, an individual research fund (even if it is small) for each faculty member which could be used for financing international conference attendance, data collection etc.
- Active participation in international networks and associations (such as the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends) will increase EMTA's and programme's international visibility.

Further considerations

- Employment policy that rests upon "building its own faculty" can lead to a problem of so-called "academic inbreeding" (see Section 2.1).

- Make additional effort for increasing the level of internationalisation including a mandatory IELTS requirement for students and some English language training for the teaching staff.

2. General assessment of the actions taken by the Estonian Business School with regard to improvement areas presented in the EKKA Council 11.04.2017 decision.

Comments

A short description of the situation in the university/study programmes based on actions taken on the basis of the last assessment in 2016.

This section presents the evaluation by the panel of the action plan submitted by EBS for the recommendation made by the last assessment panel with regard to improvement areas presented in the EKKA council on 11.04.2017 decision. The panel has reproduced the criteria for each standard to assess the action plan in connection to the recommendations. For all the standards in question the panel presents (1) a brief outline of its findings based on the EBS action plan, (2) the considerations the panel has taken into account and (3) the conclusion of the panel if the HEI has met the requirements of secondary conditions.

The HEI has provided a detailed description in the action plan document for the actions taken during the past two years to meet the requirements as per the accreditation standards. The panel finds that the HEI has put a considerable effort in all 18 recommendations made by the panel during the assessment. A short description of the action plans for all these recommendations is presented one by one.

1) The largest weakness of EBS is a small number of full-time faculty in the study programmes.

EBS has developed a comprehensive faculty recruitment policy (Employment Rules for the Academic Staff at Estonian Business School in appendix 2). This policy document which was approved by the management board in 2018 covers all important aspect and shall serve in fulfilling all faculty appointment effectively. The panel finds that if implemented effectively the HEI could benefit considerably from this policy in dealing with their faculty employment both full-time and part-time members. Some progress has already been made in this regard to improve the core/full-time faculty and faculty with PhD qualifications. The HEI has provided details in table 2 in the Interim Report for Quality (Appendix 1). The number of core faculty that has been hired during last three years has increased from 14 in 1016/2017 to 17 in 2017/2018 and to 21 in 2018/2019. The number of full time professors has increased from 10 in 2016/2017 to 12 in 2018/2019. There are approximately 40% full-time equivalent faculty members and 50% with PhD qualifications. There is good balance between male and female faculty members.

2) If EBS is willing to raise its international profile, the university should lay more emphasis on academic research. In addition, it is recommended to

increase the financing of research activities. Motivation mechanisms should be created in order to promote research. Students should be more exposed to research done by the faculty.

The HEI has carried out an international recruitment campaign at the end of the academic year 2017-18 to recruit a more international faculty. A total of 15 academic positions were advertised to recruit associate professors and professor. As a result of this initiative, they managed to higher more international faculty members and will continue with similar efforts to improve the internationality of the staff. There are 9% of core faculty holding foreign passports (comparing to 7% in 2016/17) and 67% of core faculty with foreign professional or study experience (comparing to 65% in 2016/17). It is important to note that in similar efforts to promote internationalization, EBS organised the annual EGOS conference in 2018 (*European Group of Organizational Studies*) which was attended by almost 2,000 international delegates. To enhance scientific research, the HEI has appointed their faculty members with similar research topics and interests to joint research groups, with a set work plan and research budget. Regarding scientific publications EBS has set an internal quality criterion that the publications should meet the certain minimum quality standards.

3) While determining the workload of faculty research activities, administrative duties and compilation of textbooks should also be considered in addition to teaching. The university could officially recognise faculty for voluntary additional activities (such as writing textbooks).

According to the EBS action plan, the workload of EBS faculty research activities and administrative duties have always been considered in addition to teaching in accordance with the terms set in the individual employment contracts. In addition, writing textbooks has been subject to separate remuneration previously as well. Since May 2018 accounting for the work load of EBS faculty has been regulated by Employment Regulations for Academic Staff provided in the Appendix 2. This policy document entails the detailed criteria in this regard and other tasks such as administrative duties, publication of text books is appropriately covered. The newly drafted employment regulations for academic staff also budget a sufficient amount of hours for almost all faculty members to spend some time on any related tasks of their own interest with any formal approvals. The panel finds this as a good indication to promote and help faculty to take diverse research and education initiatives.

4) The university could have a more holistic approach to qualification training for faculty members. E.g. EBS could set their requirements for faculty qualification training and for the language and pedagogical skills of the faculty.

The HEI has taken vital steps in the development of the pedagogical and professional skills of the faculty since the academic year 2017-18. EBS has been implementing purposeful active and interactive learning and the flipped classroom approach within the last two academic years. It is important to note that these developments are supported by regular in-house trainings, and based on students' feedback on the study process & environment and annual performance appraisal interviews with the faculty members. A structured approached is used

to assess needs for qualification training, on the basis of which the future qualification training plans will be designed and delivered. EBS has been offering English language training for their faculty members since 2002.

5) More foreign faculty should be recruited for master programmes

It is good to see that a considerable number of foreign lecturers have been teaching at EBS master' programmes in the last two to three years with a good mix of directly employed by EBS and some from the partner universities. It is essential to carry out such practice on a regular basis during the complete accreditation cycle.

6) The university is recommended to take a more interdisciplinary approach to programme development, e.g. include more social and cultural elements in the programmes.

The HEI has put efforts in improving the study programmes through the programme committee to enhance the social and cultural elements. For example, the International Economics masters course has been redesigned and renamed as Global Economics and Politics, that covers the political, social and cultural elements. Some other master and bachelor level courses also emphasise on similar aspects such as the Intercultural Communication, Sociology, Social Psychology, Philosophy, and International Marketing courses.

7) There is some overlapping in courses with similar contents. Faculty members should clearly discuss the reasons and need for such overlaps and explain these to the students. The study modules could have a higher volume than now. Communication between faculty members from different departments should be improved, as it tends to be insufficient at present.

According to information provided, all courses have been designed so that they contribute to the achievement of the final learning outcomes of the study programme. The new e-learning platform LMS Canvas supports a systematic surveillance of the achievement of the learning outcomes and enables to identify overlaps between courses. They have established a structured process through heads of study programmes, heads of academic departments and the lecturers of the respective courses to deal with any overlaps to improve the courses. An overview of such amendments will also be communicated with the relevant students. The panel finds important initiative, such as - the HEI is planning to create interdisciplinary clusters based on study programmes and their content modules with the purpose of improving the quality and harmonisation of teaching, understanding and achieving the learning outcomes of related subjects. All relevant departments consider this as an ongoing activity, and hold regular meetings with lecturers at bachelor's and master's level in order to avoid any repetition and agree on the division of topics and their focus.

8) The number of credit points for courses does not always reflect the actual workload for students, which is in conflict with the European Credit Transfer

System. Internationalisation assumes international comparability between courses and credit points.

The workload for students is determined based on ECTS guidelines i.e. 1 ECTS = an average of 26 hours of workload, including class contact hours, and reading materials, assignments, research and module assessments. Every lecturer is expected to achieve a balance between classroom contact hours and independent student work, which is appropriate for the volume, objective and expected learning outcomes of the course. If in doubt that the volume of the course and the workload is too high, the HEI collects student feedback and randomly reviews some modules for this purpose to make adjustments where needed. This is a good approach however a caution should be taken in exercising this based solely on the student feedback.

- 9) *Feedback given to students seems to be confined to the results of the exam. Students should be given more systematic qualitative feedback in the written form on all the components of the grade they have scored. The grading process should be clearly documented for the sake of transparency and fair treatment of students. It is recommended to set harmonious regulations for giving feedback on all official assessments.*

Assessments at the HEI are done based on the Act by the Ministry of Education and Research, which sets a unified grading system in all Estonian HEIs. The grading system at EBS provides valuable feedback on students' study results and progress. The structure of studies is based on Bloom's taxonomy – knowledge must be applicable, analysable, evaluable and creative. All lecturers are required to provide feedback to students on each activity assessed and assessment rubrics are widely used for giving feedback. In the absence of rubrics, qualitative feedback has to be given and its appropriateness can be observed in Canvas by the head of the respective academic department. The panel considers that it can help students in getting useful feedback if such a system is implemented effectively.

- 10) *As the university provides also programmes in English, it is recommended to start using a software that would enable to detect plagiarism from different languages and check the originality of students' papers. The principles of academic ethics and consequences of stealing creative work have to be explained to the students in an adequately detailed way at the beginning of their studies.*

According to the information provided, the HEI has implemented the Urkund i.e. a plagiarism detection software since 2017-18. Some relevant courses are designed in the study programme for this purpose to provide information about academic integrity and ethics. Additionally, some training sessions are organised for the faculty members to train them for an effective implementation.

- 11) *In the programmes taught in English all study materials should be available in English and updated.*

The HEI provides sufficient literature in the English language. A good number of academic databases such as EBSCO, ProQuest, Academic Search Complete and Business Source Complete, and the e-book platform (EBSCOhost) are available for student and staff to access such resources.

12) EBS could establish an Internship Office, which would help students find internship placements.

The HEI is using a systematic approach for internship arrangements for students by posting them on students' intranet, systematising them by fields of activity. Students can attend informative classes and can contact/meet an EBS career specialist concerning documentation for internship applications and finding internship placements. Students also receive support in finding international internships outside Estonia.

13) It is recommended to set the minimum amount allocated to renew the resources of the library in the annual budget.

The HEI has spent considerable budget in renewing the library resources for staff and students both physical and online publications. Such a systematic approach should serve the HEI well if implemented on a regular basis during the current accreditation period and beyond.

14) To some extent problems are caused by the different level of students' prior preparation. To solve the situation, preparatory levelling courses could be offered, or stricter admission criteria introduced.

There were two aspects to this recommendation, 1) a clear and strict admission intake criteria. This appears to be addressed properly as per the information given in the action plan. However, it is unclear for the 2) about the relevancy of prior qualification to be eligible or able to follow the admitted study programme. Are there any arrangement such as preparatory / support foundation courses are offered in this regard.

15) Student mobility both inward and outward should be endorsed to a greater extent. Therefore, the process of transferring credits from other universities should be facilitated and more flexible procedures for the accreditation of prior learning have to be established. Two master programmes do not have foreign students.

The HEI has appropriate student mobility arrangements as per the new structure and especially the elective module opportunities for the interested students to promote international placements. A good percentage of international students both in bachelor (38%) and in the master (25%) programmes taught in English can provide good learning experiences for local and international students.

16) It is recommended that students should be allowed to take courses also at other universities.

There are sufficient opportunities for the interested students to take part in courses both at national and international institutions. It is appreciated by the HEI and facilitated in certain ways. This is a good initiative in enhancing students' dynamic learning and experience.

17) The collection and processing of feedback could be the same for all programmes.

Starting from 2018-19 the new feedback platform EvaluationKit is integrated to Canvas and appears to be an effective feedback system collecting student feedback centrally. The panel is convinced of a continuous improvement in the delivery of courses if the findings are implemented effectively based on such a feedback.

18) A high drop-out rate and a small number of students graduating within the nominal study period is a cause of concern.

The drop-out rate at EBS appears to be less compared to other HEI and some arrangement such as mobility window facilitate in completing the study programme in-time. The panel understands the concept of lifelong learning and the need to provide part-time studies which usually promotes flexible integration of work and qualification training.

Commendations

A list of areas/actions you would like to praise (if applicable) – examples of good practices, excellent achievements, innovative solutions etc.

- EBS has developed a comprehensive faculty recruitment policy (Employment Rules for the Academic Staff at Estonian Business School in appendix 1). This policy document which was approved by the management board in 2018 covers all important aspect and shall serve in fulfilling all faculty appointment effectively. The panel finds that if implemented effectively the HEI could benefit considerably from this policy in dealing with their faculty employment both full-time and part-time members.
- Good initiatives in hiring and engaging a more internationally diverse faculty and promoting joint research projects among faculty members with similar research interests. Faculty employment terms & conditions to promote research and voluntary academic activities.
- The HEI has taken vital steps in the development of the pedagogical and professional skills of the faculty since the academic year 2017-18 and has developed a structured approach to develop such skills on a continuous basis.
- A good evaluation and assessment system to provide feedback on students' exams & assessments that incorporates Bloom's taxonomy.

Further considerations

- A holistic model of performance-based pay for the faculty with research responsibilities, which would take account of the outcomes of both research and teaching is still being worked out at present. It is not a requirement but it would have been better to develop this within the last two years.
- It is unclear based on the information provided if submission of the all module/course assessment through Urkund software is a must requirement. This should be the case if not. The panel believes that students are provided with an opportunity to check the similarity scores on the draft version of their assignments before uploading revised version for final assessment. It is not clear about how the HEI deals with any plagiarism cases if found through this system. Are there any consequences and penalties system in place to deal with this unethical behaviour. Is this system applicable or implemented for the faculty publications and research output?
- The new e-learning platform LMS Canvas supports a systematic surveillance of the achievement of the learning outcomes and enables to identify overlaps between courses. The possibilities provided by Canvas software is very good, but the utilisation and analysis of the system are of the same importance. This was not clear from their report as how this is analysed and expected results will be achieved through such a system.

2. Report on meeting the requirements of the secondary condition, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre

2.1. General background

At its meeting on April 11, 2017, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education decided that the next assessment of the study programme group of Business and Administration at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre will take place in 7 years (maximum term) but set a secondary condition that the EMTA should meet in 2 years.

Based on the Assessment Report of the international panel and the Decision of EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education, the EMTA submitted the following documents to EKKA:

- 1) Report on Improvements
- 2) List of Teachers
- 3) Integration of learning outcomes and research activity

2.2. Meeting the requirements of secondary condition

The following are the requirements set by the Quality Assessment Council to be met by the EMTA, and the committee's assessment on the developments EMTA has made in this regard.

According to clause 6 (7) 2) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of Higher Education', a member of the teaching or research staff who conducts studies in a given subject must have the necessary teaching competence and his or her qualifications must support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.

The degree of staff's engagement in research is low. Research is not sufficiently integrated into the teaching and learning process. Thus the research done by the teaching staff does not sufficiently support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme, as defined in the 'Standard of Higher Education'.

Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is fully met/substantially met/partly met/not met

Comments

In 2016 the self-evaluation report for MA in Cultural Management listed 25 members of staff, and 10 of them held a PhD. Since then, 16 teachers have been

replaced, 10 new teachers holding PhD have joined the programme – some of them as permanent staff members of the partner institution Estonian Business School, some others as visiting lecturers for the programme but active researchers or experts employed by various institutions (e.g., other Estonian or foreign universities). In some cases, teachers without PhD continue to teach as their pedagogical skills, a recognition in the field, and well-established practical expertise contribute to balancing the academic theoretical quality with field practice.

The progress in improving teacher qualifications has been significant however, EMTA still largely relies on visiting and/or adjunct faculty, instead of building its core staff with notable research output. The one exception seems to be one full-time lecturer who has obtained a PhD degree in 2017. This reflects the alternative path to improve faculty qualifications profile: by supporting current staff to complete their doctoral studies. As completing PhD studies requires publishing in international peer-reviewed and indexed journals, it is hoped that research output of lecturers who are currently pursuing their doctoral degrees will simultaneously contribute to increase in the number of high quality publications. However, such approach has some other perils (due to “inbreeding”) and should be used with caution, and to a limited degree.

Some of the newly recruited teachers (visiting lecturers) are employed at the EBS. Since MA in Cultural Management is a joint programme with EBS, this approach makes sense; especially in light of increased student exchange and research cooperation between both schools.

During the period of 2015-2018 EMTA permanent staff has produced 27 publications including monograph, academic journal papers, conference papers and book chapters.

The programme management has been mapping the ongoing research of the lecturers, and the lecturers have been asked to update the content of their course and update the reading materials of the courses. Most of the teachers combine their research with the topics covered in the classes, setting student assignments or are research publications provided as course reading. A feedback from the students regarding the correspondence of research-based teaching with curriculum aims is systematically collected. Report lists several examples on how teachers integrate their research results into curriculum aims and learning outcomes.

New regulation on academic positions which sets requirements for the academic positions was adopted in March 2019. Strategic improvements of the teaching staff are one of the goals that will be addressed in revised long-term vision and strategic development plan for the programme for 2020-2025. No further information on new regulation was provided, hence no assessment can be made on how this will affect the future research profile of the programme faculty.

Commendations

- A considerable effort was made to improve qualifications and research profile of the teaching staff in a short span of time.

- Programme management has taken action to establish a closer link between faculty research and teaching, so that research activities are reflected in the curriculum.

Further considerations

- Employing own graduates may cause the problem of “academic inbreeding”, which may reduce the possibility of new ideas coming in from outside sources, and it hence leads to emulation rather than diversification. Consider employing (full-time) faculty with good research credentials who has obtained their degrees at other institutions.

Report on meeting the requirements of the secondary condition, Estonian Business School

2.3. General background

At its meeting on April 11, 2017, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education decided that the next assessment of the study programme group of Business and Administration at the Estonian Business School will take place in 7 years (maximum term) but set a secondary condition that the EBS should meet in 2 years.

Based on the Assessment Report of the international panel and the Decision of EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education, the EBS submitted the following documents to EKKA:

- 1) Interim Report for quality assessment of study program group in EBS
- 2) Action Plan
- 3) Employment Rules for the Academic Staff at Estonian Business School

2.4. Meetings the requirements of secondary condition

The following are the requirements set by the Quality Assessment Council to be met by the Estonian Business School, and the committee’s assessment on the developments Estonian Business School has made in this regard.

According to clause 6 (7) 1) of the Government of the Republic Regulation, 'Standard of Higher Education', the conduct of studies conforms to the requirements if the teaching is performed by ordinary teaching and research staff who meet the qualification requirements established in legal instruments and whose number, based on their responsibilities, loads of conducted studies and research, and numbers of students supervised, is sufficient to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme. According to clause 2) of the same subsection, a member of the teaching or research staff who conducts studies in a given subject must have the necessary teaching competence and his or her qualifications must support achievement of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.

Based on the report by the Assessment Committee, the weakest element of Estonian Business School (EBS) is the insufficient number of full-time teaching staff in the study programmes.

Compared to other study programmes at EBS, the percentage of ordinary teaching staff is particularly low in the MBA programme in Business Innovation – only 15.7% (3 lecturers out of 19; see the EBS self-evaluation report, p. 71). The number of EBS's ordinary teaching staff has increased by 8 members and by 4.96 full-time equivalents. These numbers indicate that new lecturers have an average workload of 0.62. The number of extraordinary teaching staff increased by 10 members during the same period. Their workloads have decreased over the years. Extraordinary lecturers had an average workload of 0.17 in the 2014/15 academic year, 0.145 in 2015/16 and 0.136 in 2016/17. These figures have been calculated as an average across the whole educational institution and, in essence, indicate the scattering of teaching assignments among an increasing number of staff members.

Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is fully met/substantially met/partly met/not met

Comments

- The Panel finds that the HEI has developed a comprehensive new employment policy in order to engage more full-time faculty members and to deal with workload arrangements effectively. The panel is convinced that with the arrangements suggested in the action plan document and the appendix 2, the HEI should be able to achieve faculty engagement effectively. The HEI has allocated sufficient resources in this regard and has already hired some new faculty members in the past two years. Some progress has already been made in this regard to improve the core/full-time faculty and faculty with PhD qualifications. The HEI has provided details in table 2 in the Interim Report for Quality (Appendix 1). There are approximately 40% full-time equivalent faculty members and 50% with PhD qualifications. There is good balance between male and female faculty members. The number of core faculty that has been hired during last three years has increased from 14 in 1016/2017 to 17 in 2017/2018 and to 21 in 2018/2019. The number of full time professors has increased from 10 in 2016/2017 to 12 in 2018/2019.
- The HEI has carried out an international recruitment campaign at the end of the academic year 2017-18 to recruit a more international faculty. A total of 15 academic positions were advertised to recruit associate professors and professor. As a result of this initiative, they managed to higher more

international faculty members and will continue with similar efforts to improve the internationality of the staff. There are 9% of core faculty holding foreign passports (comparing to 7% in 2016/17) and 67% of core faculty with foreign professional or study experience (comparing to 65% in 2016/17).

Commendations

- EBS has developed a comprehensive faculty recruitment policy (Employment Rules for the Academic Staff at Estonian Business School in appendix 2). This policy document which was approved by the management board in 2018 covers all important aspect and shall serve in fulfilling all faculty appointment effectively. The panel finds that if implemented effectively the HEI could benefit considerably from this policy in dealing with their faculty employment both full-time and part-time members.
- The newly developed employment policy entails the detailed criteria for any other tasks such as administrative duties, publication of text books. The newly drafted employment regulations for academic staff also budget a sufficient amount of hours for almost all faculty members to spend some time on any related tasks of their own interest with any formal approvals. The panel finds this as a good indication to promote and help faculty to take diverse research and education initiatives.

Further considerations

Not applicable.

According to subsection 15 (1) of the 'Standard of Higher Education', the position of a university professor requires active research, development, and/or creative activity. Research is also required from a docent [ibid, subsection 16 (1)] and from a lecturer [ibid, 17 (1)]. Data of the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS) and the EBS self-evaluation report on the Business and Administration study programme group (p. 12) reveal that during 2013–2015 the ordinary teaching staff published 70 high-quality publications (in the ETIS classifications 1.1, 1.2 and 3.1), which is 39 per ordinary staff member at the School when calculated in full-time equivalents (in reality it is 56). It follows that during those three years, research activity by the ordinary teaching staff at EBS yielded an average of 0.6 publication per year in full-time equivalents, indicating that the research capabilities of the School were clearly in a downward trend compared to the previous years (e.g. in 2012 this indicator was 0.99 annually per lecturer in full-time equivalents).

In 2016 the number of high-quality publications increased, but it still remained below the 2012 result. Also, the research activity by the ordinary teaching staff is uneven – some staff members with a PhD have several high-quality publications, but some have none.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that the number of full-time teaching staff in the programmes within the Business and Administration study programme group at EBS is inadequate, and academic research is not emphasised to a sufficient extent. Therefore, research done by the teaching staff does not sufficiently support attainment of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programmes, and does not guarantee an adequate supervisory competence of the teaching staff in all fields of specialisation, as defined in the 'Standard of Higher Education'.

Assessment of the committee: the secondary condition is fully met/substantially met/partly met/not met

Comments

- To enhance scientific research, the HEI has appointed their faculty members with similar research topics and interests to joint research groups, with a set work plan and research budget. Regarding scientific publications EBS has set an internal quality criterion that the publications should meet the certain minimum quality standards.
- The assessment decision of 2016 panel visit points out that the publication output per FTE equivalent of core faculty has been in a downfall in years 2013-2015 (compared to i.e. year 2012). The HEI has made some good progress and took some initiatives in this regard as mentioned above. Although the publication output is not witnessing the increase (yet), this is not an easy condition to achieve in a short time. The publication output in the year 2016-17 was 1.37, and in 2017-18 it was 1.28, and in 2018-19 it is 0.87 (half a year). Additionally, there is a considerable amount of publications in the pipeline for the current academic year. The panel understands the lengthy publishing cycle in business and economics journals and perhaps the research publication progress can be evaluated over a longer time period. The core faculty with research obligations is constantly around 25 people, which means that the overall publication ratio per faculty with research obligations was 1.8 2016, in 2017 it was 1.48, and in 2018 it was 1.04.
- Most importantly, the HEI has revised their publication strategy in the last year to preferring high-tier AJG (former ABS) journals to regular ETIS 1.1-3.2 gradation. The panel finds this as a promising move to improve the quality standards of their research output. The expected level of journal publications at EBS is ETIS category 1.1/ AJG category 2, and this results in lengthy time for publishing but would surely help in a better international visibility and wider impact. According the information provided, the publication ratio of higher-level publication (ETIS 1.1 and ETIS 3.1) per core faculty with research obligation has improved. There is a steady progress shown in this regard i.e. 0.32 in 2016 to 0.72 and 0.68 in 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- The HEI institution is constantly making effort for external EU/International research funding arrangements. The state direct funding for research activities has doubled for their research, reaching 85,000 euros.

Commendations

- The HEI has setup some workable arrangements to boost research output by enhancing the availability of both physical and online scientific resources and reward system for scientific research publications.
- The HEI has revised their publication strategy in the last year to preferring high-tier AJG (former ABS) journals to regular ETIS 1.1-3.2 gradation. The panel finds this as a promising move to improve the quality standards of their

research output. This would surely help in a better international visibility and wider impact of their research output.

Further considerations

- A holistic model of performance-based pay for the faculty with research responsibilities, which would take account of the outcomes of both research and teaching is still being worked out at present. It is not a requirement but it would have been better to develop this within the last two years.
- The overall publication ratio per faculty with research obligations was 1.8 in 2016, in 2017 it was 1.48, and in 2018 it was 1.04. It is clearly showing a descending trend in the last three years and the HEI will have to ensure improvement in this regard in the coming years through carefully thought-out result oriented initiatives. The panel understands that the HEI is focusing on high quality/impact journal publications but this should not compromise on the minimum publication per faculty per year.