

## Joint Final Report

# Tallinn Technical University

### Programs Assessed

6345259 Economics  
6345210 Economics  
6343954 Business Administration  
6343906 Business Administration

### Visit Dates

March 18, 2004

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## Part I

# General Overview

### THE ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The Higher Education Quality Assessment Centre of Estonia has invited a team of experts to assess programs in Economics and Business Administration at the University of Tartu, Estonian Agricultural University, Pärnu College of the University of Tartu and Tallinn Technical University.

#### The expert team

- Prof. Heinrich Stremitzer, Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, Austria;
- Prof. Ilkka Virtanen, University of Vaasa, Finland;
- Prof. Juris Kruminš, University of Latvia, Latvia;
- Prof. Kurt Pedersen, Aarhus School of Business, Denmark;
- Prof. Wim Meeusen, University of Antwerp, Belgium;
- Prof. Paavo Okko, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration, Finland;
- Prof. Denis Lucey, University College Cork, Ireland

#### The assessed programmes:

##### UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

*6301216 Bachelor in Social Sciences (in Economics and Business Administration)*

*7301216 Master in Economics and Business Administration*

*8301200 PhD (Economics)*

*7345256 Cultural Management*

##### ESTONIAN AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

*6343963 Economics and Entrepreneurship*

*6343263 Accounting and Finance*

*6343264 Rural Entrepreneurship and Financial Management*

*7343963 Economics and Entrepreneurship*

*7343263 Accounting and Finance*

*7343903 Marketing and Management*

*7343267 Accounting and Financial Management*

*7343957 Economics and Entrepreneurship*

##### PÄRNU COLLEGE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU

*5343914 Business Administration*

*5787216 Tourism and Hotel Management*

##### TALLINN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

*6345259 Economics*

*6345210 Economics*

*6343954 Business Administration*

*6343906 Business Administration*

## **The programme of the visits**

The assessments took place during the period March 14-21, 2004. Sunday evening 14 March, the Committee had a meeting with the member of Higher Education Quality Assessment Council and managing director of the Accreditation Centre. An outline was given of the task of the Committee and the general situation of Estonian Higher Education.

Monday 15 March and Tuesday 16 March the University of Tartu and Estonian Agricultural University were visited. Wednesday 17 March the Pärnu College of the University of Tartu was visited. Thursday 18 March the Committee visited the Tallinn Technical University.

## **The programme and working method**

Prior to the beginning of the visits, the Committee had a general discussion about the task as seen by the Committee, about the standards, formulated by the Accreditation Centre and the frame of reference for the assessment as seen by the Committee. At the same time the self-evaluation reports were discussed.

The programmes of the visit had in general the same format:

- Meeting with the leaders/heads of the institutions
- Discussion with the writers of the self-evaluation reports
- Interviews with groups of students of the different programmes in small groups
- Interview with academic staff of the different programmes in small groups
- Interviews with important Committees
- On-site visits of facilities

During the one major part of each visit the Committee tried to assess especially the organisation of the programmes, the way the curricula had been designed, the way the quality is being assured, the qualification of the staff, the research activities and all other points the programmes had in common. The Committee formally had to report on 18 programmes.

What follows are the findings of the Team (Part II), its general recommendations (Part III), and its accreditation conclusions (Part IV). In Part II, the findings are relative to the "Requirements for accreditation of curricula of universities" and "Requirements for accreditation of curricula of institutions of applied higher education" (Approved by the regulation of the Government of the Republic of Estonia No 265 of 23 October 2003).

## Part II

# Findings

### GENERAL FINDINGS AT THE TALLINN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

As a general comment, the Evaluation Team feels that the funding policy of the government forces some faculties to combine in the same programmes a relatively small number of good funded students and a large number of weaker non-funded students, which may have perverse effects.

Although the ET did not see any signs confirming this, this may eventually lead in the future to a lowering of the academic standards in order to be able to continue to finance these faculties adequately.

### I. MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY

#### 1. Mission of the Faculty. Implementation of educational policy.

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEBA) is the second largest faculty of Tallinn University of Technology. The Faculty describes its mission to be a national centre of education, research and development in the field of economics and business administration. The educational programmes are directed at acquiring basic knowledge, on the one hand, and specialising in a particular narrow field in economics or business, on the other. The Faculty is aware of the important role its graduates have in the business and public sector management in Estonia.

The educational policy of FEBA is implemented and developed taking into consideration the economic development in Estonia and her European and global environment. That is putting emphasis on skills needed in international working environment. The programme development is a reflection of the Bologna declaration, too.

The bachelor programmes under evaluation are planned to aim at the educational targets of FEBA. The goals of programmes are set on four different levels: general educational, professional, speciality-related, and career-oriented level. The planning process appears to be quite well defined. The self-evaluation report was a well written and informative document.

#### 2. Conformity of the curriculum with professional standard and requirements and international trends. Tasks and activities of academic unit.

The curriculum development is a reaction to the Bologna process, and it has taken into consideration also professional requirements in the field. The accreditation was concerning both the current ongoing programmes and the new programmes started two years ago.

The curricula of the economics programme and the business administration programme are overlapping to a quite large extent. The specialisation into economics and into business administration is not very deep, as one would expect of a bachelor programme. *The economics programme* (both the old and new) is supposed to provide knowledge to analyze economic problems and finding solutions to them and to develop practical professional skills and abilities for a future academic career. Specialisation targets are in the direction of the public sector and financial institutions. *The business administration programme* (both the old and new) aims at educating graduates who act in different sectors of society and in the changing domestic and international business activities. Specialisations are finance, accounting, management, and marketing.

The curriculum is responding to professional standards and requirements and international trends. The transition process of the Estonian economy and needs coming from the membership of the EU are taken into consideration, too.

Tasks and activities of academic units seem to be defined in a proper way.

### **3. Curriculum council. Analysis and improvement of academic quality of curriculum**

Analysis and improvement of academic quality of curriculum is organised.

### **4. A supervisory system to monitor the performance of faculty and students**

TTU has developed a quality assurance system for the university. E.g., feedback from employers has been collected. The self-evaluation of university units is planned to take place every second year.

### **5. Participation and tasks of unit in other subjects**

No remarks on the issue.

## **CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A clearer specialisation in economics on the one hand and business administration on the other in the future would be a favourable direction of development.**

## **II. STUDENTS**

### **1. Size and structure of student intake; average admission level; deficiencies of pre-university education**

The competition for study places highly raises the admission requirements to budget places. There is a clear difference between the admission results of fee-paying students and state funded students. During the studies at the Faculty there appears moreover a statistically significant difference in the average marks received by funded and non-funded students.

## **2. Students' motivation, expectations, guidance, counselling services, progress level.**

The experts interviewed a small group of business administration bachelor programme students. Students were motivated and committed to their studies. They feel that they can give feedback to the Faculty about their experiences in the study process.

## **3. Monitoring of student achievements. Study load and learning conditions.**

Students seem to feel that the study load is appropriate and the relationship between class work and individual work is quite balanced. Perhaps different kinds of individual work should be increased.

## **4. Possibilities for student mobility and credit transfer**

Possibilities for student mobility and credit transfer are organised. Students who had studied abroad reported that it was easy to transfer all credit points from the foreign university. The number of the exchange students is still low, but it is hoped to be expanding.

## **5. Activity of student bodies. Students' role in academic councils and in self-assessment.**

Students were participating into self-assessment process.

# **III. THE CURRICULUM**

## **1. Curriculum conformity with requirements of the Standard of Higher Education, a professional standard and international legislation**

The Evaluation Team found no indications that the curriculum would not conform to national and international standards of higher education and professional training.

## **2. Aims and objectives of the curriculum, their correspondence to the institution goals and educational policy and graduation requirements.**

The Evaluation Team is convinced that the curriculum meets the aims and objectives set out for it by the Faculty and the institution and conforms to the educational policy and graduation requirements.

### **3. Curriculum design, accomplishment and development. The role of various structural units.**

No problems were detected in this respect. The various structural units of the Faculty have obviously played their role in the design of the curriculum, its accomplishment and development.

### **4. Subject structure, group balance, options and diversity of curriculum.**

With respect to the structure of the curriculum, its diversity and the availability of options, the Evaluation Team found no serious shortcomings. The ET however wants to draw the attention of the Faculty to a few weaknesses that they may want to address in the future development of the curriculum:

- The “Special Studies” options available to the students in the new BA Economics Programme (TAAB02) are not sufficiently oriented towards the natural interest of students in this field. The “Public Economics” option contains a subject that is clearly management oriented (“Project Management in the Public Sector”), and also the “Finance and Banking” option is not an “Economics” option in the real sense. Why not rather offer an “Economic Theory” option with subjects like e.g., “Macroeconomics 2”, “Introduction to Game Theory” and/or “Business Cycle Analysis” ?
- The weight of foreign language subjects should perhaps be increased.
- The ET does not understand the presence of the “Working Environment and Ergonomics” as an obligatory subject. The ET has understood that this is a requirement of TTU at the institutional level in view of the “technical” nature of the university. But why then not rather organise a course like “Introduction to New Emerging Technologies” instead?

As a general comment the ET has the impression that the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at Tallinn Technical University may have shifted from the old habit of “supply-driven” organisation of education to the other extreme of “demand-driven” education, thereby perhaps overstressing management oriented studies at the expense of economics oriented studies.

This might create an imbalance in personnel terms, certainly if in the near future the integration of the Institute of Economics in the Faculty will be finalised.

### **5. Correspondence to international standards and labour market.**

### **6. Intake and graduation requirements.**

### **7. Quality assurance system covering the curricula and the provision of education**



The ET has, with respect to the higher mentioned points 5, 6 and 7, found no sources of concern.

## **CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Faculty should consider correcting some imbalances in the BA Economics programme in line with the comments made under section IV.4.**

## **IV THE EDUCATIONAL (TEACHING) PROCESS**

- 1. Teaching methods used. Classroom and individual study organisation. Developments of teaching methods.**
- 2. Computers and licensed software used in teaching and learning.**
- 3. Assessment of student achievements and examination methods.**

The ET has, with respect to the higher mentioned points 1, 2 and 3, found no sources of concern.

## **V. ORGANISATION OF STUDIES**

- 1. Rationality of study organisation. Academic calendar.**
- 2. Attainability and quality of information about studies' organisation. Counselling and registration for studies and examinations.**
- 3. Students study loads and independent work**
- 4. The improvement of study organisation. Analysis of student success and failures.**
- 5. System for analysing and evaluating student progress, study loads and results.**
- 6. Technology to register and to monitor students study results.**
- 7. Co-operation relationships to organise practical training**

The ET has, with respect to the above mentioned points found no sources of concern.

## CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

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### VI. TEACHING STAFF

1. **Quantity, qualification and experience of academic staff and conformity to the requirements of the Universities Act, the Standard of Higher Education and the Requirements for Teacher Training. Full-time and part-time personnel rate. Teaching workload. Sufficiency of teaching staff for curriculum accomplishment and development. Adequacy of complementary staff.**

The academic staff meets the official requirements and has been developing in accordance with targets of the Faculty.

2. **Qualification enhancement. Research and other scholarly activities of academic staff.**
3. **Staff election policy and regulations. Assessment of teaching staff. Staff review arrangement.**

The ET is pleased with the open character of the vacancies. Maybe the Faculty could even go one step further in this direction: why not advertise the vacancies abroad through the costless procedure offered by the “Inomics-website” for academic economists ([www.inomics.com](http://www.inomics.com))?

## CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Faculty should consider the possibility of advertising its vacancies abroad.**

## **VII LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES**

- 1. Adequacy of the number of study rooms, and amount of inventory, equipment and learning resources. Conformity with health-protection and safety requirements**
- 2. Adequacy of number of laboratories, training rooms and bases for practical training.**
- 3. Library organisation and usage. Availability of textbooks, learning materials, scientific literature, special (professional) issues. Access of students to information networks.**
- 4. Existence of recreational facilities and other non-educational services (food, housing, mental, medical et al). Access of students to information technology resources.**
- 5. Facilities for teaching staff.**
- 6. Internal data network and connections with non-institutional networks.**
- 7. Facilities to photocopy study materials**
- 8. Resource management efficiency and long-term development plan to improve the condition of learning environment.**

The ET has, with respect to the above mentioned points found no sources of concern. The Faculty is well equipped in all the different aspects.

## **CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## **VIII. FEEDBACK AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 1. Existence of quality assurance system and its efficiency. Role of student feedback.**

The ET is convinced that the necessary steps are taken, both at the level of the Faculty and the University, with respect to quality assurance and student feedback. The requirement by the University that the faculties submit a bi-annual self-evaluation report is a witness of that. One might even say that there might be a slight danger of excess red tape here. Time will tell whether this frequency can be sustained, or should be changed, e.g. to a 3- or even 4-year self-evaluation.

**2. Contacts with potential employers representatives and professional associations. Contacts with alumni. Analysis of obtained information. Investigation of public opinion about institution and study programme.**

No remarks on the issue.

**3. Relationships with foreign educational institutions.**

Although the Faculty seems to have a large number of international contacts at both the institutional and personal level, and although both incoming as outgoing international student mobility seems to be increasing, the level of that type of exchange is still insufficient, and concerns a limited number of foreign universities and schools, usually of minor status.

The Faculty should set itself a clear medium and long-term objective in this respect. The Faculty should also try to find a way to assign a full time qualified member of its own staff to the organisation and development of international relations.

Another point in this context concerns the issue of equivalence. The ET advises the Faculty to be as “liberal” as possible in the declaration of equivalence between subjects taken by students at foreign universities, as well with respect to the content of the subjects as the number of credits earned.

**CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Faculty should set itself a clear medium and long term target for student mobility and accordingly should allocate the necessary funds for staffing the Faculty International Relations Office.**

**IX. RESEARCH CONDITIONS AND LEVEL**

- 1. Quality of research. Outcomes of research evaluation.**
- 2. Defended master and doctoral thesis.**
- 3. Research environment (laboratories, equipment etc)**

Although the ET is convinced that the Faculty is duly engaged in research activities, it has not examined this in depth because of the BA-level of the studies that had to be evaluated.

## Part III

# Accreditation Conclusions

The assessed programmes constitute a crucial part of activities in FEBA. The Faculty has a strong tradition in the field of economics and business administration. It is now restructuring its curricula in order to meet the requirements of the Bologna process. The programmes have sufficient contents and quality.

## Part IV

# Accreditation Recommendations

### ADVICE ABOUT ACCREDITATION

*The Committee assessed four programmes at the Tallinn Technical University.*

*In the opinion of the Committee the following accreditation advice is given:*

**6345259 Economics:**

**6345210 Economics:**

**6343954 Business Administration:**

**6343906 Business Administration:**

**Should be accredited**