

## **Assessment Report**

# Health Care

Tallinn Health Care College

Tartu Health Care College

University of Tartu

2016

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## Introduction

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 in the First and Second Cycles of Higher Education](#).

The aim of the assessment team was the evaluation of the study programme group of Health Care in three higher education institutions: Tallinn Health Care College, Tartu Health Care College, and the University of Tartu. Additionally, the study programme group of Medicine was assessed at Tallinn Health Care College.

The team was asked to assess the conformity of the study programmes belonging to the study programme group and the instruction provided on the basis thereof to legislation and to national and international standards and/or recommendations, including the assessment of the level of the corresponding theoretical and practical instruction, the research and pedagogical qualification of the teaching staff and research staff, and the sufficiency of resources for the provision of instruction.

The following persons formed the assessment team:

<b>Carol Lynn Cox (Chair)</b>	Professor Emeritus, School of Health Sciences, City University, London, United Kingdom; Chief Nurse and Clinical Manager of the Health and Hope Clinics, Pensacola, Florida, USA
<b>Pia Ahonen</b>	Head of Education and Research, Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, Turku University of Applied Sciences – Finland
<b>Lars Bohlin</b>	Professor Emeritus, Department of Pharmacognosy, University of Uppsala – Sweden
<b>Lesley Dawson</b>	Freelance Consultant in Healthcare Training and Education – United Kingdom

<b>Gunta Krūmiņa</b>	Professor, Head of Department of Optometry and Vision Science, Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, University of Latvia – Latvia
<b>Ewen McColl</b>	Director of Clinical Dentistry, Peninsula Dental School, Plymouth University – United Kingdom
<b>Hannele Turunen</b>	Professor, Head of Department of Nursing Science, University of Eastern Finland – Finland
<b>Margus Viigimaa</b>	Professor, Director of the Institute of Cardiovascular Medicine, Tallinn University of Technology; Head of the Centre of Cardiology, North Estonia Medical Centre – Estonia
<b>Samin Sedghi Zadeh</b>	Student; Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Turin – Italy

The assessment process was coordinated by Tiia Bach (EKKA).

After the preparation phase, the work of the assessment team in Estonia started on Sunday, April 17, 2016, with an introduction to the Higher Education System as well as the assessment procedure by EKKA, the Estonian Quality assurance organization for higher and vocational education. The members of the team agreed the overall questions and areas to discuss with each group at the three institutions, who were part of the assessment process. The distribution of tasks between the members of the assessment team was organised and the detailed schedule of the site visits agreed.

During the following days, meetings were held with the representatives of Tallinn Health Care College (Monday the 18th and Tuesday the 19th), Tartu Health Care College (Wednesday the 20th and Thursday the 21st), and the University of Tartu (Friday, April 22). In all cases, the schedule for discussion on site for each of the various study programmes only allowed for short time slots to be available for team members to exchange information, discuss conclusions and implications for further questions.

On Saturday, April 23, the team held an all-day meeting, during which both the structure of the final report was agreed and findings of team meetings were compiled in a first draft of the assessment report. This work was executed in a cooperative way and the members of the team intensively discussed their individual views on the relevant topics.

In the following two sections, the assessment team summarise their general findings, conclusions and recommendations which are relevant across the whole SPG. The team provides an external and objective perspective on the programmes and the contexts within which they are delivered. The intention is to

provide constructive comment and critique which may form the basis upon which improvements in the quality of the programmes may be achieved.

## General findings and recommendations

Summary of the study programme group across all three institutions reflects:

### Main Strengths

- The buildings of Tallinn and Tartu Health Care Colleges and the University of Tartu are inviting and modern teaching and learning facilities.
- Simulation equipment, laboratory equipment and facilities provide excellent opportunities for the acquisition of practical/clinical skills.
- Teaching and learning materials are excellent resources for teachers and students.
- Library facilities provide the latest texts for learning and for supporting evidence-based research.
- Research and development initiatives are evident throughout programmes of study and in many of the programmes of study demonstrate that academic researchers are in the process of conducting international collaborative applied research.
- Specialists in counselling skills are available to counsel students.
- Stakeholders are enthused about the curricular structure of programmes of study and indicate the programmes of study develop competent practitioners.
- There are excellent clinical practice placements with a sound mentoring system in place for all programmes of study.
- Information technology is of the highest standard with specialist resources available to enhance student learning. This technology ensures the ability for comprehensive literature searches and the acquisition of contemporary evidenced-based knowledge.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the Colleges' and University's subsequent Quality Review. For example:

- A moderator and external examiner process for the assessment of student papers and examinations is not in place and should be implemented to ensure quality in assessment processes and parity in marking and feedback to students regarding students' academic and clinical performance across all programmes of study.
- Poor performance on the part of some students is not being attributed to dyslexia and the need for additional academic support to ensure dyslexic students are provided with the required structures to improve their performance. Assessment processes and supportive structures should be implemented as these initiatives may improve student drop-out rates.
- There is some evidence of overlap between what is taught in theory and practice and in examinations and the completion of coursework papers which places an undue stressor on students and in some instances may

- influence the outcome of students' work. A review of all programmes of study to reduce overlap should be initiated.
- Review succession planning process of academic structures and discern career enhancement possibilities.
  - High teaching demands reduce the potential for teachers to be allocated time to obtain their PhD or engage in the conduct of research.
  - Employers (stakeholders) have indicated that there is a need to increase the number of students graduating from programmes of study. Consideration should be given as to how additional students can be admitted to programmes in order to meet employment demands in Estonia.
  - Many of the programmes of study do not facilitate the involvement of teaching staff in clinical practice. A system whereby teachers can engage in clinical practice should be initiated.

# 1. Assessment report of SPG at Tallinn Health Care College

## 1.1. Introduction

Foundation and initiation of the College dates back to 1940 when Tallinn Nursing School was opened. There are eight professional higher education curricula and two study programme groups "health care" and "medicine" in the College. In 2005, as a result of restructuring, the School was granted the status of a state institution of professional higher education and was named Tallinn Health Care College.

The aims of the College are to be an internationally recognised institution of professional higher education that is established within a modern learning environment which provides education in the broad group 'Health and Welfare'; through applied research and development promote the professions taught in the College; influence health behaviours in the population; contribute to the shaping of a healthy living environment; and organise in-service training. Due to its specialisations, the College has become a competence centre in the fields of occupational therapy, optometry and dental technology in Estonia and in the field of health and welfare in Ida-Viru County.

The College provides studies in two study programme groups: "health care" and "medicine". There are in total eight professional higher education programmes that belong to these study programme groups, all of which were subject to assessment.

Programmes assessed in the **study programme group of Health Care:**

- Basic Nursing Education
- Nursing Education Specialisation
- Midwife
- Health Promotion
- Occupational Therapist
- Optometrist

Programmes assessed in the **study programme group of Medicine:**

- Assistant Pharmacist
- Dental Technician

**Number of students:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Basic Nursing Education	1058(1048)	1082(1080)	971(965)	902(905)	839(842)
Midwife	170(167)	180(179)	138(137)	116	99(100)
Optometrist	77	73(74)	70	67(68)	64
Occupational Therapist	56	52	55	52	52
Health Promotion	54(53)	57(56)	38(37)	39	40
Nursing Education Specialisation	24	37	19	19	36
Assistant Pharmacist	138(139)	140(139)	121(122)	104(116)	89(96)
Dental Technician	42(41)	27	38	37	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1619(1605)</b>	<b>1648(1644)</b>	<b>1450(1443)</b>	<b>1336(1352)</b>	<b>1244(1255)</b>

Sources: HaridusSILM. The College's data on the number of students are presented in the parenthesis according to the Self-Evaluation Report p. 13.

**Number of admissions:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Basic Nursing Education	336	329	228	192	185
Midwife	53	41	19	20	20
Optometrist	22	14	16	15	16
Occupational Therapist	18	14	12	12	12
Health Promotion	18	19	15	15	15
Nursing Education Specialisation	0	0	0	0	0
Assistant Pharmacist	49	38	30	30	29
Dental Technician	13	0	12	12	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>277</b>

Source: HaridusSILM



**Number of graduates:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Basic Nursing Education	269	279	268	252
Midwife	21	46	36	32
Optometrist	17	14	16	14
Occupational Therapist	18	0	13	9
Health Promotion	8	18	10	6
Nursing Education Specialisation	22	34	17	19
Assistant Pharmacist	37	38	34	36
Dental Technician	14	1	13	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>380</b>

Source: HaridusSILM

**Number of interruptions:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Basic Nursing Education	43	71	40	56
Midwife	8	15	7	8
Optometrist	4	6	2	6
Occupational Therapist	4	10	2	3
Health Promotion	8	17	4	7
Nursing Education Specialisation	4	7	3	4
Assistant Pharmacist	15	13	12	10
Dental Technician	0	1	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>94</b>

Source: HaridusSILM

## 1.2. General findings and recommendations at the study programme group level

The Tallinn Health Care College (herein termed the College) offers a broad range of programmes related to the delivery of healthcare in Estonia. The College is located in the North of Estonia and provides formal education within the domain of the adult education system. It engages in the education and training of undergraduate degree and graduate specialist qualified health care professionals, in-service education and training and applied research and development. There are eight professional higher education curricula in the College. This quality assessment addresses curricula, teaching and learning, resources, teaching staff

and students in Health Promotion, Occupational Therapy, Basic Nursing Education, its associated Nursing Education Specialisation, Midwifery, Optometrist, Dental Technician and Assistant Pharmacist.

### Main Strengths

The following strengths are of particular note:

- The College building environment has been renovated which has created an inviting modernized teaching and learning environment.
- The Simulation Centre is an excellent environment for acquisition of practical skills. Simulation equipment is of the highest standard, modern and innovative.
- Teaching and learning materials are excellent resources for teachers and students (Teacher and Student interview feedback.)
- The library is in outstanding condition with open study areas and individual conference areas and smaller group study rooms. Learning resources in the library total over 1700 in the main centre.
- Information technology (SIS and Moodle) with specialist study literature in the library and free access to literature search databases ensure contemporary evidenced-based acquisition of published knowledge.
- RDI-projects are in process with the possibility of conducting international collaborative applied research.
- Stakeholders are enthused about the modular curricular structure and indicate it develops competent practitioners.
- There are excellent clinical practice placements with a sound mentoring system in place.

### Recommendations

- Delineate a programme to facilitate current teachers to obtain PhDs and allow more time to engage in applied research.
- Teachers need more access to Master and Doctoral level programmes. The number of teachers with a PhD degree could be increased.
- Involve more foreign lecturers in teaching activities.
- For the purpose of parity in assessment of student's papers and examinations, introduce a moderator and external examiner system.
- The structure of the programmes makes it difficult for student international mobility. Review current structures to discern if modifications can be made so that international mobility can be facilitated.
- Students are not sure if electronic feedback on courses is compulsory or not. Clarification is required in this area.

## 1.3. Strengths and areas for improvement of study programmes by assessment areas

### 1.3.1. Basic Nursing Education (ProfHE); Nursing Education Specialisation (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Strengths

- Curriculum development is conducted in cooperation with students, employers, higher education institutions, alumni and other internal and external partners.
- Orientation of the College is toward its stakeholders, and there is a high level of student and stakeholder satisfaction.
- There is an evolving curriculum that changes to meet healthcare institutional needs.
- Utilisation of modern information systems promotes effective communication.
- Graduates are integrated into the activities in the College.

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, NANDA (North American Nursing Diagnosis Association) terminology for articulating a nursing diagnosis

that communicates the professional judgments nurses make has been introduced to facilitate acquisition of the nursing process; however, due to the absence of teaching staff within the clinical environments there is scepticism regarding the benefit and implementation of NANDA by stakeholders (institutional management). Employers (stakeholders) have indicated that there is a gap between student practice as taught in the College and practice in the institution's clinical environment which could be overcome through problem based learning in the clinical environment.

- Clarify the institution of NANDA with stakeholders/employers. Do this through institution of regular clinical rotations of lecturers within institutions. In addition, examine what is happening in other countries in relation to the introduction and use of NANDA. This acquisition of knowledge can facilitate problem solving in NANDA implementation in the clinical environment.
- Institute a system whereby teachers can engage in clinical practice in order to more effectively evaluate student acquisition of professional practice skills.
- Introduce problem-based learning

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The College has adequate resources within its teaching and learning environments to sustain high quality teaching and learning within the domains of education (knowledge), practice and research. The College's teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment are highly praised by teaching staff, stakeholders and students. Financial resources/support is available to achieve stipulated objectives in the study programme.

### Strengths

- The College maintains sound budgetary control to support its educational programmes.

- A renovated innovative learning environment possesses an excellent skills laboratory and Simulation Centre with excellent equipment.
- There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and data base searching tools available in a fully modernized Library.
- There is flexible access to databases.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as indicated in the site-visit during the interview with teachers and students there is a risk of not having enough equipment to meet student demand in skills acquisition sessions because the students' study groups are large.

- Consider reducing the number of students in study groups by timetabling additional seminars. (This may have an effect on the number of teachers required to teach skills acquisition. One solution may be to have senior nursing students mentor junior students in 'after school' – 'out of hours' scheduled sessions.)
- Review module time tables in an attempt to restructure skills training sessions.

### **Teaching and learning**

#### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

#### Comments

The process of teaching and learning in the College has been identified in the Self-Assessment document and site visit as supporting students' individual learning needs and social development. Furthermore, the process of teaching and

learning is flexible and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes. Academics have organized practical training to support achievement of planned learning outcomes which meets the needs of the stakeholders.

### Strengths

- The College has competent teaching staff that utilize modern teaching and learning methods.
- There is a central focus on utilization of the Erasmus Scheme which is highly valued in the College.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, the scheduling and assessment of learning outcomes should be reviewed to ensure marking is appropriate, transparent and objective. A process for the assessment of dyslexia, that is not identified in the gymnasiums, has not been initiated. There is some evidence of overlap between examinations and the completion of coursework papers which places an undue stressor on students and in some instances may influence the outcome of students' work.

- Introduce a moderator and external examiner system to ensure parity in marking.
- Formulate an assessment for dyslexia and make provision for language deficiencies in coursework and examination assessments where this is not already in place.
- Review module time tables to ensure overlap in the submission of coursework papers and sitting of examinations is alleviated.
- Use the simulation laboratory equipment and other recently acquired equipment for the purpose of continuing education programmes, which are multi-professional, and applied research.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.

- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teaching staff in general have adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning in the curricula of basic nursing education and nursing specialization.

The College's teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research and with partners/stakeholders/other higher education institutions (e.g., practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian and foreign higher education institutions). Teaching staff are routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.

### Strengths

- Student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- Teaching staff are engaged in professional and teaching-skills development which enhances the teaching skills and the learning experience of students.
- Teaching staff are competent in utilization of the skills lab facilities and simulation centre for the development of competency based training.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, indicators for improvement within the teaching academic structure reflect a need to review succession planning. High teaching demands reduce the potential for teachers to be allocated time to obtain their PhD or engage in the conduct of research (note that students have indicated they want to be engaged in research projects).

- Delineate a programme for teachers to obtain PhDs and engage in applied research.
- Review the present succession plan and discern career enhancement possibilities for teachers.
- Involve more teachers in training courses on how to use the simulation equipment and also how then to use them in the wards.
- Involve foreign lecturers in teaching activities.

## Students

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

According to the Self-Assessment Report for basic nursing and nursing specialisation, students enrolled in the curriculum are motivated and talented, which is confirmed by the admission competition in recent years. In addition, the membership of students in the College's Quality Assessment Council and Student Union is active in relation to management of the College's curricula. The aforementioned has been substantiated by the Assessment Team.

### Strengths

- Students are involved in the curriculum development process.
- Students obtain excellent practice experiences.
- Students are satisfied with the College's curricular studies and motivated to learn and achieve. (No complaints were expressed by students during interviews.)
- Alumni have expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and indicate the programme of study in the College has prepared them well for practice.
- Employers are satisfied with student performance and competencies upon qualification.
- Admission standards and associated requirements are sound.
- Students value the College's counselling system and expert counsellors and psychologists (Information obtained from interviews with students.)
- Students value the opportunity to attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students (Information obtained from interviews with students.)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For



example, students have expressed sincere interest in developing expertise in research in order to expand their knowledge of practice underpinned by evidence. In addition, there is a higher than expected level of dropout in the Nursing Specialisation Programme. In light of the aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- Student participation in the College's research and development programme should be initiated to support the students' desires to expand their knowledge of practice underpinned by evidence.
- Extend the period of time to complete the Basic Nursing Education and Nursing Specialisation programmes either through elongation of the full time programme and/or the introduction of a part-time programme to reduce dropout.

### 1.3.2. Optometrist (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

The study programme is based on training specialists with professional higher education in optometry who evaluate and correct visual acuity. The objective of the study programme is to develop optometrist's knowledge, skills and competence to work in optics shops, in eye clinics dealing with vision correction, in occupational health care enterprises, in research institutions dealing with vision ergonomics and visual perception, as well as in optical products companies.

For admission into the optometry study programme the applicant must prove a good level of proficiency in Estonian and mathematics by taking the Tallinn Health Care College test as well as an interview about motivation to be an optometrist.

The focus of the study programme is currently directed towards two major skills:

- optometrist, and
- optician.

The curriculum of optometrists consists of 8 modules. Each module has clearly stated objectives and learning outcomes. The curriculum's developers have made the sequence of subjects follow logically from semester to semester and that subjects follow in order of difficulty from year to year.

The curriculum has good collaboration with optical companies to provide placements for customer services, for visual examination and for assembly of spectacles. Some supervisors from optical companies are involved in College teaching and have an input into curriculum development.

The most recent changes in the curriculum were approved by the College Board in 2011. The latest development of the curriculum has been based on the curricula of Optometry of Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences and of University of Latvia.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendation

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- The Self-Assessment Report indicates that the objectives of the study programme are to "train specialists with higher professional education who evaluate and correct visual acuity" and the curriculum main activities are limited to "the evaluation and correction of a person's visual acuity, recommending and fitting suitable optical devices and assembling spectacles". According to the definition of the World Council of Optometry "Optometry is a healthcare profession that is autonomous, educated, and regulated (licensed/registered), and optometrists are the primary healthcare practitioners of the eye and visual system who provide comprehensive eye and vision care, which includes refraction and dispensing, detection/diagnosis and management of disease in the eye, and the rehabilitation of conditions of the visual system". The evaluation team feels that the curriculum is limited and recommend that the developers of the curriculum reflect on the objective of the study programme in accordance with the WCO "definition of optometry". In association with this, a review the learning outcomes in some of the subject areas should be undertaken.
- In the interview with the developers of curriculum the evaluation team learned about the desire to reach the European level programme accreditation. The Assessment Team recommends that the programme team concentrate the curriculum learning outcomes and subjects to the requirements of European Diploma, e.g., include ocular pharmacology,

biochemistry, visual neuroscience, epidemiology and biostatistics, reduce the assembly of spectacles part, review and reduce number of modules and divide the subjects per module close to the modules of the European Diploma (e.g., Part A – Optics and Optical Appliances; Part B – Clinical investigation and Management; Part C – Biological and Medical Sciences) [<http://www.ecoo.info/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/5-Learning-Outcomes-and-Syllabus.pdf>].

- In the curriculum development plan an accreditation process at a higher level is delineated. The Assessment Team recommends the accreditation process be included in the final examination as well as the practical component in accordance with the requirements of ECOO European Diploma.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The physical infrastructure in which the Chair of Optometry is currently housed is optimal. The lecture rooms are well-equipped with the technical infrastructure necessary for modern teaching (i.e. computers, beamers, WI-FI etc.). The College is equipped with infrastructure for disabled students.

The Chair of Optometry has three laboratories: for vision examination, for assembling spectacles and for examination of eye structures and contact lenses. These laboratories are furnished and well-equipped using the support of the European Regional Development Fund. The Contact Lenses and Ophthalmology Laboratory has modern equipment for monitoring eyes with slit lamps and teaching eye evaluation processes in small groups. In the Refraction Laboratory the lecturer can work with five students at one time in five optometrist work-places. The Optician Laboratory has 16 student work-places, but usually student groups are divided into two groups so that 8 students work in the Optician Laboratory and 8 in the Refraction Laboratory. The access to Laboratories for student independent work is possible every working day. The Chair of Optometry upgrades the outdated equipment annually and acquires modern facilities for the teaching process.

Optometry students use College classrooms for general subjects together with students from the other Chairs.

In the library of Tallinn Health Care College there are books, generally in English, on the main topics in optics, optometry, ophthalmology as well as journals such as Opticians, Optometry Today, Optometry and Vision Science. Students have also access to medical literature databases (EBSCO) necessary to acquire professional higher education and develop research work. Teaching aids, access to textbooks and study materials is generally from very good to excellent.

The education materials for the different subjects for optometry have been uploaded to MOODLE. Lecturers have made presentations, descriptions and instructions related to laboratories/practical use in Estonian. These resources are readily available. In the teaching process English textbooks are generally used. In the near future there is a plan to publish the first Estonian-language textbook "Correction of visual acuity".

The Assessment Team's impression from teaching staff, students, and alumni was a high level of satisfaction with resources available (college environment, laboratories, modern equipment, library). Students were extremely happy with the e-learning resources available to them and felt that MOODLE was utilized to best effect to facilitate their learning.

#### Strengths

- Well-equipped laboratories with modern technologies, especially for eye structure evaluation and monitoring
- Each subject on the e-learning MOODLE platform includes uploaded lecturers' materials (presentations, instructions, descriptions), video-materials and lecturer feedback about student's independent work.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Identify a way to increase the number of optometry textbooks in Estonian published by the College's teaching staff or alumni.
- Alumni and the Estonian Association of Optometrists reported there is a limited vocabulary for optometry in Estonian and students sometimes have problems discussing issues with patients. We recommend that the curriculum developers, in collaboration with the Association and alumni, create an online Estonian vocabulary for optometrists with open access to add information by registered optometrists.

## Teaching and learning

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

Modern teaching methods with frequent student-staff interactions and small group learning were generally reported. One or two lecturers are involved in laboratories/practical work with 8 students. Students have access to subject materials (presentations, video-materials, instructions) on the MOODLE system as well as in the Internet portal UDEMY. In MOODLE lecturers also give feedback about student's assessments.

The assessment strategy appears complicated to the Assessment Team. Each subject lecturer plans their assessment based on theory and practise. Each subject consists of different assessments, but there is no master plan about all activities for student per semester. The assessment criteria are based on the subject's learning outcomes and students need to achieve each learning outcomes at least at grade "E".

Lecturers use a combination of classical (lectures with PowerPoint) and contemporary/modern teaching methods (internet, videos, made by staff, group works, seminars, posters, case studies, problem solving). Independent work performed by students (report, presentation, internship report, practical work) supports the acquisition of learning outcomes and develops the ability to work independently or in a small group. For preparing independent work students can consult the lecturer and use the College's laboratories and equipment.

Placement takes place during the whole study. It supports the development of special subjects and is connected with the step-by-step understanding of the profession of optometrist. The placement is divided into four levels: introduction to optical store, vision examination, vision examination & ophthalmology and pre-diploma.

Students learn practical skills in the laboratories of the Chair and in placements outside the College (in optical companies and eye clinics). The Head of the Chair is responsible for the organization of internships. Internships are supervised by teaching staff and an optometrist-mentor who is approved by the Head of Chair. The optometrist-mentor receives information about the goal of students' internship and learning outcomes and evaluation criteria. There is no formal training for mentors but there is a good link between the College and placements if problems need to be discussed. There are also regular visits from academic staff to placements. Assessment in the placement is evaluated by the mentor (graded or non-graded), by student's self-assessment report and by teaching staff through seminar on return to the College.

Mentors are not paid and there are more than 10 companies offering placements for students. There are no formal agreements between the College and companies. The optical company "Instrumentarium Optika OÜ" allocates one grant every year to the best student and the optical company "Oculus OÜ" provides literature in Russian.

At the end of studies students are able to choose between a final exam or a final thesis. The final exam consists of 65 MCQs (to be completed online in 1.5 hours) and 65 short problem solving questions (to be completed on average in 3-4 hours). Most of the students take the exam, because they perceive it as being easier and less time consuming than writing a thesis.

Employers are satisfied with students' knowledge and skills associated with vision examination, optical products and communication.

#### Strengths

- Excellent placement organisation in collaboration with optical companies helps students to gain skills and to matriculate into a recognised specialist.
- Work in small groups (one or two lecturers for 8 students) allows students to achieve good results in practical skills.
- The high ratio (more than 75%) of students feeding back about subjects helps to improve the teaching methods, content of subjects and solves problems in a timely manner.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Teaching staff and employers reported that there are no developed criteria for becoming an internship mentor. The Assessment Team suggests that the curriculum developers create criteria for selecting mentors e.g., an optometrist's experience of at least three years, good feedback from the student, continuing education etc.

- The Assessment Team recommends an annual meeting of internship providers at the College to discuss best practice and furthermore that the College provide further training in assessment and the provision of feedback.
- Establish an assessment strategy for managing student-work load per semester.

## Teaching staff

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

The Assessment team has discerned that staff are highly motivated and make students their first priority. All lecturers in the specific subjects of the curriculum have a Master's Degree in Optometry.

Lecturers are primarily employed part time, except for the Head of the Chair of Optometry. Discussions were held with the Head of the Chair and three lecturers. They report having a manageable teaching load but limited time to conduct research. The workload of lecturers is established in the College contract.

Lecturers must complete two credit points of training per year to maintain the level of their teaching. Courses are offered by Tallinn Health Care College and other colleges/universities. The lecturers and the Chair have participated in speciality-related and didactic training. The decisive factors for participation in the training is the lecturers own desire to develop professionally and pedagogically. The College supports the lecturers' participation in international conferences. The lecturers implement the information acquired from training and

conferences in their daily teaching and in the development of curriculum subjects.

All lecturers participate in the supervision of the final thesis and in the final examination/thesis committees. Some of the lecturers also participate in various other committees and work groups in the College as well as outside the College (e.g., in the Consumer Protection Board, the Estonian Qualification Agency and in the Estonian Association of Optometrists).

### Strengths

- Lecturers of specialty subjects are professional optometrists and opticians who are highly motivated and enthusiastic.
- Specialists from optical companies are involved in the teaching process to provide special knowledge and skills in specific subjects, for example, contact lenses, paediatric vision and ophthalmology.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Teaching staff reported there is no developed international collaboration with visiting lecturers. In order to improve the curriculum it is suggested funding be found for guest-lectures from nearby Optometry study programs and also to improve teaching staff exchange through the ERASMUS/SOCRATES framework.
- It is recommended the College reduce teacher workloads to allow them to undertake research/scientific projects and the publication of research data in peer-review journals (Thomson Web of Science, Scopus). In interview with teaching staff the Assessment Team concluded that lecturers are involved only in teaching therefore there is no time to undertake research. This is fundamentally so because all lecturers except the Head of the Chair are part-time lecturers. Consideration may be given to employing some full time lecturers so that research can be facilitated.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.



- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

During interviews discussions were held with students from all three years and one recently qualified alumnus. Students' desires/reasons for studying optometry were varied; in the main related to family and personal experience.

Every year 16 students start the optometry study programme. In Estonia up to 200 graduate optometrists are employed and there is no plan to increase or decrease numbers of state-funded student places. 50% of graduate optometrists belong to the Estonian Association of Optometrists but there is no specific collaboration between the curriculum and Association.

The drop-out rate from the course is low which can be explained by high motivation, good selection of applicants and experience acquired before studies begin (there is the possibility to visit the Laboratories of the Chair before the admission process is initiated).

The fact that most students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years undertake employment during their study helps them better understand and acquire the learning outcomes of the subjects. It also makes it easier to identify placements. There is no conflict if students undertake their practicum in the place where they work. The study timetable for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students is not a full five days per week which allows them to work. There is a considerable amount of independent learning/work in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

At the beginning of each subject students receive a programme with detailed learning outcomes, content and assessments. Practical assessments have a described goal to be achieved. Practical assessments of vision examination involve working with real patients and being observed and then engaging in a discussion with the tutor.

Students use the e-learning suites (MOODLE and UDOMY) and they are used for feedback in evaluation of subject matter. Students have to complete mandatory questionnaires after each subject. Assessment in the practicum is realistic and fair. Students gain considerable useful skills in the practicum.

Students have the opportunity to participate in the ERASMUS student exchange programme, but there is not a lot of interest because for most students 6 months is too long to be absent from the College and family and many of them have jobs they do not wish to lose. Students who have taken advantage of the ERASMUS opportunity are satisfied with the exchange. The curriculum has international collaboration in ERASMUS exchange programs with Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences for students and teaching staff.

Students are satisfied with the curriculum and acquired knowledge and skills developed during the theoretical studies and internships. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and alumnus feel that the structure of the study program is logical. Students of all years do not feel over assessed and feel that workload is appropriate. Alumni feel well prepared for the workplace.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> year students and teaching staff always help 1<sup>st</sup> year students. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year students act as tutors but the system is not being used much as the students have good relationships with the lecturers and they report feeling "like a big family".

### Strengths

- An excellent selection and admission process helps to select (the) well-motivated students with very good academic success. The process appears to reduce the drop-out rate.
- Excellent communication between students and lecturers.
- The students' mandatory questionnaires after each subject at the end of every session allow curriculum development and improvement.
- Employers are satisfied with well-prepared alumni fit for the workplace.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- In discussion with representatives of the Estonian Association of Optometrists there is no mandatory registration of graduated optometrists and there is no optometrist certification system. Such a system would improve continuing education of graduated optometrists because they are health care specialists and there is a need to monitor optometrists' qualification and updating of clinical skills. The best alumni in each specialist area as well as the lecturers of the Chair of Optometry could be involved in the continuing education process.
- Staff from the College should investigate, in collaboration with the Estonian Association of Optometrists, developing a centralised register of optometrists.

## 1.3.3. Occupational Therapist (ProfHE)

### **Study programme and study programme development**

#### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans,

- analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
  - ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
  - ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
  - ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

### Comments

The occupational therapy programme has continued to develop since its beginnings in 2000. It is the only study programme in this professional area in Estonia. The objective and learning outcomes are delivered by means of a well-structured curriculum of 240 ECTS with a coherent progressive of 11 appropriate modules over a period of 4 years. The study programme achieves Level 6 of the Estonian revised qualifications framework and is in compliance with the standards of the European Network of Occupational Therapists in Higher Education (ENOTHE) and the requirements of the World Confederation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT). The Self-Assessment Report and discussions with all stakeholders made it clear that programme development takes into account their feedback.

### Strengths

- The use of occupational science conceptual models of practice as part of the curriculum philosophy, such as biopsychosocial model and intentional relationship models, allows cooperation with other similar programmes in Europe and further afield.
- Changes have made to the curriculum, in terms of changes to clinical placement hours, new modules added and others adapted because of employers feedback.
- There is competition for student places with 8 applicants for each place.
- The approval of WFOT gives the study programme international credibility.

### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Employers reported that they would like to be more involved in teaching. Consider how employers/stakeholders can be involved in teaching.

- Students and some employers felt that more practice in hand therapy, splint making and advocacy skills was needed in the curriculum. Consider revising the curriculum learning intentions to facilitate this request.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The learning environment of the College in general is well-lit and decorated comfortably to enable students to enjoy their studies and also to work effectively. The learning kitchen for occupational therapy is well equipped and enables students to practice activities of daily living on each other before using them in the assessment and treatment of patients and clients. The availability of appropriate occupational therapy tools allows students to become familiar with them in a safe environment. Teachers and students have access to a wide range of literature and on-line international occupational therapy journals. These resources allow students to achieve the learning outcomes of the study programme. Resources available are sufficient for the current number of students but may be limited if size of intake to the programme increases.

### Strengths

- The learning kitchen and occupational therapy assessment tools allows students to practice skills they will need in clinical placements.
- Availability of international journals in occupational therapy allows students access to international research in their professional area.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Teachers reported the need to increase the range of special therapeutic tools to allow them to demonstrate the full range of occupational therapy

- interventions. Consider acquisition of additional occupational therapy therapeutic tools.
- The size of the learning kitchen and availability of therapeutic tools may need to be reconsidered if larger numbers of students are accepted.

## Teaching and learning

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The Self-Assessment Report and curriculum structure documents show that a variety of modern teaching and learning approaches are being used, depending on the teacher and the subject. The association with colleges in Sweden, Latvia and Finland assist teachers to use the most current approaches used in other countries in Europe and elsewhere. Students and alumni value teachers who use their practical experience to illustrate the concepts they are teaching. Other stakeholders report some involvement in curriculum development but want more input.

Applied research is undertaken by teachers within the Chair of Occupational Therapy with students taking part. English language classes are compulsory because of the bulk of literature being in English. Students who are not Russian speakers can take an elective subject in Russian because of the need to communicate with Russian speakers living in Estonia.

Assessment of different modules and subjects appear to be objective and transparent and are appropriate to the different topics studied. Assessment of learning outcomes supports international mobility although structure of the curriculum may present barriers to substantial periods of international mobility.

### Strengths

- Students report the programme is coherent and they feel all the subjects start to fit together after the first and subsequent clinical placements.
- Students report that teachers use a wide variety of student-centred teaching and learning activities; the wide variety of teaching and learning approaches enable them to develop good theoretic knowledge and professionalism, including transferable/generic skills.
- Students appreciate involvement in staff applied research in the Chair.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Students reported that the structure of the programme makes it difficult for student international mobility. Review current structure to discern if modifications can be made so that international mobility can be facilitated.
- Increase employer and alumni input to the curriculum council.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

The study programme coordinator has a background in medicine, prior to qualifying as an occupational therapist and is able to provide an overview of subjects and bridge the theory practice gap. The teaching team is very

committed to their students and have a variety of specialist areas in occupational therapy and related subjects in areas such as paediatrics, neurology and learning disabilities. Because of the small number of the full time teachers a number of visiting lecturers are used (both local and international). Some teachers have Professional Higher Diplomas, others Masters' Degrees or are completing Masters' level study in other parts of Europe.

### Strengths

- Staff members meet and coordinate teaching tasks to avoid overlap.
- The teachers are undertaking joint applied research with their students.
- There are good links with Occupational Therapy teachers throughout Europe through ENOTHE.

### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Time for the allocation of research to be undertaken by teachers must be considered.
- Teachers need more access to Master and Doctoral level programmes in occupational therapy. Mechanisms for assuring access should be developed.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students seem generally satisfied with their curriculum, teachers and clinical placements. They report that support mechanisms are available at many levels in the College and every clinical placement has a designated tutor. Drop-out rates are low despite most students working while studying and the profession of

occupational therapy not being well known in Estonia. The low drop-out rate may be attributed to prospective candidates shadowing clinical occupational therapists. Graduate employment is high with more job openings as occupational therapy becomes better understood. Some students have been able to study abroad in Europe through mechanisms such as Erasmus.

Some students stated they enjoyed the opportunity to work with students from the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences on an elective module on "Universal Design".

#### Strengths

- Employers report that students manage well on placements.

#### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Ensure flexibility of study as many students are working.
- Students are not sure if electronic feedback on courses is compulsory or not. Clarification is required in this area.

### 1.3.4. Midwife (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.



### Comments

The curriculum at Tallinn Health Care College for the Midwifery Programme was approved on 21.05.2013. The midwifery qualification is subject to automatic recognition pursuant to the European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC, Article 21. The curriculum complies with the mandated training requirements provided in Article 40 and Annex V, clause 5.5.1. The diploma is listed in Annex V, point 5.2.2. In addition, the Midwifery curriculum fully contains the curriculum of Nursing. The Nursing qualification included with the qualification of Midwifery is subject to automatic recognition pursuant to the European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC, Article 21, as the curriculum complies with the minimum training requirements provided in Article 31 and Annex V, clause 5.2.1. Graduates from the curriculum receive a dual diploma in Nursing and Midwifery. It is important to note that the curricula meet national and international requirements for the professions of Nursing and Midwifery subject to the European parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC. The programme of study also fully complies with the European Union Directive 2013/55/EC.

### Strengths

- Changes in the curricula were made 2013, which resulted from the published National Development Strategy for Midwifery and Nursing.
- New modules have been developed including Health Promotion, General Nursing, Special Nursing and Professional Development. (These new additions are being evaluated positively.)
- Stakeholders are enthused about the modular curricular structure of the midwife programme and indicate it develops a competent midwife.
- The Curriculum Counsel provides an expert evaluation of the curriculum and its development at least once a year.
- Changes in Society have been taken into account in the development of the curriculum.
- International cooperation exists: e.g., a common subject with Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Finland, and the Erasmus + programme enables teacher and student exchange in several countries.
- International projects exist, e.g., Simulation Learning, Midwifery Ethics and Afgan Midwifery staff training.
- The curriculum provides for the development of general nursing skills which ensures students with the possibility of working in other EU countries. (Student feedback during interviews.)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to future curriculum development, collaboration with Tartu Health Care College and the University of Tartu would address the national need for more flexible learning to increase admissions, reduce dropout rates (It should

be noted however that dropout rates are low in the College) and foster further dissemination of knowledge generated and discovered in the College. It is recommended that:

- When engaging in ongoing curricular revision, continue to ensure the curriculum fulfils The European Parliament and Council Directive 2013/55/EU, on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information system (The IMI Regulation).
- Introduce a part time Midwifery Programme of study to increase admissions and reduce drop outs.
- In cooperation with Tartu University, develop a collaborative MSc in Midwifery as employers in health care institutions and students have indicated a need for this level of clinical professional. (Consider a dual qualification in Midwifery and Public Health to meet changing national standards being developed in Primary Care.)
- The applied research being conducted and concluded in the College should be published in international peer reviewed journals so that the knowledge discerned through the applied research can be consumed by Midwives from other countries.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The College has benefited from the renovation of facilities with high technology simulation equipment. Students have indicated that their practice learning is greatly enhanced by use of this equipment. Innovative opportunities exist for further enhanced use of the facilities in the College.

### Strengths

- The midwifery teaching and learning area in the College building is an inviting modernized teaching and learning environment.
- The Simulation Centre is an excellent environment for acquisition of practical skills.
- Simulation equipment in relation to maternal infant/child is of the highest standard, modern and innovative.

- Teaching and learning materials for midwifery students are excellent resources teachers and students (Teacher and Student interview feedback.)
- The library has good learning materials for midwifery students.
- Information technology (SIS and Moodle) specialist, study literature in the library and free access to literature search databases ensure contemporary evidenced-based acquisition of published knowledge.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to learning resources students have requested the addition of a basic text book written in Estonian. This textbook would enhance future curriculum development as well as support teaching and learning strategies. It is recommended that:

- The College either develop a basic text book for midwifery practice and have it published in the Estonian language or undertake translation of a recent basic Midwifery text book published in English. Such an undertaking can be negotiated with Wiley Publishers or Routledge/Taylor Francis Publishers for example.

### **Teaching and learning**

#### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

#### Comments

The College has excellent teaching and learning facilities which have been designed to enhance teaching and learning. Diverse and innovative teaching and learning methods are utilized including simulation (students and teachers), video

conferencing, video recording of skills with immediate possibilities for constructive student and teacher critique, e-learning, roleplay, international courses, and for example Domestic Violence (Teachers and student feedback during interviews, observation of teaching by the Assessment Team.) Mentors are supervising student practice in the clinical environment.

### Strengths

- Midwifery teachers collaborate with each other and stakeholders to ensure practical and theoretical skills are interconnected.
- Practice training is well organized and satisfies students' personal learning skills acquisition and fulfils the requirements of the EU Directives. There is the availability of practice training, training online, mentorship courses in supervision available for mentors supervising students in practice (courses for mentors).
- Special preparation is provided for students so that they are well prepared for internships (Employer feedback during interviews.).
- Feedback is provided to students by teachers through Moodle (teacher feedback during interviews and also through observation by the Assessment Team in the Information Systems Suite.).
- Annual feedback evaluation indicate students are satisfied with the teaching of their specialty subjects, the environment and the professional knowledge of the teaching staff and the student-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- A Quality Council (Quality Assessment Team comprised of teachers and students) has been established to assess student feedback and other feedback regarding teacher's teaching as well as to review programme curricular revisions and other teaching and learning initiatives in the College.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to mentorship programmes, meeting the learning needs of Russian speaking students, ensuring parity in marking and moderating of student written papers and written examinations and assessing for learning deficiencies associated with assessment and support for dyslexic students it is recommended that:

- Additional mentorship courses for mentors be provided by the College (Request from employers of health care institutions during interviews.).
- Estonian language lessons for Russian speaking students continue to be provided (students' requests during interviews.).
- Introduce a moderator and external examiner system to ensue parity in marking.
- Formulate an assessment for dyslexia and make provision for language deficiencies in coursework and examination assessments where this has not already been addressed.

## Teaching staff

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

The national standards for Midwifery teachers to maintain their expertise in practice are being followed. It is readily apparent when visiting the College that the teaching staff are fully committed to the highest standard of teaching. Members of academic staff have pursued advanced degrees (masters' degree level) in teaching either in Estonia (Tartu University's Masters' Degree in Nursing Science) or other European Countries and a number have begun to initiate plans for the attainment of doctoral qualifications. Teachers are engaging in conferences (national and international) that support their discipline specific teaching and collaborate with other members of academic staff in assessing teaching input into the curricula.

### Strengths

- Student's formal evaluations and verbal feedback indicate a high level of satisfaction with midwifery lecturer teaching.
- An internal assessment process for discerning the quality of work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) has been established. This assessment takes into account the quality of academic teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work.
- An academic mentorship process is in place to ensure appropriate development of newly appointed teachers' teaching and assessing skills.
- The College has good mobility and motivated teaching staff who want to be involved in initiatives (such as collaborative applied research. Refer to present collaborative initiatives with Metropolia University for example.).

- The College (teachers) are in close collaboration with hospitals across Estonia.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to obtaining higher degrees, midwives working in the college have recognized a need for doctoral qualifications. Midwifery teachers and students have indicated as it is shown in the Self-Assessment by the College that there is a need to introduce interprofessional programmes of study in order to meet the changing needs of the Estonian society. The Midwifery curriculum is a complex curriculum. Midwifery practice is evolving. In light of the aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- A system for midwifery academic staff with Masters' Degrees is delineated to obtain PhDs and engage in research.
- The College introduce interprofessional courses. Due to world globalization, there is a need for midwives who are dually prepared for roles in public health/primary care such as midwife/physiotherapist or midwife/social worker.
- The College invite midwives from abroad to teach aspects of the curricula on a visiting lecturer basis to meet student requests for knowledge in similarities and differences in practice (Student requests expressed during interviews.).
- Consider collaboration with Tartu University to develop a Master's Degree Programme in Midwifery for teachers and other qualified midwives in practice who presently do not have such a degree or wish to obtain one (Request expressed by Midwifery teachers and employers in health care institutions during interviews.).

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

According to the Self-Assessment Report for Midwifery, students enrolled in the curriculum of Midwifery are motivated and talented, which is confirmed by the admission competition in recent years. There is an average of nine contenders for one student place with drop-outs declining by 7%. In addition, the membership of students in the Student Union is active in relation to management over the last two years. The aforementioned has been substantiated by the Assessment Team.

### Strengths

- Admission standards and associated requirements are sound.
- Students are satisfied with the College's curricular studies and motivated to learn and achieve. (No complaints were expressed by students during interviews.)
- Alumni have expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and indicate the programme of study in the College has prepared them well for midwifery practice.
- Employers are satisfied with student performance and competencies upon qualification. (Employers have expressed a need for more midwifery graduates from the College)
- Students value the College's counselling system and expert counsellors and psychologists (Information obtained from interviews with students.)
- Students value the opportunity to attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students (Information obtained from interviews with students.)
- The College provides excellent student support and is flexible in relation to meeting student needs. (Feedback from students, teachers and psychologists in the College.)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, students have expressed sincere interest in developing expertise in research in order to discern the changing landscape of midwifery practice in Estonia and within this vein to travel more extensively to determine the status of midwifery practice in other European countries. In light of the aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- Student participation in additional midwifery research and development projects should be initiated to support midwifery students' desires to engage in applied research.
- Continue to foster midwifery students' international mobility through the Erasmus scheme.

### 1.3.5. Health Promotion (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

The programme was initiated in 2007 and is unique in Estonia. Accreditation of the curriculum is valid until the year 2017 by the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE). The curriculum meets the European professional standards of health promotion and the graduate will receive the international accreditation of the health promotion specialist. At the beginning of the programme it was identified there was an overlap of knowledge in the courses of the study programme. This issue has been addressed and the programme of study has been considerably improved. The students have good opportunities to choose additional subjects for specialisation.

##### Strengths

- The curriculum of Health Promotion is to be commended with regard to the content as well as logical sequence of the courses.
- The programme is accredited by the International Society for Health Promotion and Education for 2014-2017.
- The curriculum meets the European professional standards of health promotion.

##### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.



- The programme should be further modernised to reduce the burden of factual knowledge and allow time for students to gain critical thinking skills. This should be addressed prior to the 2017 reaccreditation of the curriculum.
- Research should be further developed/extended.
- Practical training is in logical order, but the length of each period is problematic and should be revisited to address revisions.
- The total time of practical training could be extended to enhance skill acquisition and knowledge extension. This was particularly identified as an issue by employers.
- Employers are not involved in the admission process of the students as they would like to be. Identify mechanisms for employers to be involved in the selection and admission process of students.
- Continue to involve alumni, employers and cooperation partners in leading the changes to the programme.
- Explore how students learn about topics such as communication, teamwork and professional language to that these areas can be better facilitated and enhanced.
- Disseminate further information about the health promotion programme and health promotion specialist in the labour market.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The teaching and learning environment is very good. Availability of teaching materials and classrooms is very good and they are effectively used. Resources meet all contemporary requirements, while access to some databases is limited.

### Strengths

- Study materials are up-dated and students have access to most of the databases.
- Resource development is sustainable.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- There is a need to use resources smartly and effectively.
- There is a need for more research databases to be available for teachers and students.
- There is a need to increase resources for recruitment of future staff on higher academic levels.

### **Teaching and learning**

#### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

#### Comments

Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern and effective. Theoretical and practical studies are interconnected. The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility. Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

#### Strengths

- There is well established cooperation with representatives of employers. Employers have provided feedback about curriculum in the Curricula Council and other meetings and are also involved in the College Council.
- A well-established contact system with alumni has been implemented including the establishment of a Facebook section "Health Promoting Faculty". There has also been a successful meeting with alumni in 2015.

- Students provide feedback about the curriculum at Curricula Council meetings and also by discussing curricular issues with teachers in teaching and learning situations.
- The student's tutoring system is functioning well with one responsible teacher for an entire study process. The Student Council also supports students. First year students have advanced students as tutors. There are two psychologists in the College to support students.
- Teaching is underpinned by evidence-based knowledge.
- Learning targets and written guidelines to document practical studies are clear, evidential and facilitative.
- Practical training is well organized. The College provides support for transportation and accommodation for practice outside Tallinn.
- Assessment of academic progress during students' studies and courses is a systematic and transparent process.
- Clear written assessment criteria are in use.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Develop collaborative applied research projects with other chairs (e.g., nursing) in order to further research in health promotion and wellness.
- Extend the practice-period of students to enhance knowledge and skills acquisition.

### **Teaching staff**

#### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teaching staff have adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme. Student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive. Practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.

### Strengths

- There is substantial collaboration between the Health Promotion Programme teachers and visiting lecturers.
- Two of the teachers are presently undertaking study in PhD programmes and one teacher in an MSc programme.
- Teachers are able to apply funding from the College to have a semester for study leave.

### Areas of improvement

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Student's feedback (on teaching staff) after each course is not mandatory; therefore only a limited number of students are providing feedback which compromises the results of feedback. Feedback provision should be mandatory on the part of all students after each course.
- Increase the number of teachers with a PhD degree.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students are motivated and capable. Students are keen to learn and are satisfied with the content and methods of their studies. Students prepare a pre-research paper after their second study year and final research paper in their third study year. Supervisors readily provide assistance and support to students. English is

an absolute requirement for students undertaking the programme. Students attend foreign higher education institutions. The employment rate of graduates is high. Employers are satisfied with professional competencies and social skills of alumni.

### Strengths

- Admission competition of students is 6.5, which is quite high. The standard for student selection is high.
- There is a well-established system for academic progression and mobility for students. Five students per year are participating in intensive programmes abroad.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- The drop-out rate is problematic. Almost all the students are working, thus high workload is not facilitating intensive study. Health promotion specialists are not well paid and this influences drop-out rates. Consideration must be given as to how these issues can be addressed and resolved.
- Personal study plans are not used. It is recommended personal study plans be developed and implemented, which could subsequently reduce drop-out rates.

## 1.3.6. Dental Technician (ProfHE)

### **Study programme and study programme development**

#### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

### Comments

This programme is a modular course consisting of 11 modules. There is a good balance to the modules with a skills escalator that facilitates skills acquisition as the student progresses through the programme. Year groups consist of 12 students. There are no current plans to increase or decrease this number. The modular structure allows learners to meet the programme learning outcomes and involves a range of assessment methods to facilitate learning and skills development.

The Self-Assessment report states:

“Classroom instruction takes place only in the Estonian language. Therefore, no foreign language subjects have been created.”

Students felt that as many text books and learning materials were in English their language skills developed to allow straightforward communication internationally should they wish to work abroad. In addition to this it can be noted from the Self-evaluation report that the curriculum has been developed to align with international standards:

“The curriculum has been compared to the curricula of institutions of higher education of Lithuania (institutions of higher education of Kaunas and Utena), Finland (institutions of higher education of Helsinki and Turku), Latvia (Riga), Iceland (Reykjavik University), Norway (University of Oslo), comparisons can also be found in the published compilation of the theses of the International Week of the College and in specialty publications.”

From the Assessment Team’s inspection it was clear that in terms of teaching, learning, assessment and range of resources available, the programme compares favourably with similar courses across Europe.

There appears to be good cooperation with the TTK University of Applied Sciences in terms of support for teaching; particularly with regard to Materials Science and assistance with the Final Thesis. This agreement is formalized and there may be further scope to develop research links.

Involvement with the Dental School at the University of Tartu appears to be relatively limited though students have visited and worked with dental students, which students found useful. The Self-Assessment report notes some involvement from Tartu:

“The study process takes place in collaboration with partners (Estonian Dental Association, University of Tartu), who, after the question from the Rector of the College whether to reduce the volume of the studies of technology, has notified the public of the necessity to maintain the volume of the studies”

As team working in Dentistry becomes increasingly more important formalizing inter-professional engagement between dental students and dental technician students this should be investigated further and if practical a formalized

agreement arranged. For example Dental students visiting Tallinn Health Care College to meet with technician students and with the visit reciprocated.

An area of development that may need resourcing would be to enhance practical teaching of implants. Whilst staff seemed keen to develop this, when asked why they hadn't already, they commented "it would be too expensive". This should be investigated further to establish costs involved, sustainability, and where this would fit into the curriculum.

When it comes to implementing the aforementioned perhaps implant analogues could be made available from a supplier such as Ankylos, which is the most popular implant system used in Estonia. Staff also suggested the number of implant systems is a barrier to developing this area but the concepts are broadly similar, as confirmed by Alumni. Alumni suggested that the programme should be teaching some practical implant skills.

It is suggested, in the first instance, a procedure involving casting up an open tray implant impression of a Lower Left 6 to allow the student to produce a screw retained implant crown. This would cover key concepts and casting techniques.

### Strengths

- Modular structure of the course allows students' skills to escalate as the course progresses, allowing a straight forward transition to the workplace.
- The paper based assessment of procedures carried out in the laboratory is excellent.
- There are close working relationships with employers, alumni and other stakeholders which allows for close cooperation during student placements and facilitates employment opportunities on graduation.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- A key area of improvement based on discussion from alumni and students would be to allow earlier exposure to the practical elements of fixed prosthodontics.
- Although there is some exposure to implant concepts there should be some practical experience in the laboratory.
- From our interviews with laboratory owners who facilitated student internships, there was a consensus that externally based laboratory owners would benefit from meetings at the college to share best practice. One laboratory owner commented he had suggested such a meeting a number of times but this had not been actioned. The laboratory owner suggested that this should be quarterly, but realistically given availability and practicalities this could be an annual event.
- Investigate developing further inter-professional engagement between Dental Technician Students and Dental Students.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The facilities observed were excellent with adequate space in the laboratories for effective teaching and learning. Both students and staff were happy with the physical environment and learning resources available to them.

The Self-Assessment Report noted:

"The modernization of the infrastructure has been completed by the funding of the action of the European Union in 2012, the renovation of the dental technology teaching laboratory took place. To express satisfaction with the outcome, we could highlight the attitude of the 4th year students when they returned from their internship bases in 2014: "We would like to stay working in such a laboratory with modern equipment."

The Assessment Team's impression from both staff, students, and alumni was a high level of satisfaction with resources available. Students were extremely happy with e-learning resources available to them and felt that MOODLE was utilized to best effect to facilitate their learning.

Students feel there is a wide range of learning materials available and do not feel more needed to be in Estonian as they felt texts in English further enhanced their language skills.

The Self-Assessment Report commented on student exposure to Cad-Cam technology. "For learning about expensive topical technologies, such as the virtual design of dentures (CAD/CAM), the Chair has a simulation program." This teaching may be further enhanced by visiting labs with milling capacity, though this may already be covered in internships.

### Strengths

- A well-resourced course with modern facilities.
- A range of e-learning platforms utilised well by staff and students alike.



## Teaching and learning

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The general content and the structure of the course comprehensively covers key areas with a particular strength being the range and availability of internships, and the practical elements of the course held within the College.

Whilst working in the College laboratories, a good supervision ratio of one supervisor to six students is implemented. Therefore students feel the levels of technical feedback are excellent.

During inspection a range of technical work and the corresponding assessment forms were reviewed. These were found to be appropriate with clear assessment criteria for each procedure carried out. The students and staff feel this is a fair system maximizing opportunity to develop skills in the laboratory.

The subject of remuneration was discussed with providers following the comment from the Self-Assessment Report:

"The volume of the internship in the curriculum has been established to the necessary extent, the organization of the internship is regulated, and the supervision system and comparison of internship experiences are in place. Students select their internship base in accordance with the list approved by the Chair and with the selected internship topic. The internship takes place on the basis of tripartite agreements. A confidentiality contract is awarded for the entire period of study. The internship is supervised by the teaching staff and dental technicians-mentors whose supervision by the College takes place on-site in the internship bases. The students are continually addressing the lack of remuneration of the mentors in their feedback."

This may have already been actioned as the Dental technician action plan notes "Mentors remuneration has increased". Interestingly, as far as providers are

concerned they did not see remuneration for mentoring students as an issue. They accepted that students were producing work and although materials were used they felt that they were happy to be involved in the education of junior colleagues and were satisfied with the current situation. Indeed, one internship provider noted that he did not claim at all.

Laboratories providing internships are regularly visited and new laboratories are inspected prior to being deemed suitable for student placements.

### Strengths

- Extensive range of internships.
- Internships allow relevant work based training with regular visits and communication from College staff to ensure appropriate assessment and support of students.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Currently the assessment forms and portfolio of work completed is paper based. Consideration should be given to developing an electronic assessment database.
- Consider implementing an annual meeting of internship providers at the College to discuss best practice and to provide further information regarding assessment and feedback.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

The teaching staff interviewed were highly motivated and students commented favourably on their teaching skills and general availability if they had any concerns they wished to raise. This corresponds with the Self-Assessment document where the following observations were made:

“The results of the anonymous feedback received from students through the SIS are presented to students and are analysed with the lecturers at development interviews. In the students’ feedback, the positive aspects highlighted in the curriculum is that the theoretical and practical studies are carried out by specialists in their field who bring life examples; the knowledge and teaching methods of the lectures through demonstration are highly valued.”

The Self-Assessment document reported the following staffing levels:

“During the reporting period, the Chair has three full-time staff members: Head of the Chair-docent, a lecturer, and a teacher (respectively Ph.D., MA up to June 2015 and MA).”

It was noted during the review that the Head of the Chair had recently retired and there is a substitute Head of the Chair.

From discussions it was noted there is currently one full time member of staff with a part time member of staff hopeful that she will soon be made full time. The Assessment Team was advised the new Head of the Chair will be appointed to start position in August 2016. In the Assessment Team’s opinion this interim gap does not appear ideal from a management and leadership perspective.

There are a range of part time staff who feel well supported by the College. An induction and mentoring process is in place. Didactic teaching is also provided from lecturers within the College and also from the University of Applied Sciences.

Staff development was discussed and although the full time member of staff was keen to be involved in research, due to workload, commitments opportunities have been limited. The temporary Head of the Chair mentors from a leadership and management perspective.

Staff noted that they had an annual appraisal system which they found beneficial in signposting areas for personal development.

### Strengths

- Enthusiastic, well-motivated staff.
- Wide range of academic speakers.
- Satisfaction with staff appraisals.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- More emphasis should be placed on staff development and clearer career pathways
- Succession planning needs to be implemented for not only Head of Chair but lecturer positions as well.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

During the review 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students were met in addition to 2 recently qualified alumni. Students were driven to study as Dental Technicians mainly through an interest in working with their hands and making a valuable contribution to society.

All felt the course met their expectations and alumni felt fully prepared for the workplace on graduation. They felt assessment throughout the course was fair. In addition they felt the course workload was appropriate. Students feel that their feedback of both teaching and lab based elements is acted on to implement change.

There is a robust selection process for course admission assessing not only academic aptitude but manual dexterity.

From the Self-evaluation report there is an extremely low dropout rate from the course. In 2012/13 academic a year 1 student appears to have left the course but further to that there have been no dropouts from the course.

Students have opportunities to be involved in Erasmus exchanges with opportunities to visit Lithuania, Finland, and Latvia.

Students were generally happy with their final assessment which involved submission of a theses on Dental technology. They felt there was scope within the topic list to develop their own interests even though topics for the thesis were set by academic staff members.

### Strengths

- Currently 100% graduate employment with students feeling well prepared for the workplace and employers happy with levels of proficiency of graduating students.
- An excellent selection process assessing academic aptitude, language skills, and also manual dexterity. Students feel that this process is fair and staff also feel that the very low dropout levels from the course is down to good selection initially.
- Students feel well supported by academic staff both academically and pastorally.
- The students have a paper based portfolios of work completed which acts as an excellent record of competence and will facilitate students seeking employment outside Estonia.
- Excellent working relationships with commercial laboratories.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- After discussion with Alumni and Dental Laboratory owners it was felt that as a centralised register of Dental Technicians becomes more established, graduating students should be automatically placed on this register by the college.
- In interviews with Alumni there did not appear to be prizes for students who were for example best ceramicist. Prizes could be sponsored by either commercial laboratories or professional associations. This would allow students to develop their Curriculum Vitae and strive to excellence throughout the programme.

## 1.3.7. Assistant Pharmacist (ProfHE)

### **Study programme and study programme development**

#### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.

- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

### Comments

Overall the Assistant Pharmacist programme is a well-organized programme. It meets the standards of Higher Education with motivated staff in a well-functioning modern facility. The programme leads to qualified Assistant Pharmacists which meets the demands of society and the expectations of the students.

The teachers, together with the Head of the programme, work together to ensure that there is a logical sequence and coherence in the different subject modules. The staff and the Head of the programme ensure a high quality programme by continuing development of the content which is influenced by close contact with students, employers and alumni. An increased comparison with similar programmes internationally is ongoing, which will affect the quality of education and student mobility. The assessment of the programme is performed in a well organised way in cooperation with management, teachers, students and employers. The programme reflects flexibility in order to continuously make improvements related to changes in society.

### Strengths

- Recent introduction of work simulation in a pharmacy.
- The introduction of the possibility for students to choose a graduation thesis instead of the final examination. Together with the course "Research and Methodology Development" during their studies the students will get an introduction to research.
- Teachers maintain an awareness of the need to develop students' general competence in communication capacity through improving students' acquisition of language and digital skills during the programme.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- As indicated in the interview of employers the curriculum should be modernized to an international standard by increasing social pharmacy including customer/patient care and related skills.

- Students are satisfied with the curriculum. However, some voices have indicated a need to increase pharmacology and understanding of the interactions between drugs.
- Based on interviews and the pronounced improvements in the Self-Assessment Report the College plans to bring applied research closer to the needs of employers. It is questionable as to whether this approach will increase the quality of publications and graduation theses. It is recommended more collaborative academic fundamental research is conducted at this juncture.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The newly renovated facilities at the College including new laboratories together with modern teaching materials and equipment fulfils the current requirements and strengthens the possibility to further develop education and training on the Assistant Pharmacist programme.

### Strengths

- Both management, teachers and students emphasized the importance of appropriate new teaching rooms and laboratories.
- Installation of new equipment like GC-MS and LC-UV has proven important for teaching of modern analysis and understanding of e.g., the monographs in the European Pharmacopea.
- The simulation capacity to train the students in pharmacy work is excellent.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Increased ratio of textbooks in English is required.

- As indicated in the interview with the employers, the need for Assistant Pharmacists is much higher than the actual number of current students upon qualification. Management of the College should consider ways to find resources for future increases in students numbers, e.g., working to obtain additional funding.

## Teaching and learning

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The performance of students in meeting planned objectives in the teaching and learning process is closely followed by the Chair in collaboration with the teachers and the Curriculum Board. E-learning has been introduced in the programme. The important practical training is assessed by mentors and discussed with the staff.

### Strengths

- Close contact between the students with their teachers facilitates teaching and learning.
- The Chair is strongly involved in following the teaching process and offers feedback to the teachers.
- Reaction to the feedback from students, teachers and employers has resulted in improvement of teaching methodology and teaching materials.
- Establishment of an evaluation committee representing professionals outside the college.
- Well organised practical work supervised by responsible mentors who provide feedback to the College regarding the improvement of students' skills acquisition.



## Teaching staff

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teaching staff have demonstrated a strong motivation and positive view toward collaboration with a mutual aim of developing the curriculum to high international standards. Assessment of the planned learning outcomes is undertaken seamlessly during the entire educational process. The ability of students is measured by examinations after each subject and also by either a final exam or a shorter research project.

### Strengths

- A highly motivated teaching staff.
- Didactic training of the teachers has been increased to acquire new teaching techniques.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Due to increased international mobility there is a need for improved ability in understanding and communication in English. This is strongly recommended both for teachers and students.
- It would be valuable for teachers to have possibilities for continuing development of their education especially through closer contact with research not only in applied science but also in fundamental science in cooperation with other academic institutions/Universities.

- As indicated during the interviews and from the Self-Assessment Report the College wants to expand its international network. However, the network today is limited and should include more contacts with Faculties of Pharmacy in Western Europe. It is recommended that the College make it possible for teachers to collaborate more closely with other programmes in pharmacy which could give the students a broader experience.

## Students

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Both students in the current educational programme – first, second and third year – and alumni expressed a positive view on the study programme and its educational process. Students are extremely motivated and the drop-out rate is low. This can be a result of the selection of students in the admission process, which is done using both a theoretical examination and interviews. Students' problems during their studies are addressed and resolved in a professional way in which teachers, management and psychologist are involved. An increasing possibility for students to engage in international studies e.g., through the ERASMUS programme, is emphasized and encouraged.

### Strengths

- The admission process of students is very well organised and results in selection of highly motivated students.
- A low drop-out rate is dependent on a motivated staff and organised counselling system.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Feedback given by students should be made mandatory due to the low percent of students giving feedback following the completion of courses.

- The College should consider ways to increase the possibilities for international contacts and further studies for third year students with countries in Western Europe.
- It is apparent that some students need to work during their studies for financial reasons. The College should consider ways (e.g., financial grants/secondments from employing organisations) to overcome this problem and work toward the possibility of developing a full time study programme.

## 2. Assessment report of SPG at Tartu Health Care College

### 2.1. Introduction

The year 1811 is considered to be the founding of Tartu Health Care College. This educational institution has provided education and training for 204 years and has been a professional higher education institution since 2005.

All seven professional higher education curricula of the College belong to the study programme group of health care, following common structural and organisational rules and strategic objectives of the College.

The seven programmes under assessment are as follows:

- Basic Nursing Education
- Specialised Nursing Education
- Midwife
- Biomedical Laboratory Science
- Environmental Health Specialist
- Radiography
- Physiotherapy

#### **Number of students:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Physiotherapy	102	104	91	94	94
Basic Nursing Education	588	609	570	575	582
Midwife	148	148	137	130	116
Radiography	128	121	102	91	79
Biomedical Laboratory Science	113	106	90	89	78
Environmental Health Specialist	51	51	55	46	49
Specialised Nursing Education	47	21	47	43	59
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1177</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>1057</b>

Source: HaridusSILM

**Number of admissions:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Physiotherapy	33(28)	33(30)	29(30)	30(32)	29(32)
Basic Nursing Education	164(160)	165(170)	128(155)	142(144)	183(186)
Midwife	33(30)	29(25)	26	26	26
Radiography	29(26)	26(20)	20(21)	21(22)	21(22)
Biomedical Laboratory Science	24(20)	19(20)	24	22(24)	22(26)
Environmental Health Specialist	24(18)	14(16)	15(16)	15(16)	15(16)
Specialised Nursing Education	0(15)	0(43)	0(43)	0(30)	33(34)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>307(297)</b>	<b>286(324)</b>	<b>242(315)</b>	<b>256(294)</b>	<b>329(342)</b>

Sources: HaridusSILM. The College's data on the admission of students are presented in the parenthesis (according to the Self-Evaluation Report p. 34).

**Number of graduates:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Physiotherapy	26	33	19	26
Basic Nursing Education	127	140	132	127
Midwife	17	26	22	23
Radiography	23	32	28	24
Biomedical Laboratory Science	17	27	15	20
Environmental Health Specialist	11	7	17	8
Specialised Nursing Education	37	14	34	31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>259</b>

Source: HaridusSILM

**Number of interruptions:**

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Physiotherapy	7	12	11	10
Basic Nursing Education	-	73	50	70
Midwife	13	13	14	11
Radiography	13	8	9	10
Biomedical Laboratory Science	16	14	15	19
Environmental Health Specialist	6	8	7	6
Specialised Nursing Education	6	7	3	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>135</b>

Source: HaridusSILM

## 2.2. General findings and recommendations at study programme group level

The Tartu Health Care College (herein termed the College) offers a broad range of programmes related to the delivery of healthcare in Estonia. The College is located in the Southern Region of Estonia and provides formal education within the domain of the adult education system. It engages in the education and training of undergraduate degree and graduate specialist qualified health care professionals, in-service education, training, applied research and development. This quality assessment addresses curricula, teaching and learning, resources, teaching staff and students in the programmes identified in section 2.1. It should be noted that the Nursing and Midwifery Curricula meet national and international requirements for the professions of Nursing and Midwifery subject to the European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC. It should be further noted that all curricula taught within the College meet national and international requirements for the professions.

### Main Strengths

The following strengths are of particular note:

- The College building environment has been rebuilt to the standards of a state of the art facility which provides an inviting modernized teaching and learning environment.
- The Simulation Centre is an excellent environment for acquisition of practical skills.
- Simulation equipment is of the highest standard in most instances.
- Teaching and learning materials are excellent resources for teachers and students (Teacher and Student interview feedback.); particularly in the new modern library.
- The library is in outstanding condition with open study areas and individual session areas.
- Academic/teacher research involves students and has been published to the highest standard through Estonian and international journals. (Many publications that have been published internally are now ready for international publication.)
- Research and development projects are in process with the possibility of conducting international collaborative applied research.
- Specialists in counselling and theology skills are available to counsel students. (Feedback from interviews with teachers and students)
- Stakeholders are enthused about the modular curricular structure and indicate it develops a competent practitioners.
- There are excellent clinical practice placements with a sound mentoring system in place.
- Information technology with specialist, study literature in the library and free access to literature search databases ensure contemporary evidenced-based acquisition of published knowledge.

- Academic/teaching staff facilitate student learning through progressive teaching and learning techniques.
- Drop-out rates within many of the programmes of study are low indicating good student retention.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a moderator and external examiner system to ensure parity in marking.
- Use the simulation laboratory equipment and other recently acquired equipment for the purpose of continuing education programmes which are multi-professional and applied research.
- At present teaching staff have limited time to focus on obtaining higher degrees because of their heavy teaching loads. Delineate a programme for teachers to obtain PhDs and engage further in applied research.
- Involve more foreign lectures in teaching activities.
- Increase the number of teachers with a PhD degree.
- There is no reward for teacher excellence. A reward system should be developed and implemented.
- There seem to be limited opportunities for career development within teaching staff. Consider how career development can be enhanced.
- Students are not sure whether feedback in courses is compulsory or not, Clarify whether feedback is mandatory and encourage more students to provide feedback on their experience of teaching and facilitation of learning.
- Provide information to students as to how their feedback is used to make changes in the curriculum.

## 2.3. Strengths and areas for improvement of study programmes by assessment areas

### 2.3.1. Basic Nursing Education (ProfHE); Specialised Nursing Education (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of

- the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
  - ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
  - ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

Curriculum development is conducted in cooperation with students, employers, higher education institutions, alumni and other internal and external partners. Orientation of the College is toward its stakeholders.

### Strengths

- There is an evolving curriculum that changes to meet healthcare institutional needs.
- Sound budgetary control supports its educational programmes.
- Utilisation of modern information systems promotes effective communication.
- The College is commended on the fact that employers (stakeholders) have indicated that there is high level of practice ability on the part of students and minimal to no gap between student practice as taught in the College and practice in the institution's clinical environment.
- Students are involved in the curriculum review/development/revision process.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Clarify the institution of NANDA with stakeholders/employers. Do this through institution of regular clinical rotations of lecturers within institutions. In addition, examine what is happening in other countries in relation to the introduction and use of NANDA. This acquisition of knowledge can facilitate problem solving in NANDA implementation in the clinical environment.
- Use the simulation laboratory equipment and other recently acquired equipment for the purpose of continuing education programmes which are multi-professional and applied research.



## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The College has adequate resources within its teaching and learning environments to sustain high quality teaching and learning within the domains of education (knowledge), practice and research. The College's teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment are highly praised by teaching staff, stakeholders and students. The College has produced an internal series of research publications in the Estonian language that are available to the Estonian population. Financial resources/support is available to achieve stipulated objectives in the study programme.

### Strengths

- The College maintains sound budgetary control to support its educational programmes.
- The learning environment is bright, cheerful and innovative. It possesses good skills lab facilities and in the main good equipment for simulation training.
- There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and data base searching tools available in a fully modernized Library.
- There is flexible access to databases.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as indicated in the site-visit during the interview with teachers and students there is a risk of not having enough equipment to meet student demand in skills acquisition sessions because the students' study groups are fairly large. In addition, the market has developed new simulation equipment/models which are required to keep pace with other simulation facilities in Estonia and other European countries.

- Consider reducing the number of students in study groups by timetabling additional seminars. (This may have an effect on the number of teachers required to teach skills acquisition. One solution may be to have senior nursing students mentor junior students in 'after school' – 'out of hours' scheduled sessions.)
- Review simulation laboratories in Estonia and abroad (for example Tallinn Health Care College's state of the art simulation centre and City University London's/Bart's Health simulation centres) as benchmarks for new concepts in simulation.

## Teaching and learning

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The process of teaching and learning in the College has been identified in the Self-Assessment Document and site visit as supporting students' individual learning needs and social development. Furthermore, the process of teaching and learning is flexible, and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes. Academics have organized practical training to support achievement of planned learning outcomes which meets the needs of the stakeholders.

### Strengths

- The College has competent teaching staff for the utilization of modern teaching and learning methods.
- Students obtain excellent practice experiences.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to students, it has been identified that there is no moderation and external examination process in place within the programmes to ensure parity in marking. A process for the assessment of dyslexia, that is not identified in the gymnasiums, has not been initiated. There is some evidence of overlap between examinations and the completion of coursework papers which places an undue stressor on students and in some instances may influence the outcome of students' work.

The scheduling and assessment of learning outcomes should be reviewed to ensure marking is appropriate, transparent and objective.

- Introduce a moderator and external examiner system to ensure parity in marking.
- Review module time tables to ensure overlap in the submission of coursework papers and sitting of examinations is alleviated.
- Formulate an assessment for dyslexia and make provision for language deficiencies in coursework and examination assessments where this is not already in place.
- Institute a system whereby teachers can engage more frequently in clinical practice in order to more effectively evaluate student acquisition of professional practice skills.
- Use the simulation laboratory equipment for the purpose of continuing education programmes which are multi-professional and applied research.
- Introduce Problem Based Learning.

### **Teaching staff**

#### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

The College's teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research and with partners/stakeholders/other higher education institutions (e.g., practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian and foreign higher education institutions). Teaching staff are routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.

Teaching staff in general have adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning in the curricula of basic nursing education and nursing specialization.

In the main academic teaching staff are young to middle age holding Master's Degrees. High teaching demands reduce the potential for teachers to be allocated time to obtain their PhD or engage in the conduct of research (note that students have indicated they want to be engaged in research projects).

### Strengths

- Student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- Teaching staff are engaged in professional and teaching-skills development which enhances the teaching skills and the learning experience of students.
- Teaching staff are competent in utilization of the skills lab facilities and simulation centre for the development of competency based training.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

There are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, at present teaching staff have limited time to focus on obtaining higher degrees because of their heavy teaching loads.

- Delineate a programme for teachers to obtain PhDs and engage further in applied research.
- Some teachers need training courses on how to use the simulation equipment for teaching purposes. Ensure a system is in place so that all academic teaching staff involved in the teaching of simulation are familiar with the equipment.
- Involve foreign lectures in teaching activities.
- Research publications that have been produced internally in the Estonian language should be translated into English and circulated widely. There is valuable knowledge that has been discerned from the research that has been undertaken by academic teaching staff in the College. This knowledge should be made available to a wider reading audience globally.
- Institute a system whereby nursing teachers can engage in clinical practice for more than two weeks at a time (e.g., one or two semesters) to remain current in practice.
- Review the present succession plan and discern career enhancement possibilities for teachers.

## Students

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

According to the Self-Assessment Document for basic nursing and nursing specialisation, students enrolled in the curriculum are motivated and talented, which is confirmed by the admission competition in recent years. In addition, the membership of students in the College's Student Council/Union is active in relation to review/development/revision of the College's curricula. The aforementioned has been substantiated by the Assessment Team.

### Strengths

- Admission standards and associated requirements are sound.
- Students obtain excellent practice experiences. Students are satisfied with the College's curricular studies and motivated to learn and achieve. (No complaints were expressed by students during interviews.)
- Alumni have expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and indicate the programme of study in the College has prepared them well for practice.
- Employers are satisfied with student performance and competencies upon qualification.
- Students value the College's counselling system and expert counsellors and psychologists (Information obtained from interviews with students.)
- Students value the opportunity to attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students (Information obtained from interviews with students.)
- There is a central focus on utilization of the Erasmus Scheme which is highly valued in the College.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For

example, students have expressed sincere interest in developing expertise in research in order to expand their knowledge of practice underpinned by evidence. In addition, dropout levels in the nursing specialisation programme could be lower. In light of the aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- Student participation in the College's research and development programme should be initiated to support the students' desires to expand their knowledge of practice underpinned by evidence.
- Consider the extension of the period of time to complete Nursing Specialisation Programmes either through elongation of the full-time programme and/or the introduction of a part-time programme to reduce dropout.

### 2.3.2. Physiotherapy (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

The study programme is coordinated jointly with that of Environmental Health Science. This collaboration seems to work well. The physiotherapy study programme complies with Estonian (Level 6) and European professional standards and those of the World Confederation of Physical Therapy. The programme is of three years duration, worth 180 ECTS and prepares graduates to meet the requirements of the labour market and Master's level study at the University of Tartu. A similar (Bachelor's) level study programme is run at the University of Tartu.

The syllabus is divided into three modules, one of which is the College-wide module of Personal and Professional Development. Objectives and learning outcomes are appropriate for the subject area and the level of study. Curriculum content, teaching and learning approaches and assessment methods are current and innovative. Required professional competencies and skills are charted against learning outcomes. Students have good opportunities to choose additional subjects for specialisation. Student feedback is taken into account in the continuing development of the programme and learning environment of the College. However, students are not always clear as to how feedback from them is used to make changes in the curriculum. Clinical placements are integrated with College-based theory and practice. This accounts for 30% of the programme and complies with WCPT requirements. Employers and placement supervisors have excellent collaboration with the study programme coordinator, teachers and involvement in teaching and placement supervision.

### Strengths

- Curriculum development is supported by applied research, networking and collaboration with partners in Estonia and throughout Europe.
- The learning environment and curriculum structure facilitate learning in accordance with student needs.
- Final thesis defence committees involve representatives from the professional association, employers and teaching staff.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Students reported a need for a closer association between the teaching of theory and its application in neurology and physio-neurology.
- Provide information to students as to how their feedback is used to make changes in the curriculum.
- The Assessment Team suggests establishing a closer communication system with the BSc in Physiotherapy study programme team at the University of Tartu to reduce possible overlap and competition.

## **Resources**

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

Resources available are sufficient for the needs of the present number of students. The general environment of the College is conducive to learning and the subject specific teaching rooms for physiotherapy; gymnasium, massage room and exercise therapy room are appropriate in size and furnishings for students to practice their skills. Appropriate learning resources, both paper-based and electronic are current and available.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Consider equipment, rooms and learning resources if student numbers increase.
- Consider costs of replacing specialist equipment and how and where funding can be obtained for replacing specialist equipment.

## **Teaching and learning**

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

Student-centred learning approaches are currently being used with plans to move towards problem based learning. The process of teaching and learning allows students to integrate theory and practice and prepares them for placements in clinical settings. The assessment on placements is considered fair. It has been reported that some placements use their own assessment form in addition to the College form. Supervisors and employers report that students' ethical behaviour is excellent and have a high level of professionalism, although their



communication skills are not always appropriate in difficult situations. Teaching and learning approaches employing group discussion are appreciated and valued and there is opportunity for some specialisation in the curriculum.

Many graduates also enter the Master's programme at the University of Tartu. Teachers and students have an opportunity to engage in professional and educational links across Europe; in particular in Latvia, Lithuania and Finland, through attendance at conferences run by the European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education. There are plans to undertake joint teaching in research methods and thesis preparation with colleagues in the Environmental Health Specialist programme.

Students felt generally supported by staff and were able to discuss problems face to face or provide feedback anonymously. However, students felt that students with family responsibilities were not always well managed in relation to their teaching and learning needs.

### Strengths

- There are good links with European Network of Physiotherapy in Higher Education.
- There are links with the Master's programme in Physiotherapy at the University of Tartu.
- Student-centred learning is evident, in particular problem based learning.
- The curriculum coordinator and teaching staff analyse and develop systematically the teaching and learning methods used in the study process.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Applied research should be incorporated more thoroughly into the teaching and learning process.
- Consider ways to equip students to manage difficult situations when engaged in clinical placements.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is

- positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
  - ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
  - ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
  - ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

All teachers have at least Master's level education and some have a PhD. Many are involved in research and have published research articles with the University of Tartu and staff and students have won international prizes. The strength of the College is the commitment of teachers to its students, but there does not seem to be clear career structure or rewards for teaching excellence within the assessed programme of study.

Overall students rated their teachers positively and felt well supported. However students felt that students with family responsibilities were not always well managed in relation to their teaching and learning needs.

### Strengths

- Teachers have achieved publications at international level.
- There is a good commitment of teachers to their students and level of support

### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Increase the number of teachers with a PhD degree.
- Improve the opportunities for career development.
- Provide some recognition of teaching excellence.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.

- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students seem to be motivated and capable. Students have opportunities for international mobility. The graduate employment rate is high. Student drop-out rates are similar to most other study programmes in the College.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Consider ways to support students with family responsibilities needs.
- Consider reasons for drop-out of students and strengthen the admission process.

## 2.3.3. Environmental Health Specialist (ProfHE)

### **Study programme and study programme development**

#### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

### Comments

The study programme is coordinated jointly with that of Physiotherapy and this collaboration seems to work well. The curriculum is innovative and meets European professional standards. There are good opportunities for students to choose additional subjects for specialisation. Graduates can start work immediately after finishing their studies. There is excellent collaboration with employers and the needs of the labour market are taken into account when developing the curriculum. Employers are involved in thesis supervision. Defence committees of final theses involve the representatives of professional associations, employers and teaching staff.

### Strengths

- Curriculum development is supported by applied research, networking and collaboration with the partners.
- There is excellent collaboration with employers.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Practical training in the curriculum is considered to be low (16%) in relation to other programmes of study in Tartu Health Care College. Practical training should be increased to be in line with other programmes of study in the College. (Note that a new version of the curriculum, involving 22% of practical training, was adopted by the College Council on 30.03.16 which facilitates some improvement in practical training.
- Improve the use of student feedback, including the general feedback on the environment of the College.

## **Resources**

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

Resources available are sufficient for the needs of the present number of students. The general environment of the College is very good. Appropriate learning resources, both paper-based and electronic are current and available. The learning environment facilitates learning in accordance with student needs.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Consider equipment, rooms and learning resources needed if student numbers increase.

## **Teaching and learning**

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

Teaching is moving from a teacher-centred towards student-centred approach. Teaching and learning approaches using group discussion are appreciated and valued by students. The process of teaching and learning allows students to integrate theory and practice. Students' ethical behaviour is excellent and students have a high level of professionalism. Students feel generally supported by staff and are able to discuss problems face to face or provide feedback anonymously. Some placements use their own assessment form in addition to the College's form.

### Strengths

- Student-centred learning, in particular problem based learning is evolving.
- The curriculum coordinator in collaboration with the teaching staff, analyse and develop systematically the study methods used in the study process.
- Integration of teaching with Physiotherapy is evident.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Applied research should be incorporated more thoroughly into the teaching and learning teaching process.
- Consider resources utilized in practice placements to discern their adequacy; particularly in relation to students with family needs.
- The communication skills of some students could be better. Mechanisms should be incorporated into the study programme that teach students how to stay calm and communicate effectively in difficult situations.
- Involve students in more group discussion sessions during their studies as these are appreciated and used well in learning by students.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teachers have achieved publications at a very high international level. However, there does not seem to be a clear career structure for teachers or rewards for teaching excellence.

### Strengths

- The commitment of teachers to their students is apparent.
- Several teachers are involved in research and have published excellent research articles with researchers at the University of Tartu.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- There is no reward for teacher excellence. A reward system should be developed and implemented.
- There seem to be limited opportunities for career development within teaching staff. Consider how career development can be enhanced.
- Increase the number of teachers with a PhD degree.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students are motivated, committed and capable. Students are not necessarily understand how their feedback is used to make changes in the curriculum. The drop-out rate of students is a problem. Almost all students are working which impacts on the completion of the study programme. Students have opportunities for international mobility and the graduate employment rate is high.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Employers are not involved in the admission process of the students and would like to engage in this process. Consider ways that employer involvement can be achieved.
- An interview should be incorporated into the admission procedure so that motivated students are selected and subsequently the drop-out rate decreases.
- Identify mechanisms to better support/manage students with family responsibilities.

### 2.3.4. Midwife (ProfHE)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

The curriculum at Tartu Health Care College for the Midwifery Programme was approved on 18.06.2014. The midwifery qualification is subject to automatic recognition pursuant to the European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC, Article 21. The curriculum complies with the mandated training requirements provided in Article 40 and Annex V, clause 5.5.1. The diploma is listed in Annex V, point 5.2.2. In addition, the Midwifery curriculum fully contains the curriculum of Nursing. The Nursing qualification included with the qualification of Midwifery is subject to automatic recognition pursuant to the European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC, Article 21, as the curriculum



complies with the minimum training requirements provided in Article 31 and Annex V, clause 5.2.1. Graduates from the curriculum receive a dual diploma in Nursing and Midwifery. It is important to note that the curricula meet national and international requirements for the professions of Nursing and Midwifery subject to the European parliament and Council Directive 2005/36/EC. The programme of study also fully complies with the European Union Directive 2013/557EC.

### Strengths

- The curriculum is modular and has been developed in collaboration with employers, the Estonian Midwifery Association, national and international advisors academic staff, alumni and students.
- Theory is completely integrated with practice.
- Curriculum evaluations involve critical review not only within the College but also in cooperation with placement partners, the Estonian Midwifery Association and senior managers within health care institutions.
- Academic responses to student and stakeholder feedback are positive and action is taken to recommendations to revisions of study.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to future curriculum development, collaboration with Tallinn Health Care College and Tartu University would address the national need for more flexible learning to increase admissions, reduce dropout rates (It should be noted however that dropout rates are low in the College.) and foster further dissemination of knowledge generated and discovered in the College, it is recommended that:

- The College should ensure the curriculum continues to fulfil The European Parliament and Council Directive 2013/55/EU, on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System (The IMI Regulation).
- Collaboration with Tallinn Health Care College and Tartu University should be undertaken to develop a Masters' Degree in Midwifery. (Consider a triple qualification in Midwifery/Nursing and Public Health to meet changing National Standards being developed in Primary Care. It is noted that graduates of the Midwifery Curriculum also receive a Nursing Qualification with competencies to practice in primary care environments; however, an expressed need for a qualification in Public Health with a public health administrative/management component was expressed in interviews. Therefore the qualification desired by interviewees should be considered as a triple qualification: Midwifery, Nursing and Public Health.

- The applied research being conducted and concluded in the College should be published in international peer reviewed journals so that the knowledge discerned through the applied research can be consumed by Midwives from other countries.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The College has benefited from the construction of new modern and innovative facilities with, in the main, high technology simulation equipment. Students have indicated that their practice learning is greatly enhanced by use of this equipment. Support is available for the staff and the students (the educational technologist and three IT specialist, Lab Technicians, two librarians). Information technology (SIS, Moodle), specialist study literature stocks and free access to the databases in the Library facilitates student learning in relation to evidence based practice.

### Strengths

- The new study building and study environment supports the study activities, e.g. independent learning, preclinical learning (skills labs), group work, equipped with contemporary presentation technology.
- The simulation centre enables student-centred preclinical practice.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to dissemination of knowledge there is a considerable amount of excellent applied research knowledge that has been accumulated in College publications that is not available to English speaking practicing midwives in other countries throughout Europe (and globally). In addition, technology is

changing rapidly in relation to simulation equipment. This requires Colleges globally to continually upgrade resources within the simulation field.

- There is a need to translate the Estonian language published applied research into English and publish it in English language peer reviewed journals to disseminate the valuable knowledge discovered in the College's applied research projects.
- Simulation equipment meets the standards for practical training, however some of the equipment is aging. Therefore, a priority list with discerned budget for the purchase of new/additional equipment should be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Research.

## Teaching and learning

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The College has excellent facilities which have been designed to enhance teaching and learning. Clinical practice places are available for internship. Midwifery teachers act as mentors supervising students in clinical practice. Practice training is organized well and functions well (Direct observation of practice sessions by the Assessment Team.). Applied research is being undertaken and utilized in teaching.

### Strengths

- Flexibility in studies has been introduced.
- Midwifery teachers use diverse teaching methods. New models and methods that advance innovation in teaching and learning are actively being considered.

- The training programme which the College has developed for mentors is strengthening the assessment processes in practice.
- Student support is flexible in relation to meeting students' learning needs.
- All midwifery teachers engage in clinical practice.
- Research, development and innovation projects are integrated with study processes involving academic staff and students.
- Feedback to students is continual. (There is supporting evidence of good discussions with students in the Assessment Team's notes from interviews with students.).
- Clinical educators indicated that students were ready to undertake their clinical placements due to the theoretical and practical skills learned in the College.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to mentorship programmes, ensuring parity in marking and moderating of student written papers and written examinations and assessing for learning deficiencies associated with assessment and support for dyslexic students it is recommended that:

- Additional mentorship courses for mentors be provided by the College (Request from employers of health care institutions during interviews.).
- For the purpose of parity in assessment of student's papers and examinations, introduce a moderator and external examiner system (International Standard).
- In line with what is presently happening in other European Countries and North America it is recommended that an assessment for dyslexia be developed and implemented to identify and support dyslexic students. Formulate an assessment for dyslexia and make provision for language deficiencies in coursework and examination assessments where this has not already been addressed.

### **Teaching staff**

#### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and

- practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
  - ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

There are teaching staff with appropriate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning. Members of academic staff have pursued advanced degrees at masters' degree level; teachers work as midwives about 50% of their full working time. The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).

It is readily apparent when visiting the College that the teaching staff are fully committed to the highest standard of teaching. Teachers are engaging in conferences (national and international) that support their discipline specific teaching and collaborate with other members of academic staff in assessing teaching input into the curricula.

### Strengths

- There is cooperation of teachers on teaching the midwifery curriculum as well as across the nursing curricula.
- Student's formal evaluations and verbal feedback indicate a high level of satisfaction with midwifery lecturer teaching (Identified in interviews with students.).
- An internal assessment process for discerning the quality of work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) has been established. This assessment takes into account the quality of academic teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work.
- An academic mentorship process is in place to ensure appropriate development of newly appointed teachers' teaching and assessing skills.
- Midwifery teachers with part-time teaching posts are employed in clinical facilities.
- Mentors from clinical settings who are also part-time teachers, act as mentors supervising the students in practice training.
- Midwifery teachers in the College engage in continuing education that involves the acquisition of new teaching methods for simulation activities.
- The College has introduced a sociology lecturer who possesses a background in Theology. Taking advantage of this individual's knowledge can facilitate student learning about cultural, religious and spiritual differences within Estonia's emerging multi-cultural society.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, as it relates to obtaining higher degrees, midwives working in the College have recognized a need for doctoral qualifications. Midwifery teachers and students have indicated there is a need to introduce interprofessional programmes of study in order to meet the changing needs of the Estonian society. The Midwifery curriculum is a complex curriculum and midwifery practice is evolving. In light of the aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- Consider collaboration with Tallinn Health Care College and Tartu University to develop a Master's Degree programme in Midwifery for teachers and other qualified midwives in practice who presently do not have such a degree or wish to obtain one (Request expressed by Midwifery teachers and employers in health care institutions during interviews.).
- It is recommended that a system for midwifery academic staff with Masters' Degrees be delineated to obtain PhDs and engage in research.
- The College should consider the introduction of inter-professional courses. Due to world globalization, there is a need for midwives who are dually prepared for roles in public health/primary care such as midwife/physiotherapist or midwife/social worker. (It is noted that midwives also have a nursing qualification, but this qualification is not viewed as broad enough to meet the changing healthcare landscape.)
- The College invite midwives from abroad to teach aspects of the curricula on a visiting lecturer basis to meet student requests for knowledge in similarities and differences in practice (Student requests expressed during interviews.).

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

According to the Self-Assessment Document for Midwifery, students enrolled in the curriculum of Midwifery are motivated and talented, which is confirmed by the admission competition in recent years. Admission competition of the curricula is nine for one study place with a dropout rate 6%. Students are active in College activities and have verbalised that they are readily employed following qualification from the College. As part of midwifery student studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students. The aforementioned has been substantiated by the Assessment Team.

### Strengths

- Students are happy with the College's curricular studies and motivated to learn and achieve. (No complaints were expressed by students during interviews.)
- Alumni have expressed satisfaction with the curriculum and indicate the programme of study in the College has prepared them well for midwifery practice.
- Employers are satisfied with student performance and competencies upon qualification. (Employers have expressed a need for more midwifery graduates from the College)
- Admission standards and associated requirements for the selection of students are sound which reduces the number of dropouts from the College.
- Students value the opportunity to attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students (Information obtained from interviews with students.)

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review. For example, students have expressed sincere interest in developing expertise in research in order to discern the changing landscape of midwifery practice in Estonia and within this vein to travel more extensively to determine the status of midwifery practice in other European countries. In light of the aforementioned, it is recommended that:

- Student participation in additional midwifery research and development projects should be initiated to support midwifery students' desires to engage in applied research.
- Continue to foster the midwifery students' international mobility through the Erasmus scheme.

## 2.3.5. Biomedical Laboratory Science (ProfHE)

### Study programme and study programme development

#### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

#### Comments

The study programme for Biomedical Laboratory Science is a three and a half year 210 ECT programme that compiles with Estonian and European standards of educational and professional practice. It is the only Biomedical Laboratory Science study programme available in Estonia. The curriculum is delivered through 13 modules. The Self-Assessment document makes it clear that this study programme follows the philosophical concepts adopted by the College as a whole. Coherence of the study programme and consistency of content, objectives and learning outcomes are displayed on charts in the Self-Assessment report which has assisted in understanding the programme of study by the Assessment Team. The Self-Assessment report also shows the logical progression of modules. Teachers have requested that more language classes be introduced in the curriculum in English, Russian and German.

The curriculum continues to develop taking into account the requirements of the European Association for Professions in Biomedical Laboratory Science and with input from all stakeholders. Many employers and graduates are members of the curriculum board and final thesis board. Employers report that they would like more students on the programme. The programme is linked administratively with the Radiography programme through a joint Coordinator. This process seems to be effective and efficient. There are plans for a joint Master's degree with four other European universities.



### Strengths

- Training for clinical supervisors and also for those taking international students is good.
- Employers are involved on the curriculum board and supervision of student theses.
- There are common curricula guidelines with Biomedical Laboratory Science in place and plans for common modules.

### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Increase the number of students on the programme through more effective recruitment mechanisms/strategies.
- Employers and teachers recommend the addition of an interview in the admissions process so that more motivated and intellectually developed students are admitted to the programme. Implement an interview in the admission process.
- Introduce a language test into the admission process to enhance the selection of students.
- Masters level study is not yet available in Estonia. Consider how collaboration with the University of Tartu can affect achievement of masters level study in the field of Biomedical Laboratory Science.
- Add more language classes in the curriculum.

## **Resources**

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The learning environment of the College in general is comfortable to enable students to enjoy their studies and work effectively. Some equipment is antiquated and needs updating. However it should be noted that the equipment

used in the laboratories is equivalent to the standard found in most of the clinical laboratories in Estonia. Appropriate teaching aids are available, including journals in the Estonian language. Specialist teaching areas are sufficient for present student numbers but may be insufficient if student numbers increase. It must be noted that in the event of increasing student numbers there will be a need for additional specialist equipment which will be costly.

### Strengths

- Laboratory equipment in the College allows students to function well on placement.
- Literature is available in the Estonian language.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Consider replacing some equipment in the laboratories on an annual rotational basis.

## **Teaching and learning**

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The process of teaching and learning is flexible and allows students to work while studying. The coordinator regularly visits classes to evaluate teaching standards. It has been reported that the timetable is acceptable with no overlaps in teaching because of regular meetings with stakeholders. Practical skills are

learned in the various specialist laboratories in the College. Assessment of students' work is seen to be fair. Extra courses and additional help are provided to students who are in danger of failing. Feedback on teaching is provided by many students. Teachers report students' communication and team work skills are insufficient to meet learning requirements but to compensate, students' digital skills are good.

Students recommend the introduction of personal tutors into the study programme and a language test to be part of the admission process in order to better support students' learning needs. Students have expressed concerns about feedback, overlap of content in the curriculum between modules, a heavy assessment load and a need for financial support.

### Strengths

- There are enthusiastic teachers using student-centred teaching and learning approaches.
- Teacher links with practice add value to the teaching elements in the programme of study.
- Regular evaluation of teaching by the Curriculum Coordinator has enhanced the quality of the programme of study.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Students would like the assessment load to be spread over a longer period. Consider mechanisms for achieving this student request.
- Some supervisors wished to have fewer students on placement at one time in order to manage the students skills acquisition more effectively. Consider ways to reduce the number of students each supervisor in practice must supervise.
- Address the issue of poor communication and team work skills.
- Introduce personal tutors to support students who are in danger of failing. (This might reduce the drop-out rate of students.)

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is

- positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
  - ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
  - ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
  - ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teaching staff are enthusiastic and motivated; with qualifications primarily at Master's level or above. Many of the teaching staff are working clinically in addition to their teaching responsibilities which ensures student learning is linked to present trends in practice. Teachers can effectively facilitate student clinical placements and link with clinical supervisors because of the currency in practice. Teachers use modern teaching, learning and assessment methods; are involved in applied research and developing skills in relation to student-centred learning.

Teachers reported that there was a good career structure in the College and that they were able to attend courses to upgrade their knowledge.

### Strengths

- Teachers practice in the clinical settings and meet clinical supervisors through Skype to ensure open and effective communication within the clinical environment.
- There is good career support for teachers with the ability to attend training programmes and conferences.
- Most teachers take student feedback into account in making changes to their courses.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Identify mechanisms to facilitate teachers' access to appropriate PhD courses.
- Provide teachers with more training in student-centred teaching and learning approaches.

## Students

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students seem to be motivated to graduate and work as Biomedical Laboratory Scientists. Employers indicate that students on placement and graduates are well prepared and therefore employment rates are high. Drop-out rates are above 10% and students feel that is due to candidates not being sure about the content of the curriculum and the work involved in laboratories before initiating study in the programme. However, it must be noted that scholarships and remedial programmes are available to reduce student drop-out and there are mechanisms in place to reduce drop-out rates due to students' economic and personal responsibilities.

Student mobility is limited currently due to financial and timetabling problems. The programme team has recognised this problem and are working on plans to modify the curriculum to facilitate student mobility. Employers reported that students have good digital skills but that their communication and team work skills require improvement. It has been identified that although Biomedical Laboratory Scientists do not have direct contact with patients, they do need to work with colleagues in the laboratory setting and at times more widely. Therefore communication and team work skills require a high degree of acumen.

### Strengths

- Students are motivated towards achievement of their studies and profession.
- Employers report students are well prepared for placements.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- International mobility is limited by financial problems therefore mechanisms should be identified where possible to alleviate this situation.
- Consider mechanisms to support students more effectively in an effort for a further reduction in drop-outs rates.

### 2.3.6. Radiography (ProfHE)

#### Study programme and study programme development

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

The Radiography study programme is a three and a half year 210 ECT programme that complies with Estonian and European standards of educational and professional practice. It is the only Radiography study programme available in Estonia. The curriculum is delivered through 8 modules. The Self-Assessment document makes it clear that this study programme follows the philosophical concepts adopted by the College as a whole. Coherence of the study programme and consistency of contents, objectives and learning outcomes are displayed on charts in the Self-Assessment report and demonstrate concurrence with current standards for a Radiography programme of study. The Self-Assessment report also demonstrates the logical progression of modules.

The curriculum continues to develop taking into account the requirements of the European Federation of Radiographer Societies (<http://www.efrs.eu/>), with all stakeholder, many employers and graduates being members of the curriculum board and final thesis board. The programme is linked administratively with the Biomedical Laboratory Science programme through a joint Coordinator. This process seems to be effective and efficient. There are plans for a joint Master's degree with other universities in Europe.

Students recommend the introduction of personal tutors into the study programme and a language test to be part of the admission process which can also lead to the reduction of student drop-out rates. Students have some concerns about feedback, overlap of content of curriculum, the high assessment load and lack of financial support. Feedback on teaching is received from less than half of students as feedback is not compulsory in the present curricula.

### Strengths

- Training is provided for clinical supervisors. Additional training is provided for those clinical supervisors taking international students.
- Employers are involved on the curriculum board and in supervision of the final student thesis.
- There are common curricula guidelines with the Biomedical Laboratory Science programme in place and plans for additional common/shared modules.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Employers and teachers recommended the addition of an interview in the admissions process which should be considered. The addition of a language test should be part of the admission process.
- Implement a personal tutor programme for students. Councillors are available so assist students but this mechanism does not fulfil the personal tutor role.
- Identify a mechanism whereby students can be assured that if they provide feedback to teachers regarding teaching and the curricula that it will be anonymous. Encourage more students to provide feedback on their experience of teaching and facilitation of learning.
- Masters level study is not yet available in Estonia but could be launched in collaboration with other universities. Consideration should be given as to how this may be managed not only nationally, but internationally.

## **Resources**

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.

- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The learning environment of the College is comfortable enabling students to enjoy their studies and also to learn/work effectively. Lecture and seminar rooms are available. The radiography skills room facilitates students in practicing conventional and specialist radiography skills in a simulated clinical setting. There is modern equipment available for student practice in the radiography skills room. Appropriate teaching aids are available, including two textbooks that have been translated into the Estonian language, and the availability of textbooks in the Estonian language is improving. Specialist teaching areas are sufficient for present student numbers but may be insufficient if student numbers increase. In such an instance, additional specialist equipment will be required and costly.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Consider costs of replacing or adding specialist teaching resources.
- Identify mechanisms whereby additional equipment can be purchased/obtained at minimal expense when/if student numbers increase.

## **Teaching and learning**

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and



objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

Many of the teachers are lecturer-practitioners which ensures that student learning is linked to present trends in practice. There is enthusiasm for the study programme plans to move towards problem based learning. The process of teaching and learning is flexible and allows students to work while studying. The Programme Coordinator regularly visits classes to evaluate teaching standards.

It was reported that the timetable is acceptable with no over laps in teaching because of regular meetings. Assessment of students' work is seen to be fair.

### Strengths

- There is enthusiasm amongst teachers for developing a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning.
- Teacher links with practice facilitate up-to-date student acquisition of knowledge and skills.
- The use of Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) for assessing practical skills is a measurable approach to objective assessment of student acquisition of knowledge and skills.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Some employers indicated they want to have fewer students at one time in order to manage the students and effectiveness of clinical placement opportunities. Although it is in the purview of the employers to determine the number of students in clinical placement at any given time, consideration should be given with the help of the College as to how student numbers can be distributed more effectively; especially when there are limited clinical supervision resources.
- Consolidate plans for problem based learning so that its integration into the study programme can be expedited. Training in problem based learning has already commenced for teachers.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the

- objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
  - ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
  - ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
  - ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
  - ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teaching staff are enthusiastic and motivated. The teaching staff who are Radiographers are mainly at Professional Higher Diploma level and many are working clinically in addition to their teaching responsibilities. Because of this they can facilitate student clinical placements and link with clinical supervisors effectively. The College has plans to develop a Master's programme which will raise the educational level of the Radiography teachers (and qualified students) to a more appropriate level for teaching and practice. Despite the lack of higher level degrees, teachers are using modern teaching, learning and assessment methods, are involved in applied research and developing skills in relation to problem based learning.

### Strengths

- Most teachers take student feedback into account in making changes to their courses.
- There is good career support for teachers and the ability to attend training programmes and conferences.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Implement plans for Master's level programme.

## Students

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students seem well motivated to graduate and work as Radiographers. Employers indicate that students on placement and graduates are well prepared and employment rates are high. Drop-out rates are above 10%. Students feel the high drop-out rate is related to candidates not being sure about the content of the curriculum and the work of Radiographers. Student mobility rate on this curriculum has been 4.3%, decreasing slightly due to the limited ERASMUS Scholarships. It is noted that some of the interviewees indicated their inability to be mobile is limited currently due to financial and personal timetable problems. The College is presently working to modify the curriculum to allow for further student mobility and is congratulated for attempting to addressing this issue.

### Strengths

- Employers report student have good communication, team work and professional skills.

### Areas for improvement and recommendation

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the College's subsequent Quality Review.

- Consider ways to reduce student dropout rates. This may include spreading the assessment load over a longer period of time to reduce student stress and drop-outs.

### 3. Assessment report of SPG at the University of Tartu

#### 3.1. Introduction

The University of Tartu was founded as the Academia Dorpatensis (Academia Gustaviana) in 1632. The University has currently 60 bachelor, 72 master and 34 doctoral study programmes, and four Faculties: the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Medicine, and the Faculty Science and Technology. The former independent structural units Department of Nursing Science, Department of Public Health and Clinic of Family Medicine have been reformed into a new structural unit – Institute of Family Medicine and Public Health. The former Faculty of Exercise and Sport Sciences has been reformed and become the Institute of Sport Sciences and Physiotherapy. Both Institutes are now structural units of the Faculty of Medicine (the reform was enforced on 01.01.2016) and all the programmes to be assessed belong to the Faculty of Medicine.

Four programmes were assessed within the study programme group of Health Care:

- Physiotherapy (BSc)
- Physiotherapy (MSc)
- Nursing Science (MSc)
- Public Health (MSc)

***Number of students in the study programme group:***

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Physiotherapy	133(132)	121(122)	112	93	104(105)
Master's studies	Physiotherapy	61	60	60	58	57
Master's studies	Nursing Science	57	58	56	64	67(69)
Master's studies	Public Health	56(54)	50	54	45	45
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>307(304)</b>	<b>289(290)</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>273(276)</b>

*Sources: HaridusSILM. The University's data is presented in the parenthesis according to UT Office of Academic Affairs which were received 31.08.2015 and that are indicated in the Self-Evaluation Report.*

**Number of admissions:**

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16
Bachelor's studies	Physiotherapy	46	36(37)	31(32)	31(33)	43(44)
Master's studies	Physiotherapy	21	18	21(22)	21	22(23)
Master's studies	Nursing Science	13(15)	14	15	15	15
Master's studies	Public Health	13	13	15	15	16
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>93(95)</b>	<b>81(82)</b>	<b>82(84)</b>	<b>82(84)</b>	<b>96(98)</b>

Sources: HaridusSILM. The University's data is presented in the parenthesis according to UT Office of Academic Affairs which were received 31.08.2015 and that are indicated in the Self-Evaluation Report.

**Number of graduates:**

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Physiotherapy	37	27	39	28
Master's studies	Physiotherapy	11	16	16	20
Master's studies	Nursing Science	8	12	5	7
Master's studies	Public Health	13	9	12	14
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>69</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>69</b>

Source: HaridusSILM.

**Number of interruptions:**

		11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Bachelor's studies	Physiotherapy	13	15	19	9
Master's studies	Physiotherapy	-(9)	-(7)	2(8)	2(6)
Master's studies	Nursing Science	9(4)	7	8(3)	6(3)
Master's studies	Public Health	4(3)	7(5)	3(4)	3(12)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26(29)</b>	<b>29(34)</b>	<b>32(34)</b>	<b>20(30)</b>

Sources: HaridusSILM. The University's data is presented in the parenthesis according to UT Office of Academic Affairs which were received 31.08.2015 and that are indicated in the Self-Evaluation Report.

**Nursing Science and Public Health Programmes**

Nursing Science and Public Health share common perspectives in relation to health and well-being. Therefore it was discerned that these distinct disciplines, which share similarities in perspectives and modules, could be reviewed together. In the narrative that follows the reviews of Nursing Science and Public Health will be articulated separately. However much of the narrative within the reviews will be similar. The University has a long history of education and training in the disciplines of medicine. Nursing and Public Health at Masters' Degree level are relatively new disciplines provided by the University. It may be argued that the addition of Nursing and Public Health to the curricula of the University of Tartu has been a logical evolution within the domain of education and training of health care professionals. From the review, it is evident that the study programmes

provided in Nursing and Public Health mirror programmes in other European countries that offer these disciplines at Masters' Degree level. It is also evident that the structure and content of modules and courses in the study programmes support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of each programme. In addition, the various modules within the programmes form a coherent whole which makes it possible for graduates to obtain substantial professional positions within the healthcare arena. The University's graduates' professional positions influence the development and implementation of new visions that advance the provision of healthcare to society as a whole.

## 3.2. General findings and recommendations at study programme group level

The programmes of study meet international and national standards for teaching and learning. The programmes of study are in full compliance with the Standards of Higher Education in Estonia.

### Main Strengths

The following strengths are of particular note:

- Teaching and learning materials utilized in the programmes of study are excellent resources for teachers and students (Teacher and Student interview feedback.).
- The library is an outstanding resource with facilitative study areas for students.
- Academic/teaching staff are involved in national and international research projects, which in many instances also involve students. Subsequently excellent national and international publications are being generated to inform advancing knowledge in disciplines.
- Stakeholders are enthused about the curricular structure of programmes of study and indicate they develop competent practitioners.
- There are excellent clinical practice placements with a sound mentoring system in place.
- Student feedback about the practical/clinical learning is positive throughout all programmes of study.
- Information technology available to students supports learning, particularly within the specialist domains of practice.
- All programmes of study are evidence-based and ensure acquisition of contemporary knowledge.
- There is potential for programmes of study to be shared with other institutions of higher education.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

- Consider initiating the development and implementation of the Master's degree programme in Midwifery at the request of employers in order to meet their demands to improve healthcare provided to prenatal and antenatal women.
- As there no Bachelor programme in public health in Estonia, it is recommended that a Bachelor Degree Programme in Public Health be developed. This will not only place the University in a unique student recruitment position in Estonia but will also draw students from other European countries where a Bachelor Degree Programme in Public Health is unavailable.
- Consider developing and implementing a doctoral programme in Nursing Science, as alumni are presently undertaking doctoral study in universities outside of Estonia.
- Introduce a moderator and external examiner system to ensure parity in marking across all programmes.
- Locate more clinical placements for students learning and skills acquisition. Train more clinical supervisors to supervise students in practice.
- Increase the number of teachers with PhD degrees through the allocation of sabbaticals for the present academic staff.
- Consider use of the Professor Emeritus to support the newly appointed academic teaching staff so that the tenured academic teaching staff can focus on research and publications.
- Implement actions to enhance student mobility.
- Consider ways to reduce drop-out rates and students needing to take time out during their studies.

## 3.3. Strengths and areas for improvement of study programmes by assessment areas

### 3.3.1. Nursing Science (MSc)

#### **Study programme and study programme development**

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.

- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

### Comments

The Master's Degree Curriculum in Nursing Science is offered as a part-time study programme. It is the only programme that prepares qualified nurses to become nurse teachers and nurse managers in Estonia. The curriculum has harmonised with the national development strategy for nursing and midwifery in the years 2011-2020. In the Estonian society and labour markets there is a need for Master's and PhD educated nursing experts. The contents and structure of the programme are consistent with its objectives and learning outcomes. There is good opportunity with the programmes of Nursing Science to plan and carry out joint study courses such as statistical methods and qualitative research methods with the Public Health programme. In addition, one course shared within the programme of Nursing Science is offered to medical students. The students are satisfied with the programme and the programme is highly valued by employers.

### Strengths

- The curriculum of the Nursing Science programme is robust in relation to content as well as incorporating a logical sequence of courses/modules.
- The curriculum is harmonised with the national development strategy for Nursing and Midwifery in the years 2011-2020.
- The structure and content of modules and courses in the study programme support the achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the programme.
- There is a well-established cooperative relationship with students, representatives of employing agencies and other stakeholders regarding curriculum development.
- The study programme development takes account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders such as professional associations.
- The part-time nature of the curriculum suits the needs of adult learners who are working full time.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

There is a need to equate the international position of the Nursing Science programme with that of other universities. Such an initiative would enhance student recruitment and generate additional revenue for the University. Employers have requested the addition of a Master's Degree programme in Midwifery in order to meet their demands to improve healthcare provided to



prenatal and antenatal women. Employers have also verbalised the need for specialist nurses to work within the clinical environment managing and directing patient care.

- Increase courses/modules taught in English.
- Initiate the development and implementation of the Master's degree programme in Midwifery.
- Initiate the development and implementation of an Advanced Practice Clinical Nurse Specialist Master's Degree programme (Refer to the standards for this programme in North America and the United Kingdom. Refer to the American National Organisation of Nurse Practitioners Standards for Education and Training and the United Kingdom Royal College of Nursing Standards for Education and Training of Advanced Nurse Practitioners.)

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The availability of teaching materials is good and these resources are effectively used, in spite of statistical software models for nursing being limited. The location of the teachers' office (in the Biomedicum) and lecture rooms (in the main building of the University) being located in different buildings challenges the face-to-face contact between students and nursing teachers. Whilst e-mail contact and Skype-meetings are consistently employed, there is a view amongst academic staff and students that access limits their ability to learn at optimum levels leading to weaknesses in motivation and initiative. Human resources in terms of competency to lead research projects, apply for funding to support research projects and build a research group/team is limited. This circumstance has led to a number of would-be nursing applicants seeking academic study in other universities where a PhD qualified nurse professor is leading research. IT support from the University is good; however there is a need to improve statistical models for nursing sciences modules.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

- Ensure the availability of statistical software models for Master's Degree students in the nursing programme of study.
- Consider the location of premises (teachers' offices, lecture rooms) and work toward the achievement of a single location for academic staff offices and lecture rooms.

### **Teaching and learning**

#### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

#### Comments

The teaching and learning environment and methods used are student-centred and effective leading to the individual development of academic achievement by students. Theoretical and practical studies are interconnected. Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners. Master's Degree students' individualised study programmes are planned with the teacher. Modules taught in English is limited.

#### Strengths

- Student-centred teaching and learning methods are in use.
- Flexible and individualised study plans are incorporated into the learning programme of all students.
- The assessment of learning outcomes is transparent and objective.

## Teaching staff

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

Teaching staff are exceedingly motivated and develop the teaching and learning environment constantly. The Nursing Science programme is scientifically based and implemented by Master's Degree qualified teachers. The teaching staff have adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the Master's Degree programme in Nursing Science. However due to the lack of a PhD prepared qualified nurse in a Chair position in the University, research is limited and the motivational initiative for the nursing teaching staff to undertake research is limited. The addition of a PhD qualified nurse in a Chair position requires financial support from the University to resolve this deficiency. Due to the lack of a Professor in Nursing Science, the standing of the University nationally and internationally is poor.

The teaching skills of academic staff are enhanced by University based programmes in teaching and learning. However due to the heavy teaching load of the teachers, the ability to follow through on attending these programmes is limited.

### Strengths

- Teaching is based on evidence-based research/knowledge.
- Teachers are committed to develop the content and methodologies of teaching and learning within the programme.

- Teachers actively develop their teaching skills by participating continuing education organised by the University where possible.
- Regular feedback is provided to teachers through student and employer/stakeholder evaluations and teaching quality assessments undertaken by the teaching staff.
- Periodic use of international speakers is utilized in order to enhance programme modules and student learning.

#### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

Internationally, Master's degree level Nursing Science Programmes have a number of PhD qualified academic staff leading their programmes. This enhances opportunities to obtain research funding for research purposes and publication. Academic staff teaching within a university environment should be obtaining PhD degrees if they do not already possess this level of degree and engaging in post-doctoral research.

Academic staff have verbalised that the teacher to student ratio is high and that they are overwhelmed by teaching demands which limits their time to engage in research and writing for publication. The international standard for publication is a minimum of one publication per year in a high impact peer reviewed international journal. For a professor the expectation is a minimum of four publications per academic year.

- Review the student-teacher ratio which at present is above international standards. (E.g., there are too many students and not enough teachers for the purpose of theoretical and practical learning and skills acquisition by students. Some teachers have over the international standard of 6 students for supervision of the final thesis.)
- Increase the number of teachers with PhD degrees through the allocation of sabbaticals for the present academic staff and recruitment of academic nursing staff with PhD degrees.
- It is essential that the University identify funding resources required for the recruitment and initiation of the employment of a PhD educated professor. This activity should be implemented without delay as the Nursing Science programme is in jeopardy of losing its credibility; especially in relation to nursing research and publication.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the

- standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.
- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Students undertaking the Master's Degree programme in Nursing Science are motivated and capable. The students are satisfied with the content and methods of their studies. The Master's Degree Thesis studies with a final phase of external review with an opponent has been indicated as a good academic learning experience for the students (student feedback during interviews). The employment rate of graduates is high. Many of the alumnus practice in leading positions (40%) in health care management or health care education. Employers are satisfied with the competencies and social skills of the University's Nursing Science Master's Degree alumni.

### Strengths

- Students are motivated and capable.
- Competition for student places is 2.3, which provides opportunities to be selective about student admissions.
- The student tutoring system is functioning well.
- Many of the alumnus work on leading positions (40%) in health care management or health care education.
- Employers are satisfied with the competencies (critical thinking, problem analyses and solving, team working, evidence-based implementation of health care provision, research skills and development) and the social skills of alumni.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

As previously indicated in this report, due to the nature of the programme and the limited number of modules being taught in English, student mobility is limited. Students have indicated they would value more modules being taught in English. Several alumni are presently undertaking doctoral study in universities outside of Estonia because a doctoral level programme in Nursing Sciences is not offered at the University of Tartu.

- Implement actions to enhance student mobility. The primary actions are increasing the number of modules taught in English and the addition of a

PhD qualified nurse as a professor so that student research can be initiated in collaboration with the professor as it is in other international universities.

- Develop and implement a doctoral programme in Nursing Science.

### 3.3.2. Public Health (MSc)

#### Study programme and study programme development

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

The Master's Degree programme in Public Health was initiated in 2000 and represents an example of a programme operated through interdisciplinary expertise, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. Public Health education and practice at Masters' Degree level is a relatively new discipline provided by the University. It may be argued that the addition of Public Health, as a science, to the curricula of Tartu University has been a logical evolution within the domain of education and training of health care professionals. The Master's Degree Curriculum in Public Health is offered as a full-time study programme. It is a definitive programme that prepares healthcare professionals, wishing to study at graduate level, to become qualified to work within the domain of public health. From the review, it is evident that the study programme provided in Public Health is robust and mirrors programmes in other European countries that offer this discipline at Masters' Degree level. The University's graduates' professional positions influence the direction of healthcare provision in public health in Estonia. Furthermore, the portability of the programme has made it possible for students to gain professional positions in other European countries.

From the Self-Assessment Report and discussions with academics, students and employers, it is evident that the Master of Public Health programme is the only programme in Estonia training public health specialists. The programme addresses the major areas associated with public health including epidemiology, biostatistics, health promotion, health care management and environmental health. The aforementioned is achieved with co-operation and networking on both national and international levels. The University's Public Health Department is working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Estonian Health Board and the National Institute for Health Development and Estonian Health Insurance Fund.

It is evident that the structure and content of modules and courses in the study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the programme.

### Strengths

- The various modules within the programme form a coherent whole which makes it possible for graduates to obtain substantial professional positions within the healthcare sector.
- The Department accesses student, alumni and employer feedback and acts on the feedback to improve the programme.
- The curriculum has been developed in accordance with the Estonian National Development Strategy for public health. In the Estonian society and labour markets there is a need for Master's and PhD educated public health experts. There are excellent opportunities within the programmes of Public Health and Nursing Science to plan and carry out joint study courses such as Statistical Methods and Qualitative Research Methods.
- Training to provide qualifications in agreement with the Standard of European Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (ECCPHP) developed by ASPHER.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

The Master's Degree programme in Public Health has offered training on the following specialization modules: environmental health, health management, health promotion, and epidemiology. However since 2008 the specialization module has focused on epidemiology due to a need for qualified healthcare specialists trained in monitoring, analysing and evaluating health-related data. The national and international context of health care is changing. Health and safety are paramount areas emerging within the health care environment.

- With the evolution of public health services in Estonia, consideration should be given to offering specialization modules in health management and environmental health.

- There is a need for the study programme to be compared with programmes in public health as Master's degree level internationally to ensure compliance with international trends in health care. This review and comparison should be undertaken every three years at a minimum.
- Additional modules/courses offered in the English language should be offered so that there is an opportunity for international students to undertake study at the University.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

The Department is well equipped with computers and audio-visual technology. All seminar rooms and the library possess the necessary equipment (whiteboard, screen, computer, data projector and internet connection) required for teaching and learning. In addition, the premises have a free Wi-Fi area for students and guest lecturers as well as teaching staff to access. The Department of Public Health is located on the fourth floor of the Biomedicum building. The total area of the facilities is 615 m<sup>2</sup>, consisting of 15 office rooms, 2 seminar rooms, 1 library room, 1 laboratory and 11 auxiliary rooms. The teaching and learning environment for students and teaching staff is facilitative. Department facilities for independent learning activities and practical assignments facilitate learning.

### Strengths

- Two rooms within the Department are allocated specifically for master and doctoral students study.
- Student classrooms and teaching staff workspace is located in close proximity which facilitates ready access for dialogue (Student and Teaching staff interviews).
- The Department's teaching and learning facilities/rooms are accessible to physically disabled students.
- Some elements of courses occur in the National Institute for Health Development, Ministry of Social Affairs, Statistics Estonia Agency in Tallinn, Tartu University Hospital and Pärnu Hospital (study visits) which



facilitates contextual experience of the working environment post student graduation (*Self-Assessment Report*).

- The Department has its own library with more than 2000 publications. Library resources are sufficient for study and research purposes. All five public health areas are covered with a choice of literature (textbooks, manuals, statistical yearbooks etc.). Main scientific journals are accessible online through the electronic system of the University Library (*Self-Assessment Report*).
- In 2010, the Department created an online Public Health Library RaTeRa in cooperation with Ministry of Social Affairs and National Institute for Health Development which is highly valued by students.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

The majority of learning materials are accessible through Study Information System. There is only a small selection of textbooks in public health disciplines in the Estonian language (*Self-Assessment Report*). This is compensated by using recognized textbooks in the English language. In 2015 the Department of Nursing Science moved into the premises of the Department of Public Health. The relocation of the Department of Nursing Science has increased pressure on room availability. All seminar rooms are actively used for teaching and it is not always easy to find free space.

- Review the use of seminar rooms throughout the Biomedicum building to discern whether additional space can be found from seminar rooms that are not being utilized full-time.
- Consider changing the times of taught modules so that seminar rooms can be utilized more effectively.
- The Department of Public Health has initiated a joint project with the Department of Nursing Science to make better use of internal human and technical resources. However it is perceived that Nursing Science students are being pushed to the main campus for the bulk of their learning and that Public Health is being marginalized in comparison to other programmes of study. To alleviate this perspective consideration should be given to remodelling some areas in the Biomedicum building so that additional space for Public Health and Nursing Sciences is obtained.

## **Teaching and learning**

### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the

- specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
  - ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
  - ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
  - ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
  - ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

### Comments

The Department of Public Health enhances its teaching through a strong emphasis on research. Teaching staff within the Department are actively engaged in research and involve students in their research, where possible, which further facilitates learning. Teaching and research are enhanced through faculty and student involvement in public health policy and service activities (*Self-Assessment Report and teaching staff and student interviews*).

The process of teaching and learning has been identified as supporting students' individual and social development (*Self-Assessment Report and student/employer feedback during interviews*).

### Strengths

- The process of teaching and learning is flexible and takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- The practical training module provides an opportunity for practice-based learning in the public health working sector. Within this context, students learn from professionals in the field and apply concepts learned in the classroom.
- External experts are used as guest lecturers to enhance 'real life' knowledge and experience learning. Students are taught by a variety of specialists with direct, practical experience of applying their expertise. This increases the international reach of the students' education and provides an international perspective on public health and public health issues and initiatives.
- The Public Health study programme is scientifically based and implemented by student-centred teaching and learning methods.
- Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

As noted previously, the majority of learning materials are accessible through SIS. There is only a small selection of textbooks in public health disciplines in the Estonian language (*Self-Assessment Report*). This is compensated by using recognized textbooks in English language. Internationally developed teaching materials published in the Estonian language are also limited which means that teaching staff must spend additional effort developing materials that can be taught in Estonian. The Estonian educational model does not incorporate a moderator and external examiner system as is the custom in other European Countries. This deficit can lead to the allegation of examination bias by students.

- Introduce a moderator and external examiner system to ensure parity in marking across all programmes of study in Public Health.
- Make the monitoring of students' academic progress (both credit accumulation and grade achievement) consistent across the faculties so that both students at risk of failure and those performing exceptionally well can be identified and supported early on.
- Identify and support students with learning disabilities that build on international best practice standards.
- Consider increasing the number of programmes taught in English, either in addition to or in place of Estonian, to attract international students, and to make Estonian students more competitive globally.
- The practical training module only accounts for 10% of the total workload of the curriculum. As the practical component is highly valued by employers consider increasing the percentage of practical training in the programme.
- Students acknowledged that the modules/courses are organised in a logical order. However there are some areas in which there is overlap/repetitive teaching of knowledge. Undertake a thorough review of curricula within each module/course and modify teaching and learning contexts accordingly. Students and graduates indicated they would like more practical exercises and case-studies incorporated into their study programme. Introduce practical exercises and case-studies into each module where there is a deficit.

### **Teaching staff**

#### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is

- positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
  - ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
  - ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
  - ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility.

### Comments

In the main, the academic teaching staff in the Department are well qualified with 57.1% holding PhD degrees (or equivalent degree) with the remaining academic teaching staff holding Master's degrees or MDs. Younger members of the staff have received pedagogic training during their master's or doctoral studies.

### Strengths

- Teaching staff are motivated and continually work to develop the teaching and learning environment for students. The programme is led by PhD educated academic staff which provides the opportunity for students to engage in the sound research and enterprise that is being undertaken by the academic staff.
- The Department is increasing its competency through the use of guest lecturers.
- Research activity amongst some of the academic teaching staff has increased during the last five years. The academic staff responsible for public health training has a successful track record of applying for and receiving national or international research or applied research funding. The number of research papers published in peer-reviewed international journals has increased as well (*Self-assessment document record; not supported in interviews*).

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

According to the Self-Assessment Report and feedback during interviews the number of teaching hours is set by the University regulations depending on the type of academic appointment (teaching/research) position. The number of

teaching hours for each staff member is combined between undergraduate, Master's and Doctoral levels teaching. Administrative tasks are divided between the teaching staff members, and are allocated by the head of the Department. This leads to a difference in workload amongst the academic staff. In several instances the workload is high impacting on the ability to apply for research funding and undertake research. Due to the workload in relation to teaching positions, semesters and academic years and the majority of teaching staff being involved in various specialist associations and/or the working groups of government commissions/ministries demands on time to write for publication are also impacted. Furthermore, in the past academic year several new academic teaching staff positions were filled. This increases the workload of experienced academic teaching staff in relation to mentoring/supporting the new teaching staff.

- Increase the number of teachers with PhD degrees through the allocation of sabbaticals for the present academic staff and recruitment of academic nursing staff with PhD degrees.
- Reduce the demands of administrative time required by academic teaching staff by employing administrators. In this manner academic teaching staff can engage more proactively in obtaining funding for research, conducting research and writing for publication.
- There is only 1 research position in the Department of Public Health. This position is insufficient to generate enough research/publications for substantial recognition of the Department internationally. Consider how rationalisation of the research position could benefit academic teaching staff and also consider how an additional appointment to support academic teaching staff's research can be accomplished (e.g., the addition of research assistants to support academic teaching staff).
- Consider use of the Professor Emeritus to support the newly appointed academic teaching staff so that the tenured academic teaching staff can focus on research and publications.
- As noted under the section on strengths, the professional development of academic teaching staff is supported by the University through internal training courses. However participation in the courses has been relatively modest due to the high workload of academic teaching staff. Use of the Professor Emeritus to support newly appointed staff could facilitate a higher level of participation in the developmental programmes provided by the University.

## Students

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.

- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

From documentation found in the Self-Assessment Report and interviews with academic teaching staff and (some) students, it has been identified that the Department of Public Health has developed a pre-requisite scheme that places the Department in a good position to admit capable and motivated students. A minimum admission score to apply for student placement has been determined. Only those applicants that exceed the threshold are eligible for admission. Students admitted to the programme come from diverse academic backgrounds. It has been identified that this is partially due to the fact that there is no bachelor programme in public health in Estonia. All candidates eligible for the programme must have Bachelor's degree or an equivalent in medicine, health sciences, social sciences, economics, biology or mathematics. Drawing students from backgrounds such as these provides a sound foundation for study at Master's Degree level in Public Health.

### Strengths

- Clear objectives for student learning have been determined for each student. An academic progress review is ongoing.
- Counselling facilities are readily accessible for students. Students have indicated during interview that they value this facility and that it is effective.
- Student drop-out rates are within international norms for a Master's degree programme in Public Health which is a full-time programme of study.
- Students are happy with the programme and additionally, the programme is highly valued by employers.
- Graduates from the programme are valued in the labour market and employers are pleased with their professional preparation.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

Students interviewed indicated that they are actively employed, which when undertaking academic study their workload is sometimes high. This causes delays in completing the study programme and also leads to dropouts (also noted in the Department Self-Assessment Report). With support from the University, students can apply for grants to study at a foreign university through Erasmus and other programs. Mobility of public health students is overall considered satisfactory by the Department (*Self-Assessment Report*); however during the interview some

students indicated a need for further support to take advantage of studying in a foreign university. Student mobility is primarily limited by 'tight study-cycles' (*Self-Assessment Report and student feedback during the interview*) as well as students working and/or having family commitments (e.g., small children or other family responsibilities).

- As noted in the general comments for this section there is no Bachelor programme in public health in Estonia. Therefore it is recommended that a Bachelor Degree Programme in Public Health be developed. This will not only place the University in a unique student recruitment position in Estonia but will also draw students from other European countries where a Bachelor Degree Programme in Public Health is unavailable.
- University enrolment numbers are decreasing overall, but according to the Self-Assessment Report, student quality is increasing. It is noted that this increasing quality of students is in alignment with a goal of the University to train Estonia's leading intellectuals. It is recommended that investment in a work-study programme with employing agencies in Estonia be explored to increase the potential of recruiting student intellectuals from other countries.
- Consider the establishment of a Crèche for students' small children so that students can engage in more study time at the University. This will decrease some of the pressure some students experience and decrease student dropout numbers.

### 3.3.3. Physiotherapy (BSc); Physiotherapy (MSc)

#### Study programme and study programme development

##### Standards

- ✓ The launch or development of the study programme is based on the Standard of Higher Education and other legislation, development plans, analyses (including labour market and feasibility analyses), and professional standards; and the best quality is being sought.
- ✓ The structure and content of modules and courses in a study programme support achievement of the objectives and designed learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ Different parts of the study programme form a coherent whole.
- ✓ The study programme includes practical training, the content and scope of which are based on the planned learning outcomes of the study programme.
- ✓ The study programme development takes into account feedback from students, employers, alumni and other stakeholders.

##### Comments

There are currently degrees at Bachelor's (BSc) and Master's level. The BSc is a three year programme. It is worth 180 ECTS and graduates are qualified at

Estonian Qualification Level 6. It is one of two programmes at this level in Estonia with the other programme being at Tartu Health Care College. The University of Tartu emphasises research studies with the amount of clinical practice being lower than Tartu Health Care College. The Master's programme is of two years duration, worth 120 ECTS and the only programme at this level in Estonia.

Both curricula appear coherent and teachers and students see the logic of sequencing of different courses throughout the programme. This is achieved through alumni, employer and student feedback and SWOT analysis. The study programmes have links in different parts of Europe through Erasmus+ and the European Network in Physiotherapy in Higher Education. Graduates of the BSc programme have an alternative route to the occupation of Fitness and Health Counsellor. The Master's programme accepts bachelor graduates from both the University of Tartu and Tartu Health Care College. Master level students supervise clinical practice during their two courses on the first year Spring and second year Autumn Semester (4 ECTS). The greater amount of clinical practice (26 ECTS) takes place in the clinical environment under supervision of physiotherapists in which the majority of clinical practice supervisors have a Master's degree. The supervisors of the research thesis on the Bachelor's level are teachers of the Institute of Sport Sciences and Physiotherapy. In some cases these physiotherapists have Master's degrees, and in some cases are Doctoral students.

### Strengths

- The restructured combined sports and medical faculties has given the physiotherapy programme a wide range of possible teachers.
- The BSc programme offers an alternative route to clinical practice as a physiotherapist.
- Both programmes have excellent levels of research involvement and publication.
- Students on both programmes are well motivated to study and become physiotherapists.

### Areas for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

- The clinical practice hours in the Bachelor's programme do not comply with World Confederation of Physical Therapy minimum hours and must be restructured to meet this compliance. It is noted that the University is aware of this issue and is working to increase the volume of practice. It is noted that the University has practical work and classes in physiotherapy as well as clinical courses that are not credited as pure practice. Perhaps consideration can be given as to mechanisms for addressing this issue.
- Employers asked for the provision of a part-time route for the Master's level study in addition to the current full-time route. Consideration should be given as to whether this can be accomplished in a practical manner.



- Consider closer cooperation with the bachelor's level programme at Tartu Health Care College at administrative, teacher and student levels. It is noted that there is cooperation between the University and the College in relation to research. Furthermore in some instances there is cooperation in courses and other activities. For example in September 2014 the University and Tartu Health Care College collaborated on the ENPHE Conference. The main topic of the Conference was Work Place Learning and Assessment. Further activity will enhance teaching, learning and research through deepened collaboration.
- Employers indicated during the interview process that they want students to begin clinical placements at the end of year 1. Reflect on how this may be achieved.
- Employers interviewed also indicated they need a reduction in their administrative work load so that they can facilitate student supervision on placements. Consideration should be given as to how this can be achieved.

## Resources

### Standards

- ✓ Resources (teaching and learning environments, teaching materials, teaching aids and equipment, premises, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.
- ✓ There is a sufficient supply of textbooks and other teaching aids and they are available.
- ✓ Adequacy of resources is ensured for changing circumstances (change in student numbers, etc.).
- ✓ Resource development is sustainable.

### Comments

Basic science lectures are held in one building, research facilities in another building which is a 15-minutes' walk away and physiotherapy theory and practice teaching take place in another building close to Tartu Health Care College. Plans are in hand to relocate the physiotherapy programme into one building. Theory and practice teaching rooms are appropriate, with suitable furnishings and equipment and an excellent biomechanics laboratory that facilitates student research at all levels. There is access to current physiotherapy literature.

### Strengths

- There are excellent resources for teaching and research into biomechanics.
- Access to appropriate literature in the specialist field is available.
- Appropriate teaching rooms and profession-specific equipment are present.

### Area of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

- Continue to make provision for students classes to be on the same site.

### **Teaching and learning**

#### Standards

- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learners' individual and social development.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning is flexible, takes into account the specifics of the form of study and facilitates the achievement of planned learning outcomes.
- ✓ Teaching methods and tools used in teaching are modern, effective and support the development of digital culture.
- ✓ Practical and theoretical studies are interconnected.
- ✓ The organisation and the content of practical training support achievement of planned learning outcomes and meet the needs of the stakeholders.
- ✓ The process of teaching and learning supports learning mobility.
- ✓ Assessment of learning outcomes is appropriate, transparent and objective, and supports the development of learners.

#### Comments

Teachers with Master's and Doctoral level qualifications provide teaching and learning that is evidence-based and links theory to practice by using a student-centred approach via case scenarios and expert clinician lectures. A variety of assessment methods are used as appropriate to the subject of the different courses. The programme has a sufficient number of supervisors for clinical placements. However there is a concern that the University has to negotiate over clinical practice places (and therefore with supervisors) each year. Clinical supervisors have to be physiotherapists who have at least three years of working experience, with the majority of them having a Master's degree. Master's degree students are used in supervising clinical practice (as part of their academic curricula) which amounts to 4 ECTS, in order to better prepare them to work in the clinical environment. This supervision component is based on the employers' constructive feedback of the programme of study. It has been noted by interviewees that some clinical placements lack sufficient patients for students practice therefore the programme leaders are seeking other placement locations.

### Strengths

- Evidence-based teaching is implemented throughout the programme of study.
- Placements are selected using supervisors who have three years of clinical experience or more.
- New placements are being sought in private clinics.
- A variety of assessment methods are used to suit the type of modules being assessed.
- Expert practitioners are brought in to teach their speciality when required.

### Areas of improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

- Some student have asked for more psychology input to enable them to deal with the needs of complex patients. Consideration should be given as to how this can be achieved.
- Train more clinical supervisors to supervise students in practice.

## **Teaching staff**

### Standards

- ✓ There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and planned learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the teaching and learning.
- ✓ Overall student assessment on teaching skills of the teaching staff is positive.
- ✓ The teaching staff collaborate in the fields of teaching and research within the higher education institution and with partners outside of the higher education institution (practitioners in their fields, employers, and staff members at other Estonian or foreign higher education institutions).
- ✓ Recognised foreign and visiting members of the teaching staff and practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.
- ✓ The teaching staff is routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.
- ✓ Assessment of the work by members of the teaching staff (including staff evaluation) takes into account the quality of their teaching as well as of their research, development and creative work, including development of their teaching skills, and their international mobility

### Comments

Fifty percent of teachers have qualifications at Doctoral level and the rest at Master's level. Teachers are evaluated by students as being committed and supportive. Teachers are involved in research and continuing professional development which influences their teaching and enables students to achieve the learning outcomes of the study programme. There are a number of international teachers from Europe and further afield who provide input in their special teaching areas in the physiotherapy curriculum. In order to increase applications and attract motivated candidates teachers are actively involved in Open Days and career activities in gymnasia.

### Strengths

- Suitable candidates for admission to both programmes are actively recruited.
- Teacher research inputs into the curriculum is enhancing the development and revision of the curriculum as needed to meet current standards of practice.
- International input to the Bachelor's programme is enhancing the programme of study.
- Students report that teachers are committed and supportive.

### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

- Employers asked for better preparation of students' clinical skills for clinical placements. Consideration should be given as to how this can be achieved. The University is working to increase the number of practical classes in physiotherapy courses. It should be noted that many students have found employment during their clinical practice or have been offered a workplace as soon as the students have graduated from the University.

## **Students**

### Standards

- ✓ Student places are filled with motivated and capable students.
- ✓ The dropout rate is low; the proportion of students graduating within the standard period of study is large.
- ✓ Students are motivated to learn and their satisfaction with the content, form and methods of their studies is high.
- ✓ As part of their studies, students attend other Estonian and/or foreign higher education institutions as visiting or international students.

- ✓ Employment rate of alumni is high.
- ✓ Alumni and their employers are pleased with their professional preparation and social competencies.

### Comments

Drop-out rates are quite high and some students delay their graduation due to taking time out from their studies. Students have opportunities for international mobility through Erasmus+ and ENPHE. Employment of graduates is high in Estonia and abroad. Students, graduates and employers are satisfied with the preparation by both programmes for professional practice.

### Strengths

- There is a high level of commitment of students to learning and research.
- Employers indicate that graduates can deal with complex patient problems.

### Area for improvement and recommendations

The Assessment Team has found that there are some areas of activity associated with a need for improvement as well as challenges which should be addressed during the period leading up to the University's subsequent Quality Review.

- Where possible, consider ways to reduce drop-out rates and students needing to take time out during their studies.