



ESTONIAN QUALITY AGENCY FOR
HIGHER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Report on the re-assessment of the study programme group of Arts

Doctoral studies

Tallinn University

2021

Table of Content

1.	Introduction	3
2.	A brief summary of the results of the assessment and their justifications	5
3.	Analysis of the study programme group of Arts by assessment areas and criteria	6
3.1.	QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION	6
3.1.1.	Study programme	6
3.1.2.	Learning and teaching	9
3.1.3.	Organisation of studies	13
	CONCLUSIONS AND AGGREGATED ASSESSMENT: QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION	16
3.2.	RESOURCES	18
3.2.1.	Academic staff	18
3.2.2.	Learning and teaching environment	21
3.2.3.	Financial resources	23
	CONCLUSIONS AND AGGREGATED ASSESSMENT: RESOURCES	25
	Aggregated assessment of the resources: conforms to requirements.	25
3.3.	SUSTAINABILITY	26
3.3.1.	Further sustainability criteria	26
	CONCLUSIONS AND AGGREGATED ASSESSMENT: SUSTAINABILITY	28

1. Introduction

Re-assessment of study programme group

In the case the right to provide instruction has been granted for a specified term, EKKA shall, within a specified period, conduct a re-assessment of the study programme group and cycle of higher education.

When an institution applies for the right to provide instruction, it is ascertained whether the quality of instruction meets the requirements laid down for the relevant cycle of higher education; and whether resources and sustainability are adequate for the provision of instruction.

EKKA conducts initial assessment and re-assessment using three assessment areas: 1) Quality of instruction, 2) Resources, and 3) Sustainability. The Quality of instruction is divided into three sub-areas: Study programme, Learning and teaching, and Organisation of studies. The area of Resources has also three sub-areas: Academic staff, Learning and teaching environment, and Financial resources. When assessing sustainability, assessments for quality of instruction and resources are taken into account in addition to further sustainability criteria.

In the assessment report, the committee shall determine for each assessment area, whether the quality of instruction:

- 1) Conforms to the required standard;
- 2) Partially conforms to the required standard;
- 3) Does not conform to the required standard.

As a result of the re-assessment, EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education makes a proposal to the Minister of Education and Research, whether to grant the higher education institution the right to provide instruction in the relevant study programme group and cycle of higher education; to grant the higher education institution the right to provide instruction in the relevant study programme group and cycle of higher education for one to three years; or not to grant the higher education institution the right to provide instruction in the relevant study programme group and cycle of higher education.

The re-assessment is carried out in accordance with the document *Guidelines for the initial assessment and re-assessment of study programme groups* approved by EKKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education on 19.05.2020.

The following study programme in the study programme group of Arts and the third cycle of higher education were submitted for the re-assessment by Tallinn University:

Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies

In order to carry out the re-assessment, EKKA formed an expert panel, which includes experts from higher education institutions, outside higher education institutions and student representatives. EKKA coordinated the composition of the expert panel with the higher education institution.

The following persons formed the expert panel:

Lorenz Engell	Chair of the panel; Director, Internationale Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie (IKKM), Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany
Rimantas Plunge	Department of Contemporary Art, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Andrew Spicer	Professor of Cultural Production, University of the West of England Bristol, UK
Maris Männiste	PhD Student (Media and Communication), University of Tartu; Assistant of Information Systems, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tartu, Estonia

Assessment process

The members of the expert panel completed the re-assessment training organized by EKKA. The members of the panel worked through the documents submitted by the higher education institution. During the preparatory meeting for the assessment visit, the panel prepared a preliminary visit plan, which was coordinated with the institution and EKKA. The members of the panel agreed on the topics to be clarified on the basis of the documents submitted by the higher education institution. The division of labour and tasks were agreed in the panel for the assessment visit.

Online discussions with Tallinn University representatives (programme manager, PhD students, supervisors, management of TLU Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Vice-Rector for Research of TLU, external stakeholders) were held on 27 April 2021.

EKKA sent the initial report of the panel to Tallinn University for comments on June 1, 2021.

Tallinn University submitted its comments on the initial assessment report on 14 June 2021.

When finalizing the report, the panel took into account the comments of the university and made some clarifications in the report.

The panel submitted the final report to EKKA on 18 June 2021.

General information about the study programme group of Arts

The doctoral programme *Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies* is one of 13 PhD programmes offered at Tallinn University. It is currently the only PhD programme in the study programme group of Arts at the doctoral level.

The programme is run by Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media and Arts School (BFM) since it was launched in 2018. There are 14 students studying on the programme at the time of assessment.

2. A brief summary of the results of the assessment and their justifications

EXPERT PANEL'S DECISION:

ASSESSMENT AREA	CONFORMS TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD	PARTIALLY CONFORMS TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD	DOES NOT CONFORM TO THE REQUIRED STANDARD
QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESOURCES	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUSTAINABILITY	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Strengths:

- Coherent and ambitious doctoral programme that has clear strengths in its provision for art-based study that is sector-leading.
- Well-motivated students, fully supported by staff, undertaking innovative and exciting projects.
- Wide provision of external networks that provide additional resources together with close and supportive collaborations with Estonian media organisations.
- Fully supported by School and University.

Areas of concern and recommendations:

- The programme lacks specific scholarly profile due to the small number of candidates. A higher number of candidates should be assured.
- The programme lacks input from the humanities. It therefore needs a relevant extension of the teaching offer to encompass more traditional fields of the humanities; specific attention should be given to the Estonian film heritage.
- There are many dissertation projects which are not based on creative art. Therefore, more participants should be encouraged to pursue art-based research.
- The regulations about supervision of the individual projects are not clear. All students should be provided with two supervisors as a minimum requirement, according to international practice.

- The programme is of experimental character. There should therefore be a systematic and coherent programme of supervisor training; supervisors should be required to have a PhD degree.

3. Analysis of the study programme group of Arts by assessment areas and criteria

3.1. QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

3.1.1. Study programme

3.1.1.1. Launching and developing of the study programme is based on the Development Plan of the higher education institution, national development plans and analyses (including labour market and advisability analyses) and strives for top quality.

Evidence and analysis:

Launching and development of the programme have been successfully executed with respect to all legal, regulatory, and institutional frameworks and in close consultation with the labour market. The degree to which all actors are determined to respond to highest quality standards is remarkable and the success is more than considerable.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.1.2. Employers and other stakeholders of the study programme group are involved in the study programme's development.

Evidence and analysis:

The study programme runs a well-developed network with potential employers, institutions and other stakeholders in the field of media production, the creative industries, and the art market. In the interview with representatives from radio and film production and from the creative sector, the panel could verify that these external partners are very committed and interested in the further evolution and results of the study programme. They are closely connected and integrated into the present development as well as the future perspectives of the programme. This includes specific partnerships, cooperation or internships with individual PhD candidates/projects, participation of stakeholders in the mentoring process, and regular consultations with the directors and other administrative bodies of the programme. Given the high use, value and functionality of this external network, the panel would like to encourage the University and the study programme to even extend the cooperation to an international range and scale, even if this may appear, of course, challenging.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.1.3. The study programme meets the requirements and trends in international legislation that regulate the professional field, and if an occupational qualification standard exists takes into consideration the acquisition and implementation of the knowledge and skills described therein.

Evidence and analysis:

Creative art based PhD programmes are still to a certain extent exceptional and, although quickly evolving in the Anglosphere as well as in Continental Europe, until now less standardized and less regulated on international level. The same holds true for the professional fields in the media and creative industries as well as the art market. Regular employment relationships, for instance, are rare compared to freelance or independent forms of labour organization. Moreover, skills and knowledge required on the labour market in these sectors are very rapidly evolving. This said, the study programme can be looked upon as an excellent preparation of the candidates for their later professional work, and this mainly for two reasons. First, the accent of the programme is on individual creative problem definition and problem solving, on finding solutions for completely new situations, more than on the application of stable, identifiable generic skills and knowledge. It is based on the idea of constantly evolving requirements (“learning learning”). Second, the constant cooperation with and integration into the non-university world is well secured. Most of the candidates during their study acquire experience beyond the academy. Hence, the expert panel assesses that the requirements are matched to the full extent.

Yet, the panel wishes to remind the University and other institutions that successful and convincing creative work in the arts as well as in the scholarly field, especially in the humanities, has to be as free as possible. Creative work in art and research does not always seem useful, applicable, or profitable at first sight. It requires and deserves a certain protection of the candidates and the projects from demands and restrictions from market, employment, and in general economic pressure, at least for a certain amount of time.

3.1.1.4. The learning outcomes of the study programme are equivalent and comparable to the learning outcomes of the academic cycles of higher education described in Annex 1 of the Standard of Higher Education.

Evidence and analysis:

The main outcomes of any PhD programme are obviously successful PhD dissertations and hence relevant research results. In this respect, the study programme, which of course has very few students/candidates, none of whom has defended her thesis so far, can be assessed as extremely promising, but not yet as successful on an international comparative scale. The panel was impressed by the commitment and competence of the students. They are determined and able to finish their projects in regular time (which is rare in other comparable institutions and deserves an explicit mention). The projects are convincingly challenging and serious, and they are also comparable to equivalent practice-based projects on an international level. Moreover, the programme meets the standards and requirements of the respective regulations and promise to be compatible with the standards of Higher Education as described in Annex 1 of the Standard of Higher Education.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.1.5. *Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole. The title of the study programme is consistent with the content and the structure; and content of the study programme supports the acquisition of the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.*

Evidence and analysis:

The programme is well structured and administered. The content of the study programme meets the purpose of scholarly instruction in the field of media and the arts and of the acquisition methodological approaches for higher research skills to a convincing extent. Its coherence and consistency under all relevant aspects is given and the requirement is fully met. The students explicitly expressed their satisfaction with almost all aspects of the programme. With regard to the very vast and open field of media arts and media studies in general, the range of research topics represented in the programme is restricted and somewhat scattered, so that this broad field cannot be expected to be treated in its whole and a specific and selective research profile has not yet developed. The panel therefore recommends a considerable augmentation in the number of participating candidates of the programme. Only through an increased number of projects and topics could the programme acquire a specific academic profile, appear more contoured, and thus make itself more visible and attractive on an international scale, which, given its undisputable qualities and strengths, is an attainable goal. Another recommendation of the panel is that the strength, scope and specific goal and character of the programme should be enhanced by encouraging more participants to pursue combined art and theoretical research *in* arts and media instead of empirical research projects *about* arts and media, but without drawing on the student's own individual artwork. Even if the programme allows for both creative and exclusively empirical research projects, the accent should clearly be met on the former, since empirical research of the type pursued here can be done in many institutions, while research by art is a unique selling point and a specific profile generating challenge.

Furthermore, the panel wishes to recommend a relevant extension of the teaching offer to more narrow (traditional) fields of the humanities. Although there is a considerable offer in the humanities available for the students, more of these contents should be integrated into the obligatory parts of the study programme and not be just optional. To the benefit of neuro-sciences and auto-ethnography, there is a clear lack of topics and content in (art and media) history, aesthetics, philosophy, and comparative cultural theory and history in the individual projects. This deficiency aggravates the students' understandable striving for projects that have technological and economic currency. A richer and more detailed obligatory offer could help them to develop a more critical and reflective attitude towards even very recent developments in the fields of technology, society, and the arts. A specific field of intensified study and research should be invested into the important Estonian film heritage.

The institution partially meets the requirements of the criterion.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT: STUDY PROGRAMME

The panel concludes that the study programme conforms partially to the requirements.

Strengths

- the good governance of the programme and, seemingly, of the University;
- the programme's extremely well considered and implemented structure;

- the importance and weight of the programme and the support for it within the framework of the University;
- the degree of thorough reflectedness concerning the specific conditions and problems of research work through artistic practice;
- the very high quality of the individual projects of the PhD students;
- the close links to the professional field and the candidates' good perspective for a professional future;
- the international scope of the participants of the programme both students and staff.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The program lacks a specific scholarly profile. Given the small number of participants, the research topics of the individual projects do not form a consistent whole. The programme should therefore have a wider, more coherent and more profiled set of individual research topics in the field of media arts' studies. Therefore, the panel recommends a considerable augmentation in the number of students in the programme or a stricter narrowing the fields of study and research.
- There are many dissertation projects which are not based on creative art. Although the specificity of the programme is research based on creative art, a considerable number of projects does not pursue artistic work which gives this programme its profile but empirical studies instead (which could also be pursued in other academic institutions). Therefore, more participants should be encouraged to pursue art-based research, that is, research by means of artistic practice and creative methods and not only about art works and media.
- The programme clearly lacks input from the humanities despite the optional availability of knowledge from the humanities to the students. The theoretical background of most projects is focused on either empirical research, neurological findings, or auto-ethnography. Since the final qualification is flagged out as a PhD, the programme needs a relevant extension of the obligatory teaching offer to encompass more traditional fields of the humanities (e.g., art and cultural history, aesthetics, comparative cultural theory, philosophy); specific attention should be given to the Estonian film heritage.

Opportunity for further improvement

- Successful and convincing creative work in the arts as well as in the scholarly field, especially in the humanities, must be as free as possible. Creative work in art and research does not always seem useful, applicable, or profitable at first sight. It requires and deserves a certain protection of the candidates and the projects from demands and restrictions from market, employment, and in general economic pressure, at least for a certain amount of time.

3.1.2. Learning and teaching

3.1.2.1. Conditions for admission and graduation are clear and transparent; requirements to prospective students stem from prerequisites for the completion of the study programme.

Evidence and analysis:

After analysis of HEI, study programme, additional documents (Field-based assessment criteria, Doctoral student's individual study plan form, Doctoral student's progress review report form, TLU Baltic Film, Media and Arts School (BFM) Guidelines for Creative Doctoral Thesis and Preliminary

Defense, Journal of Supervision), discussions with academical staff, programme leader and students, it can be stated that conditions for admission, project development, and graduation are clear and understandable.

During the discussions, the impression was formed that the lecturers and students are acquainted with the existing admission, student certification and defense procedures. Students follow the planned certification, admission to defense and defense procedures, and receive timely consultations from supervisors, BMF administration and technical staff in case of questions or uncertainties.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.2.2. Academic staff members are aware of the objectives of the study programme and their role in achieving these objectives.

Evidence and analysis:

After discussion with academic staff members, it is clear that they are aware of the objectives of the study programme and their role in achieving its objectives.

Those implementing the study programme and the academic staff are properly acquainted with the content of the study programme, its goals, and are fully prepared to implement them. The roles of the academic staff are purposefully distributed, they have a good understanding of how they can help students achieve the best results. It should be noted that the academic staff actively participate in the improvement of the study programme and contributes to its timely renewal.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.2.3. Study methods motivate learners to take charge of their studies and achieve learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis:

Study methods and forms of work are sufficiently defined in the documents presented to the panel. During the discussions with PhD students, it became obvious that the studies are organised quite consistently, the planned study methods (continuous, permanent assessment of studies and timely assistance) motivate students to achieve the set goals, study organisation provides opportunities to work in stages, which really facilitates achievement of learning outcomes. PhD students noted that the study methods are chosen appropriately, and they always receive the help of supervisors in case of difficulties.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.2.4. Appropriate methods are used for the assessment of learning outcomes; assessment is transparent, objective and supports the development of students.

Evidence and analysis:

After reviewing and analysing the study documents, it can be stated that appropriate methods are used for the assessment of learning outcomes. It can be argued that assessment is transparent, objective enough and supports the development of students.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.2.5. The content and volume of independent work and practical training (in the case of doctoral studies, implementation of professional activities) support the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme.

Evidence and analysis:

The content and volume of independent work, practice-based/artistic training and implementation of professional activities support the achievement of learning outcomes of the study programme and the students confirmed this during the discussion. Students noted that they can always get the help of external consultants, from the university academic staff or other institutions.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.2.6. The academic staff members have adequate teaching competences in order to support the autonomy of students and ensure adequate and professional supervision.

Evidence and analysis:

The CVs of the academic staff show, and the discussion with the supervisors reasonably confirms that the lecturers are professionals in their fields, competent to teach and supervise PhD students. Proper leadership is also provided, in most instances, by two supervisors. Students have also access to a wide range of individual consultants (from Tallinn University or external institutions) through staff connections should their work require this, and they are used on an ad hoc basis. Their role was not obvious from the documentation but clarified in an email correspondence: "Our PhD students can consult with different specialists in their field. Since BFM is an interdisciplinary environment of recognised creative people." The use of consultants in this way is strategic and appropriate for a small programme of study.

The panel did not find any regulation concerning the number and exact qualification of the supervisors. The re-assessment report (p. 2) states: 'We generally try to provide each student with two supervisors. Doctoral students doing creative practice-based research have one supervisor who is an expert in creative practice and one academically renowned supervisor, other consultants are used, if necessary.' The panel is concerned that some of the projects have only one supervisor. In the panel's opinion, no project should have less than two main supervisors; anything less else would not quite meet international good practice. Obviously, the programme permits supervisors who do not possess a PhD themselves to function as supervisors. The panel therefore wishes to recommend that the recruitment of the teaching staff of the programme, especially as far as the mentoring of PhD candidates and projects is concerned, should from now on exclude persons who have not yet themselves obtained a PhD, even in the field of the arts. The panel also found that there is currently no documented procedure in place for developing the supervision skills of both those supervisors who are already supervising as well as those are potential candidates. It is important that supervisors obtain training for developing their supervision skills on a regular basis.

The institution partially meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.2.7. *The level and volume of research, development and creative activities of academic staff is sufficient to provide instruction and supervise academic work by students in the appropriate cycle of higher education.*

Evidence and analysis:

After reading and analysing the CVs of the academic staff, reviewing the research, ongoing projects, artistic and creative activities, it can be reasonably asserted that the lecturers are ready to work in the doctoral study environment as all of them are researchers or practitioners with high or highest scientific and/or artistic achievements. The high and/or highest achievements of the academic staff clearly show that they can successfully lead and instruct PhD students at doctoral level.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT: LEARNING AND TEACHING

The panel concludes that learning and teaching conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- The admission procedure is transparent, understandable and clear. The study process is properly and clearly documented. The documentation consistently and clearly defines the roles of teachers, their responsibilities and the management of study processes. During the discussions it became clear that the lecturers are acquainted with the study programme documents, understand their role in the study process, are competent to help doctoral students, know enough methods and techniques to use to achieve the study programme goals.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The regulations about supervision of the individual projects are not clear. Not all of the projects have two main supervisors. Two main supervisors for every single project should be obligatory; if possible, one from the humanities, one from creative practice.
- The programme is still (and should stay) rather experimental, which includes challenges for the supervisory staff as well. Training and continuous qualification of supervisors should therefore be intensified. The panel also recommends that the recruitment of the teaching staff of the programme, especially as far as the mentoring of PhD candidates and projects is concerned, should from now on exclude persons who have not yet themselves obtained a PhD, even in the field of the arts; all supervisors should be required to have a PhD degree.

3.1.3. Organisation of studies

3.1.3.1. The organisation of studies is unambiguously regulated and information thereof publicly available; it allows to cater for the needs of different learners as well as specificities of the study programme group.

Evidence and analysis:

The University has a published framework for how doctoral student studies are organised and regulated in its General Study Regulations.

Because this doctoral programme has been devised in order to encourage and support practice-based or artistic research, staff in the BFM have prepared and published additional guidelines (Annex 11).

The University's framework supplemented by these additional guidelines for practice-based or artistic research enables the institution/BFM to provide guidance and support for 'traditional' and artistic doctoral students and thus the needs of different learners. It therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.3.2. Practical training (in doctoral studies applied professional activities) is regulated, requirements for the completion of practical training have been laid down and preliminary agreements concluded with organisations offering opportunities for practical training.

Evidence and analysis:

The additional guidance mentioned in the previous section sets out the stages and requirements for the completion of the practical training/creative work in a systematic way, how this work might be staged and managed and the criteria for its presentation. How students should prepare for the pre-defence of a creative doctoral thesis is set out in the re-assessment documents.

Work is in progress on a framework document describing the principles of creative research and the development of relevant policy (BFM Development Plan 2021-22) to support practical training. Our understanding is that the BFM staff are collaborating in drafting a national framework for creative research (meeting on 24/04/21). The BFM Development Plan 2021-22 (Annex 1, section 4) sets out several goals and mentions a 'digital journal'.

The re-assessment report identifies a number of organisations which support this programme and offer opportunities for practical training; in particular: The Estonian Film Institute, the Estonian Filmmakers Association, the Public Broadcasting Association, the Association of Estonian Broadcasters and the Estonian Authors' Society. All of these offer advice and support and practical training opportunities for students on this programme. In a major development, the Estonian Film Institute will co-finance a studentship in the next recruitment round. In our meeting with external partners, it was clear that the programme has their full support and that there were plans to enhance and extend the programme, for instance to encompass music practice.

The external partners evaluate the structure, organisation and recruitment of the doctoral programme.

Tallinn University and the BFM have a wide range of international connections with other universities, often through staff networks and projects, and have access to the CUDAN open seminars. This has

many benefits and can be used strategically to support specific projects rather than provide a too prescriptive general programme.

The institution therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.3.3. The higher education institution has in place rules for academic recognition as well as for recognizing prior studies and work experience; these are implemented in the study programme group under assessment.

Evidence and analysis:

The rules for recognizing prior studies and work experience are set out in the General Study Regulations.

Prior studies and work experience are taken into account in recruiting students to the programme, which awards studentships on the basis of overall excellence. This was clear from the students we met, who were from a wide range of backgrounds and who have different skill sets which their research topic draws on and develops.

The institution therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.3.4. Students enrolled in the study programme group have access to counselling (study; career and preferably psychological counselling); there are effective measures in place for supporting academic progress of students and preventing premature leaving.

Evidence and analysis:

The 2018 initial assessment, from additional information obtained during site visit, found that TLU had seven study counsellors, one career counsellor and a psychological counsellor for doctoral students. Students have access to these and judging from the students we were able to talk to, this support seems to be adequate. There was no evidence from our conversations of the need for additional psychological/mental health support because of the pandemic. Students appeared to be making good progress, reaching agreed milestones without undue stress and to be on course for timely completions.

The institution therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.3.5. Students enrolled in the study programme group participate in international mobility programmes.

Evidence and analysis:

TLU Dora fund supports student mobility. There appear to be sufficient resources to meet student demand.

Students enrolled on this programme participated in a number of international study programmes, facilitated by staff network connections, including through their ongoing projects, e.g. the Mobilitas Pluss project. Some have taken advantage of ECREA winter schools or specific short courses or modules offered at particular universities – e.g., a Digital Media Ethnography course taken at Aarhus

University in 2018, and a Digital Methodologies Course at the University of Amsterdam (January 2020). One student spent a semester at the University of Queensland in 2019/20 that was part of a more extended collaboration resulting in a jointly authored article.

As mentioned, students can access the CUDAN open seminars and MEDIT hosts international conferences and residences for visiting professors and researchers and also international practitioner-teachers.

The institution therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.3.6. Fair and transparent rules for dealing with complaints are used in the study programme group.

Evidence and analysis:

The general rules are set out in the Study Regulations. It was clear from our meeting that the students were aware of these regulations and felt that they had access to staff whenever this was necessary. The head of the doctoral programme was available for informal meetings about any issues and all the students felt they were listened to and fully supported.

The institution therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.1.3.7. Regular internal assessment is conducted in the study programme group, including the analysis and taking into account of feedback from various stakeholders (students, alumni, employers, academic staff).

Evidence and analysis:

The re-assessment report (section 4) states that the programme follows the regulations of the Statute of Study Programme (section 19) by providing annual and triannual review processes.

The *Annual review* is conducted by the head of the study programme taking into account the goals of the TLU Development Plan and is reviewed by the Academic Affairs Office. The annual review covers:

- 1) The correspondence of teaching and assessment methods to the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme.
- 2) Planned changes based on student and staff feedback.
- 3) Proposed changes in the organisation of studies.
- 4) Recommendations made by the external quality assessment review in relation to the action plans that have been put forward.

The *Triannual review* has additional feedback from alumni and employers; scrutinises the admission processes; evaluates the currency of study materials; the supervisory process; the correspondence of study programme to the needs of the labour market; the inclusion of outside specialists; student mobility; and the alignment of learning environment to the study programme. It is sent to the Student Union and Academic Affairs Office.

Between these formal review processes, the programme gives considerable weight to ongoing, more informal student feedback and comments from academic programme staff in order to monitor how

the course is running and to set development goals. Student feedback is made through the Study Information System, which includes the attestation process and from roundtable discussions (meeting 24/04/21). There are also additional surveys of student satisfaction. The last meeting prior to this evaluation process was held in November 2020.

The high morale and commitment of the students and the academic staff on this doctoral programme was very evident in our meeting on 24/04/21. The institution therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT: ORGANISATION OF STUDIES

The panel concludes that the organisation of studies conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- Commitment to artistic/practice-based doctoral study through the document describing the principles of creative research and the development of relevant policy. BFM is the path leader in Estonia in this development and has the potential to establish international status.
- Strong support from the Estonian partners and the new development in collaborative co-funding.

Area of concern and recommendations

- The BFM and the doctoral programme team should investigate further the possibilities of strategic partnerships with specific universities, particularly ones that have a similar interest in developing creative practice at doctoral level.

CONCLUSIONS AND AGGREGATED ASSESSMENT: QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

Aggregated assessment of the quality of instruction: conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- the good governance of the programme and, seemingly, of the University;
- the programme's extremely well considered and implemented structure;
- the importance and weight of the programme and the support for it within the framework of the University;
- the degree of thorough reflectedness concerning the specific conditions and problems of research work through artistic practice;
- the very high quality of the individual projects of the PhD students;
- the close links to the professional field and the candidates' good perspective for a professional future;
- the international scope of the participants of the programme both students and staff;
- strong support from the Estonian partners and the new development in collaborative co-funding;

- commitment to artistic/practice-based doctoral study through the document describing the principles of creative research and the development of relevant policy. BFM is the path leader in Estonia in this development and has the potential to establish international status.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The programme lacks a specific scholarly profile. The programme should therefore have a wider, more coherent and more profiled set of individual research topics in the field of media arts' studies. Therefore, the panel recommends a considerable augmentation in the number of students in the programme.
- There are many dissertation projects which are not based on creative art. Although the specificity of the programme is research based on creative art, a considerable number of projects does not pursue artistic work which gives this programme its profile but empirical studies instead (which could also be pursued in other academic institutions). Therefore, more participants should be encouraged to pursue art-based research, that is, research by means of artistic practice and creative methods and not only about art works and media.
- The programme clearly lacks input from the humanities despite the optional availability of knowledge from the humanities to the students. The theoretical background of most projects is focused on either empirical research, neurological findings, or auto-ethnography. Since the final qualification is flagged out as a PhD, the programme needs a relevant extension of the obligatory teaching offer to encompass more traditional fields of the humanities (e.g., art and cultural history, aesthetics, comparative cultural theory, philosophy); specific attention should be given to the Estonian film heritage.
- The regulations about supervision of the individual projects are not clear. Not all of the projects have two main supervisors. Two main supervisors for every single project should be obligatory; if possible, one from the humanities, one from creative practice.
- The programme is still (and should stay) rather experimental, which includes challenges for the supervisory staff as well. Training and continuous qualification of supervisors should therefore be intensified. The panel also recommends that the recruitment of the teaching staff of the programme, especially as far as the mentoring of PhD candidates and projects is concerned, should from now on exclude persons who have not yet themselves obtained a PhD, even in the field of the arts; all supervisors should be required to have a PhD degree.
- The BFM and the doctoral programme team should investigate further the possibilities of strategic partnerships with specific universities, particularly ones that have a similar interest in developing creative practice at doctoral level.

Opportunity for further improvement

- Successful and convincing creative work in the arts as well as in the scholarly field, especially in the humanities, has to be as free as possible. Creative work in art and research does not always seem useful, applicable, or profitable at first sight. It requires and deserves a certain protection of the candidates and the projects from demands and restrictions from market, employment, and in general economic pressure, at least for a certain amount of time.

3.2. RESOURCES

3.2.1. Academic staff

3.2.1.1. Requirements for academic staff are based on the Higher Education Standard and further rules put in place by the higher education institution, procedures for the selection and recruitment of staff are fair and transparent.

Evidence and analysis:

After analysis of SER, submitted documents, appendices, Tallinn University Employment Relations Rules and discussions with academic staff, it can be stated that the criteria for admitting staff are clear, they define who can apply for the positions of lecturers and researchers. It should be noted that during the discussion with the staff, it was confirmed that the conditions and admission criteria for the staff or candidates for the positions of lecturers / doctoral supervisors were completely understandable. The lecturers noted that the requirements are clearly set out in the Tallinn University Employment Relations Rules and that Tallinn University, BFM and its other departments consistently adhere to these regulations.

Regulations for academic staff are based on the Higher Education Standard and rules. It can be stated that the admission procedure for academic staff works efficiently, the processes are organised in a transparent manner. There is no doubt about the adherence to admission procedures and / or admission procedures for either party (neither applicants for competitions nor the university as an employer). The doctoral students did not raise any doubts about the academic staff leading the doctoral students - on the contrary, they noted the competencies of the supervisors and their timely assistance during studies and research.

It should be noted that it is recommended to avoid conflicts of interest when a doctoral student in Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies supervises other doctoral students.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.1.2. The qualifications of academic staff members meet the requirements laid down in legislation as well as those stemming from the specificities of the study programme group and academic cycle.

Evidence and analysis:

The qualifications of the academic staff are not in doubt, they comply with the requirements of the Tallinn University Employment Relations Rules, which in principle correspond with the Republic of Estonia Education Act, international good personnel selection practices, and the requirements for academic staff.

Although the Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies doctoral study programme is very broad and complex, after reading the CVs provided by the academic staff (information, lists of publications, features of artistic activities), discussions with the programme manager, doctoral students, Tallinn University and BFM management, selected academic staff can successfully implement the doctoral programme.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.1.3. The number of regular academic staff in the study programme group is adequate and enables achieving the objectives of the study programmes as well as the learning outcomes.

Evidence and analysis:

Twenty-one lecturers (21) teach in the study programme, comprising six professors (6), thirteen assoc. prof. (13), one visiting lecturer (1) and one research fellow (1). Most lecturers (15) have a PhD, six (6) of which have an MA. Most lecturers with PhD are researchers and / or artists, all lecturers with an MA are recognised artists. Such a balance of the teaching staff structure is appropriate, ensures the teaching of the study programme subjects to an appropriate level, to properly supervise doctoral students and jointly carry out the study programme Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies, to achieve the intended goals of the study programme.

It can be noted that the Baltic Film and Media school of Tallinn University has managed to gather a suitable team whose competencies cover all media fields (cross media, film, film directing, audiovisual arts, media policies, communication, sound recording and sound design, television, journalism, media management and economics, media innovations, etc.) fields. The competencies of the academic staff are demonstrated by having published work or produced practical creative work in relevant fields. The courses assigned appear to correspond with the individual's experience and expertise. The team includes teachers from different countries (Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy), which has a positive impact on intercultural cooperation, research and represents different creative and teaching cultures. There is an appropriate balance of theoretical and practice-based expertise across the teaching and research staff to support a programme of this type.

From the discussions with the head of the study programme, administration, researchers, artists, it became clear that, if necessary, the heads of the programme and executors are ready to attract and invite the necessary staff from other Estonian higher education institutions and universities. This is shown by cooperation with the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Estonian Academy of Arts, and foreign institutions.

In summary, it can be stated with certainty that the number of qualifications, competencies and academic staff is fully sufficient to carry out the Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies programme, achieving the objectives of the study programmes as well as the learning outcomes.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.1.4. Academic staff members regularly engage in continuing education at institutions of higher education or research from abroad, take part in international research projects and deliver presentations at high level conferences.

Evidence and analysis:

Most members of the academic staff carry out/participate in international research/art projects, give presentations at conferences, undertake internships in foreign institutions. The staff are well connected with the international networks of their fields. Via MEDIT, they host international conferences, invite visiting professors and researchers to further the professional development.

It should be noted that although Tallinn University and Baltic Film, Media and Arts School have signed many cooperation agreements with foreign universities, not all of them are actually used and applied

in establishing cooperation between researchers and or academic staff and expanding research. The panel recommends in this area to work more purposefully.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.1.5. Regular academic staff members have undergone required attestation and/or received regular feedback on their performance; and have been topping up their professional and pedagogical skills.

Evidence and analysis:

After reading the submitted documents, SER, after discussing with the representatives of the administration, the academic staff of the study programme, discussing the requirements for lecturers, it can be stated that lecturers are constantly assessed as to their competence and their achievements are evaluated. In this way, teachers receive a proper and clear assessment of their scientific, artistic and pedagogical activities. Assessment is comprehensive and exhaustive (e.g., student surveys are conducted on an ongoing basis).

It should be noted that future and current lecturers of the study programme have the opportunity to develop their competencies, go on internships, trainings to expand and improve their professional competencies.

The University offers training for academic staff, some lecturers on the doctoral programme have received various student leading trainings at Tallinn University or other institutions. Supervisors should obtain continuous training on a regular basis. However, it should be noted that there is no suitable system for continuous, systematic pedagogical development of the supervisors. Because of the unplanned and slightly haphazard nature of the current arrangements, the panel would suggest initiating the development of a system of consistent, continuous, systematic pedagogical and/or other training for teachers, anticipating and implementing a system of education and training of applicants for supervisors.

The institution partially meets the requirements of the criterion.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT: ACADEMIC STAFF

The panel concludes that the academic staff conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- A large, suitably qualified, international team of academic staff has been assembled, whose competencies are fully sufficient to implement the study programme of Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies. The estimated number and qualifications of potential doctoral supervisors are also sufficient;
- the high quality of instruction and the impressive competence of the teaching and mentoring staff;
- the remarkable degree of commitment and determination of both teaching staff and candidates/students.

Area of concern and recommendations

- The professional competencies of the teachers are sufficient, but currently there is no suitable system for continuous, systematic pedagogical development of the supervisors. However, supervisors should obtain continuous training on a regular basis, and staff should be given a systematic programme of supervisor training provided by the University which is mandatory. It is important to create a permanent, systematic approach to improving pedagogical competencies that would replace the existing rather haphazard education programme of the supervisors. Such education and training of supervisors would positively affect the application of the intended study methods and achievement of study goals.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The panel recommends continuing the existing tradition of attracting researchers and artistic professionals for longer or shorter teaching residencies in the study programme.
- The panel recommends make more intensive use of signed cooperation agreements with foreign universities.

3.2.2. Learning and teaching environment

3.2.2.1. There are facilities (lecture rooms, labs, seminar rooms, rooms for independent work by students etc.) available for studies and study-related research, development and creative activities; these are adequately furnished and equipped with up-to-date equipment needed for achieving the objectives of the study programmes.

Evidence and analysis:

After reading and analysing the submitted documents (Report on the re-assessment of the study programme group of Arts) and appendices (Annex 3 and Annex 4) and documents, watching the introductory videos of BFM facilities and pictures of the CUDAN working space for students forwarded through e-mail, it can be stated that Baltic Film and Media School has facilities which accommodate the basic needs of the school itself as well as doctoral study programme needs.

Baltic Film and Media School has a Cinema Hall (equipped with Estonia's first 4K cinema projector), Film Studio (can also be used as a TV studio), Television Studio, Post Production Centre and MEDIT Creative Lab, which are all adequately equipped for students to undertake practical learning. Also, recently purchased NVIDIA DGX Station can be used for machine learning algorithms and data analysis. Additionally, a separate server to store large amounts of data has been purchased.

Doctoral students of CUDAN project have a newly equipped working space. BFM aims also to create working spaces for all PhDs but at the moment doctoral students have to express interest to have one. To provide parity for all doctoral students, we suggest that each has at least a shared working space which could be used by all of the PhD students. Also, MEDIT creative lab and BFM studios are available for the students to use for their research. The re-assessment report indicates that MEDIT and the doctoral study programme have resources to purchase facilities necessary for doctoral students' creative work as well as for covering costs for services necessary for creative work. As students' projects differ throughout the years, this flexibility can be considered important as it offers a possibility to change and renew the technology as specific needs arise.

Baltic Film and Media School also plans to renew 70% of its equipment as it will reach to the state of being depreciated in the next 3-5 years.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.2.2. Research, development and creative activities in the study programme group are supported by adequate amount of up-to-date and pertinent textbooks, research publications and other study materials, access to research databases is ensured.

Evidence and analysis:

Baltic Film and Media School additionally to Academic Library of Tallinn University also has a Film and Media library which offers access to the list of professional databases which can be found at the webpage of TLU Academic Library.

The following databases were considered relevant for the specific study programme in the re-assessment report:

1. EbookCentral – multi-discipline collection of e-books (about 150 000 e-books)
2. JSTOR Arts & Sciences I, II, III, IV – databases in the humanities and social sciences.
3. SAGE Research Methods
4. EBSCO databases Communication and Mass Media Complete (media studies database), PsycARTICLES (database of psychology-related resources), Academic Search Complete (multi-discipline database), MasterFILE Premier (multi-discipline database).
5. SpringerLINK multi-discipline database
6. Online art and music resources Oxford Art Online and Oxford Music Online.

The other services, like borrowing from other libraries through Interlibrary Loans (ILL) through Academic Library ensures that the requirements are met fully.

BFM also aims to launch a journal or platform which could present the creative research and creative reflections of academic staff. This aim will become increasingly important as the programme develops. It could offer insights for the future PhDs and help also in finding new investments to renew the technical facilities.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.2.3. State of the art and fit for purpose information and communication technological solutions, including study information system, document management system, online learning environment support learning and teaching.

Evidence and analysis:

The re-assessment report states that students have access to the following support systems: general webpage of the university and the webpage of each academic unit (BFM); study information system (OIS), course schedule programme (ASIO); e-study environments such as Moodle and Google Classroom.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT: LEARNING AND TEACHING ENVIRONMENT

The panel concludes that the learning and teaching environment conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- There are sufficient facilities available for the studies and an investment strategy to renew technical resources and facilities in the next five years.
- Students as well as staff have access to academic libraries and suitable academic databases. Therefore, it seems to have sufficient resources to accommodate PhD students' needs.
- There is willingness to renew technical base as the needs with related to specific PhD projects arise.
- PhD students appreciate the overall warm and collegial environment at BFM.

Opportunities for further improvement

- PhDs of CUDAN project and the ones who have expressed interest have access to private workspace. All PhDs, especially if they are junior researchers and contribute to teaching should have working spaces from the start. PhDs really appreciated the overall warm and collegial environment at BFM.

3.2.3. Financial resources

3.2.3.1. *The educational institution has adequate funds necessary for conducting high quality studies as well as for the provision of adequate and up-to-date support services, for implementing learning and teaching related developments and for supporting the development of academic staff.*

Evidence and analysis:

The programme is overall well and roughly adequately funded. Even recent and hence costly technologies are available and at the disposal of the students. The increase in the doctoral grants' amount is highly appreciated since it allows the students/candidates to concentrate on their respective art and research work instead of losing too much time just earning money. The support and technical services provided are useful and seem to be well equipped and sufficiently financed. The continuous development of the staff (notably PhD mentors) could be intensified. The number of PhD grants/positions should be considerably higher for the programme to offer adequate opportunities to develop a thematical and topical profile and international visibility.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.2.3.2. *The higher education institution has sufficient funds for research and development activities related to the study programme.*

Evidence and analysis:

The University's development plan gives a good deal of importance to media and artistic development. It does not, however, give exact figures about the future funding of the programme. According to the investment plan (Annex 3 of the re-assessment report), the total of investment into the technical equipment is 150.000 Euros (in five years), mainly for studio equipment and workstations. After going through the re-assessment report and having got additional relevant information concerning the future plans of the University in the audit, the panel sees the requirements of the criterion as fulfilled.

3.2.3.3. *The higher education institution has a long-term strategy for ensuring the sustainability of financial resources, including a risk analysis and financial projections. The strategy describes, among others, risks stemming from the operating environment and planned mitigating measures thereof.*

Evidence and analysis:

The development plan (annex 7 of the re-assessment report) is very convincing as a long-term strategy, even if it does not give exact figures concerning the financial resources. During the audit, however, the panel received enough information to judge that the requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

3.2.3.4. *Financial reports for the higher education institution or keeper thereof are publicly available. Annual reports for the higher education institution or keeper thereof have undergone financial auditing unless stipulated otherwise in legislation.*

Evidence and analysis:

Financial reports for the university are publicly available on the university webpage for years 2015-2019. Older reports can be accessed through document management system. All of the reports have undergone financial auditing and publicly available reports on university webpage include information about the auditing results.

The requirements of the criterion are fulfilled.

CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The panel concludes that financial resources conform to requirements.

Strengths

- technical resources (studios, digital workplaces etc.) are sufficiently provided;
- grants/studentships have been increased so that students/candidates are not forced to work for to subsidise their studies. This makes success within the allotted time far more likely.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The number of PhD grants/posts should be considerably increased in order to strengthen the programme in its thematical and topical range and profile.
- The development plan should be extended to include more detailed long term financial planning and contain at least estimated figures.

CONCLUSIONS AND AGGREGATED ASSESSMENT: RESOURCES

Aggregated assessment of the resources: conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- A large, suitably qualified, international team of academic staff has been assembled, whose competencies are fully sufficient to implement the study programme of Audiovisual Arts and Media Studies. The estimated number and qualifications of potential doctoral supervisors are also sufficient.
- The high quality of instruction and the impressive competence of the teaching and mentoring staff.
- The remarkable degree of commitment and determination of both teaching staff and candidates/students.
- After reviewing the submitted appendices and documents it can be stated that there are sufficient facilities available for the studies. There is also an investment strategy to renew technical resources and facilities in the next five years.
- Students as well as staff have access to academic libraries and suitable academic databases. Therefore, it seems to have sufficient resources to accommodate PhD students' needs.
- There is willingness to renew technical base as the needs with related to specific PhD projects arise.
- PhD students appreciate the overall warm and collegial environment at BFM. technical resources (studios, digital workplaces etc.) are sufficiently provided.
- grants/studentships have been increased so that students/candidates are not forced to work for to subsidise their studies. This makes success within the allotted time far more likely.

Area of concern and recommendations

- The professional competencies of the teachers are sufficient, but currently there is no suitable system for continuous, systematic pedagogical development of the supervisors. However, supervisors should obtain continuous training on a regular basis, and staff should be given a systematic programme of supervisor training provided by the University which is mandatory. It is important to create a permanent, systematic approach to improving pedagogical competencies that would replace the existing rather haphazard education programme of the supervisors. Such education and training of supervisors would positively affect the application of the intended study methods and achievement of study goals.

Opportunities for further improvement

- The panel recommends continuing the existing tradition of attracting researchers and artistic professionals for longer or shorter teaching residencies in the study programme.
- The panel recommends make more intensive use of signed cooperation agreements with foreign universities.
- PhDs of CUDAN project and the ones who have expressed interest have access to private workspace. All PhDs, especially if they are junior researchers and contribute to teaching should have working spaces from the start. PhDs really appreciated the overall warm and collegial environment at BFM.
- The number of PhD grants/posts should be considerably increased in order to strengthen the programme in its thematical and topical range and profile.
- The development plan should be extended to include more detailed long term financial planning and contain at least estimated figures.

3.3. SUSTAINABILITY

Aggregated assessment of the quality of instruction: conforms to requirements.

Aggregated assessment of the resources: conforms to requirements.

3.3.1. Further sustainability criteria

3.3.1.1. Regular development planning and risk management are on-going in the higher education institution, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of high-quality studies in the higher education institution as a whole as well as in the study programme group.

Evidence and analysis:

It was clear from our meeting (24/04/21) that the University fully supports the BFM's doctoral programme and accepts the judgement of the re-assessment document that the PhD programme is vital to 'the sustainability of the system, succession and gradual improvement in quality' of the School as a whole. It also has an important role to play within Estonian media, culture and society.

There is very strong evidence from the documentation and from our meeting that the Team has addressed the recommendations of the initial, 2018, assessment and has succeeded in recruiting high quality and well-motivated students.

This programme is the subject of continued and quite detailed evaluation processes that ensure its currency and appropriateness.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.3.1.2. Development trends for student admissions, graduations and budgetary resources indicate sustainability of the higher education institution as a whole and the study programme group under assessment.

Evidence and analysis:

There are currently 14 students enrolled on the programme. There were 5 students in its first year as start up; an intake of 3 students over the next two years, with a cohort of 4 for next year (2 state-funded; 2 grant-based). The admission procedure is clear and transparent, the study stages are defined in the study documents. During our meeting we became confident that the study programme is being implemented properly.

However, although significant University resources have been allocated to support the present programme, this is still a relatively small number of students. The co-funded studentship and entrepreneurial-related doctoral studies is an area of growth, but the University/Ministry should consider putting more resources into the programme to widen its research base and to broaden out from the current focus on contemporary digital culture and data analytics. Film heritage is an obvious potential direction as are other topics from more traditional but relevant fields of the humanities (media aesthetics, cultural studies, media philosophy). This would reflect more adequately the innovative, sector-leading nature of the programme and its importance to Estonian media, culture and society. It would also recognise the quality of the staff on the programme and their efforts to set up and sustain this ambitious programme.

The institution partially meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.3.1.3. The higher education institution has a long-term financial projection of financial resources needed for conducting high quality studies in the study programme group and sources for the provision thereof, which takes into account risks stemming from the operating environment.

Evidence and analysis:

The funding status is secure, but the programme remains small.

BFM has sufficient funds to support the student projects and additional money is available from the TLU general research fund.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.3.1.4. The age structure of academic staff as well as share of young teachers ensures sustainability of instruction provision in the study programme group.

Evidence and analysis:

The age structure of the academic staff is appropriate, the ranks of experienced lecturers and professors are supplemented by young but promising researchers and artists, therefore it can be stated that in this respect the continuity of the study program is guaranteed. It is further supported through actively engaging PhD-s in both research projects as well as teaching courses on BA and MA level.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

3.3.1.5. In the case of doctoral studies, sustainability is achieved when doctoral studies in the study programme group are based on well-established fields of research and development within the higher education institution that have successfully undergone evaluation. Supervisors of doctoral theses are actively engaged in research and have supervised successfully defended doctoral theses.

Evidence and analysis:

Interviews with supervisors as well with the head of the study programme suggested that most of the supervisors are very much actively engaged in research and have previously supervised doctoral theses. Additionally, several of the younger researchers were also mentored to become PhD supervisors. However, interviews suggested that the requirements to become one may be too vague and should be addressed more clearly to the academic staff.

Students are based in well-established fields and also emergent ones and are supported by research active staff with supervisory experience. However, its range is fairly narrow.

The institution meets the requirements of the criterion.

CONCLUSIONS AND AGGREGATED ASSESSMENT: SUSTAINABILITY

Aggregated assessment of sustainability: conforms to requirements.

Strengths

- Provision of an ambitious programme that makes good use of resources.
- Appropriate levels of funding and support from University and media organisations.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- A programme of this size is vulnerable. It should receive additional funding to develop its strengths.
- The programme is very broad, covering a very large number of research directions, and therefore requires quite a lot of resources from Tallinn University and BFM. At the same time, the number of doctoral students is relatively small. There is a risk that it will be difficult for study programme managers and administrators to maintain proper number of academic staff. The university should increase the number of students or narrow the field of study.

Opportunities for further improvement

- In many ways the programme needs to grow to be fully effective.
- Staff should consider strategic collaborations with congruent programmes in other universities to expand its reach and recruitment.