

# Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences

## Decision on Institutional Accreditation

7.06.2021

The Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education decided to accredit the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences for seven years with a secondary condition.

Pursuant to Section 38(3) of the Higher Education Act and clause 43.2 of the document 'Guide to Institutional Accreditation', established on the basis of the authorization given in Section 24(5) of the Statutes of the Republic of Estonia Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (hereinafter the Council) states the following:

1. Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences Mainor (EEUAS Mainor) and EKKA agreed on the time frame for institutional accreditation on 10.03.2020.
2. On the basis of point 8 of the 'Guide to Institutional Accreditation', the following study programmes were also assessed in the context of the institutional accreditation:  
*Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation (professional higher education)*  
*Management of Enterprise (Master studies)*  
*Robotics Software Development (professional higher education)*  
*Software Development and Entrepreneurship (professional higher education)*
3. By her decision of 5 February 2021, the Director of the EKKA approved the composition of the Institutional Accreditation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee):

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**Annie Doona (Chair)**

**Freelance Consultant in Quality, Diversity, Equality and Strategy (PhD), Emeritus President IADT,**

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	<b>Institute of Art Design and Technology Dun Laoghaire (Ireland)</b>
<b>Kristiina Tõnnisson (Secretary)</b>	Head of the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu (Estonia)
<b>Indra Tupp</b>	Student of Tallinn University (Estonia)
<b>Robert J. Coelen</b>	Director Centre for Internationalisation of Education, University of Groningen (The Netherlands)
<b>Soledad Garcia-Ferrari</b>	Senior lecturer and Dean at the Edinburgh Art School (United Kingdom)
<b>Agu Leinfeld</b>	Director of Software Development and Technology, AS Datel (Estonia)
<b>Danute Rasimaviciene</b>	Lecturer and Human Resources Development Coordinator at Vilnius University Business School (Lithuania)

4. EEUAS Mainor submitted a self-analysis report to EKKA on 4 January 2021; EKKA assessment coordinator sent the self-analysis report to the Committee on 08.01.2021.
5. A virtual evaluation visit to EEUAS Mainor took place from 1 to 4 March 21.
6. The Committee sent the draft assessment report to EKKA on 5 April 2021, EKKA submitted the draft assessment report to the higher education institution for comments on 20 April 2021 and EEUAS Mainor submitted its comments on 5 May 2021.
7. The Committee submitted the final assessment report to EKKA on 24 May 2021. The evaluation report forms an integral part of the Decision. The report is available on the EKKA website.
8. The final assessment report and self-analysis report were forwarded by the Secretary of the Council to the members of the Council on 31 May 2021.
9. The assessment committee's assessments were as follows:

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Strategic management</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Resources</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Quality culture</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Academic ethics</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Internationalisation</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Teaching staff</b>	Partially conforms to requirements
<b>Study programme</b>	Conforms to requirements

<b>Learning and teaching</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Student assessment</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Learning support systems</b>	Conforms to requirements
<b>Research, development and/or other creative activity</b>	Partially conforms to requirements
<b>Service to society</b>	Conforms to requirements

10. At its meeting on 7 June 2021, the Council with its 13 members present, discussed the received documents and decided to highlight the following strengths,<sup>1</sup> areas for improvement and recommendations as well as suggestions<sup>2</sup> for further developments for EEUAS Mainor's from the assessment report<sup>3</sup>.

## 10.1. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

### ***Strengths***

1. The higher education institution has strong trust-based links with businesses.
2. The HEI offers interesting study programmes that meet the needs of businesses and a good learning environment.

### ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. At the level of strategic management, there are no clear key performance indicators in terms of service to society. The definition of such key indicators would be useful to create a common understanding within the higher education institution.
2. Although the HEI has stipulated its objectives for internationalisation, there is no clear direction and strategy as to why and how partner universities are selected. It is advisable to rethink the principles of selecting international benchmark higher education institutions in order to ensure the highest possible added value for EEUAS Mainor.

<sup>1</sup> Achievements exceeding the standard level (not compliance with the standard) are identified as strengths.

<sup>2</sup> Improvement areas and recommendations point to shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the Institutional Accreditation Standard and affect the Council's final decision.

<sup>3</sup> Suggestions for further development are improvement suggestions that do not contain any reference to non-compliance with the standard and which it is for the higher education institution to decide whether or not to take into account it. Suggestions for further developments do not have an impact on the Council's final decision.

3. It is necessary to develop a transparent and clear procedure for the systematic involvement of students in decision-making bodies.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. It is recommended to re-launch the activities of the student union.
2. As regards study programme management, the division of roles is not clear. It is necessary to ensure a common understanding of the division of responsibilities between management, teaching staff and study programme managers.
3. With regard to the long-term goal of becoming a university, it is desirable to plan specific activities with clearly measurable interim outcomes.

## **10.2. RESOURCES**

### ***Strengths***

1. As a result of good management, the higher education institution has reached a situation where profits are made and said profits are reinvested in the higher education institution.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. The higher education institution could strengthen its national position by linking research more closely to study programmes. This would help to ensure better opportunities for graduates in the labour market. A good example is the robotics study programme, which takes into account the major change brought about by the fourth industrial revolution.

## **10.3. QUALITY CULTURE**

### ***Strengths***

1. There is a well-functioning student feedback system and evidence of quick response and individualised feedback.
2. An internal and external evaluation system has been set up, providing valuable information for the management in monitoring the achievement of strategic objectives.

## **10.4. ACADEMIC ETHICS**

### ***Strengths***

1. A meaningful and comprehensive code of ethics has been developed at the higher education institution and students are offered training in this field.

### ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. Although the higher education institution has a code of ethics, it is not clear to what extent academic ethics is monitored in teaching and research. Such control activities should be formalised.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. It is recommended to continue to define the procedures and responsibilities in the field of academic ethics and advise students, faculty (including visiting lecturers) in this field.

## **10.5. INTERNATIONALISATION**

### ***Strengths***

1. Teaching and learning at the higher education institution takes place in three languages, which increases the chance of growing the number of foreign students.

### ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. Student participation in mobility is low. There are no mobility windows in curricula to support student participation in mobility. The higher education institution should design short-term mobility windows in its curricula in order to facilitate participation in mobility, taking into account their domestic and professional responsibilities. International experience provides added value in the development of a student into a specialist.
2. The higher education institution should pay greater attention to the internationalisation of its staff, going beyond short term trips abroad. Teaching staff must also be supported in developing the international component of the curricula for which they are responsible. In this context, account should be taken of the context-specific nature of internationalisation, which means that competences and international perspectives in the field of intercultural communication should be integrated into speciality studies, for example.

## **10.6. TEACHING STAFF**

### ***Strengths***

1. The motivated and mutually supportive staff community of the higher education institution has strong links with industry in all the speciality areas of the higher education.
2. The higher education institution has a clear and appropriate staff policy setting out general objectives and support measures.

### ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. Expanding the skills of teaching staff is clearly one of the goals of EEUAS Mainor. At the same time, it is not fully clear what background is required from the teaching staff in order to be recruited, what their practical or research experience should be. The HEI needs a more comprehensive recruitment plan to support the achievement of the objectives set in all its activity areas.
2. The opportunities for gaining international experience are used by a small number of teaching staff, which can also hamper the development of intercultural competences. Participating in international cooperation would allow teaching staff to expand their skills and experience. This in turn means that the higher education institution must be involved in developing the skills needed for internationalisation, including foreign language skills, among teaching staff. A specific measure should be developed to increase the level of proficiency in English among the teaching staff, enabling them to participate more in international training and other similar events.
3. A number of training and mentoring schemes exist in the higher education institution. However, they are not mandatory for teaching staff and there is no impact analysis that assesses how different trainings have affected, for example, learning and teaching. It is necessary to assess and analyse the impact of training and to implement the results in the development of future training schemes. It is not clear how support measures for teaching staff differ at different career levels. EEUAS Mainor could consider developing specific groups of teaching staff among its staff, such as a entry level faculty or visiting lecturers. This would make it possible to develop more specific support and upskilling mechanisms to help those teachers develop themselves and develop their careers.
4. A more structured approach is needed for the the planning, regulation and conduct of research and development of teaching staff. An analysis of the extent to which R&D is integrated into human resources development processes must be carried out and the development of teaching staff should be monitored throughout all processes.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. The contribution of foreign teaching staff to curriculum development could be more systematic than it has been to date.
2. Teaching staff also have the opportunity to receive feedback and advice about their work through less formal channels than feedback surveys. However, it is not clear how best practices and teaching methods are shared more widely among teaching staff. Sharing such experiences and practices would benefit, among others, visiting lecturers.

## **10.7. STUDY PROGRAMME**

### ***Strengths***

1. The study programmes offered by EEUAS Mainor have well considered workload, clear focus and understandable learning outcomes that make them attractive to students.
2. A rapid response to employers' needs is ensured through close contacts with various professional and trade associations.
3. Students value highly the practical output and professional orientation of the study programmes.

### ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. Although there are certain principles for the establishment of study programme councils, they have not always been clearly followed in practice. The input of alumni in study programme development needs to be used more than hitherto, including through study programme councils.
2. The information displayed on the website of EEUAS Mainor on some study programmes is sometimes confusing. This was confirmed at interviews with students. The higher education institution needs to review and harmonise the titles and descriptions of study programmes used on different platforms in order to ensure that information is clear and consistent.

## **10.8. LEARNING AND TEACHING**

### ***Strengths***

1. Students highly value the flexibility of study programmes and the way learning is organised, which also helps to reduce drop-out rates.
2. Teaching staff use a wide range of modern and inclusive learning methods.

3. The study programmes provide students with good professional skills and prepare them to enter the professional world, offering a lot of “practical life” as part of their studies.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. The design and involvement of the alumni organisation could be more systematic and target the entire alumni community. Alumni could be more involved in different types of learning and teaching activities.

## **10.9. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS**

### ***Strengths***

1. Teaching staff cooperate on student assessment at early stages of preparation.
2. Assessment methods are tailored to measure the achievement of learning outcomes, are diverse and appropriate to support student development.
3. The HEI supports the development of assessment competences of teaching staff by providing specialised training.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. The faculty’s awareness of the concept of recognition of prior learning and work experience and the procedures for its implementation should be enhanced.

## **10.10. LEARNING SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

### ***Strengths***

1. Students have good access to support and academic staff.
2. The study information system is comprehensive and meets the needs of students.
3. The student progress monitoring system works well and helps students manage their academic and financial responsibilities.



## **10.11. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES**

### ***Strengths***

1. Most of the teaching staff are involved in professional networks.
2. Several study programmes develop creativity and innovation throughout the learning process.

### ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. The interviews revealed a lack of common understanding regarding research, its focus and coordination of research at the higher education institution. The Committee received different information from a number of parties regarding who decides and defines research objectives. Research should have a clearer focus, aim and plan for it to have a stronger impact on the development of knowledge and its exchange across study programmes.
2. Research and the involvement of teaching staff in various research activities are limited. The external resources to carry out applied research and the range of partners are limited. There is no trans-university research plan nor an accompanying work plan. The focus of these plans should be on the development of knowledge transfer between different disciplines.
3. Research and development support systems for teaching staff should be better promoted to motivate teaching staff to publish articles and apply for research funding.

### ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. Stepping up cooperation with international partners would make it possible to raise the quality of research publications.
2. The HEI should increase the number of staff with PhDs and support staff in their endeavors to complete their PhDs.

## **10.12. SERVICE TO SOCIETY**

### ***Strengths***

1. Strong links with industry.
2. Regular events are organised that are relevant for the professional world.

## ***Areas for improvement and recommendations***

1. While the assessment of academic staff takes into account their impact on society, there are no specific objectives in this area. The impact of academic staff on society should be taken into account more clearly when assessing their work and clear expectations and objectives should be set. Qualitative and quantitative feedback to academic workers on service to society would also help them to better achieve the objectives set.

## ***Suggestions for further developments***

1. Although the HEI occasionally involves alumni in its activities (guest lectures and offering internships), their potential could be exploited more than hitherto, for example by including them in study programme councils.
2. EEUAS Mainor could consider offering courses and projects to society at large, not just to individual organisations.

11.If one to four standards are assessed as 'partially conforms' and all the remaining standards are assessed as 'conforms', the Council shall analyse the strengths and areas for improvement of the HEI and decides that the management, administration, teaching and research activities as well as the environments of learning and research at the HEI meet the requirements, and accredits the HEI for seven years; or shall decide that there are shortcomings in the management, administration, teaching and research activities or in the environments of learning and research at the HEI, provide guidance for their elimination, and accredit the HEI for three years.

12.The Council examined the strengths and areas for improvement of EEUAS Mainor and considered it necessary to highlight:

- 12.1. **The university is characterised by a series of important strengths:** The higher education institution has strong trust-based links with businesses. A rapid response to employers' needs is ensured through close contacts with various professional and trade associations. The HEI offers interesting study programmes that meet the needs of businesses and a good learning environment. As a result of good management, the higher education institution has reached a situation where profits are made and reinvested in the higher education institution. The higher education institution provides instruction in three languages, which increases the chance to grow the number of foreign students. Students highly value the flexibility of study programmes and the way learning is organised. The student progress monitoring system works well and helps students manage their academic and financial responsibilities.

- 12.2. **Shortcomings in** meeting institutional accreditation standards mainly concern topics related to research and development and lecturers under standards that were assessed by the assessment committee as “partially conforms to requirements”:

**Strategic management of R&D:** There is a lack of common understanding of research, its focus and coordination in the higher education institution. Research and the involvement of teaching staff in various research activities is limited. The external resources to carry out applied research and the range of partners are limited. There is no trans-university research plan nor an accompanying work plan. Research needs to have a clearer focus, aim and plan in order to have a stronger impact on knowledge development and exchange between study programmes and thus on the research-based nature of the study programmes.

**R&D conducted by the teaching staff:** A more structural approach is needed for the planning, regulation and conduct of research and development by teaching staff. An analysis of the extent to which R&D is integrated into human resources development processes needs to be undertaken and monitoring of the development of teaching staff throughout all processes must be ensured.

**International experience of teaching staff:** The opportunities for gaining international experience are used by a small proportion of the teaching staff. The higher education institution should pay greater attention to the internationalisation of its staff, going beyond short term trips abroad. The faculty must also be supported in developing the international component in the study programmes for which they are responsible.

13. According to subsection 53(1)(2) of the Administrative Procedure Act, a secondary condition to an administrative act is an additional obligation relating to the basic regulation of an administrative act and, pursuant to clause 3, an additional condition for the creation of a right arising from the basic regulation of the administrative act. Sections 53(2)(2) and (3) of the APA provide that a secondary condition may be imposed for an administrative act if the administrative act should not be issued without a secondary condition or if the administrative act is to be resolved on the basis of administrative discretion.

14. Considering the strengths and shortcomings set out in point 12, and on the basis of point 43.7 of the ‘Guide to institutional accreditation’, the Council considered that it was possible to adopt a more positive decision if the higher education institution met some conditionalities set out in a secondary condition.

In the light of the above, the Council

## **DECIDED**

### **To accredit the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences for seven years with the following secondary condition:**

The Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences shall submit a report in English by 7.06.2022 at the latest on the activities launched by the higher education institution in order to eliminate the shortcomings listed in point 12.2. Members of the Committee shall be involved in the assessment of the fulfilment of the secondary condition.

The decision was adopted by 13 votes in favour. Against 0.

- 15.If the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences fails to comply with the secondary condition in due time, the Council shall repeal the accreditation decision or impose a new secondary condition.
- 16.The accreditation is valid until 7.06.2028 or until the decision is revoked. The time of the next institutional accreditation will be agreed between EKKA and the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences Mainor by 7 June 2027.
- 17.The Council suggests that the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences Mainor submit, along with the report on the fulfilment of the secondary condition, an overview of activities undertaken by the higher education institution on the basis of other improvement areas and recommendations set out in the Council Decision in English by 7 June 2022 at the latest.
- 18.A person who finds that his or her rights have been violated or his or her freedoms restricted by this decision may file a challenge with the EKKA Quality Assessment Council within 30 days after the person filing the challenge became or should have become aware of the contested finding. The Council shall forward the challenge to its Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the challenge within ten days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If the challenge needs to be investigated further, the deadline for its review by the Council may be extended by a maximum of thirty days. A legal challenge to this decision is possible within 30 days after its delivery, by filing an action with the Tallinn courthouse of the Tallinn Administrative Court under the procedure provided for in the Code of Administrative Court Procedure.

**Eve Eisenschmidt**  
**Chairman of the Council**

**Hillar Bauman**  
**Secretary of the Council**