

Decision Regarding Institutional Accreditation Estonian University of Life Sciences

28/08/2012

The Quality Assessment Council of the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency decided to accredit the Estonian University of Life Sciences for seven years.

Assessment Committee

Michael Emery– Chair	Higher education consultant (UK)
Margus Tiru	Student member (Estonia)
Birgitta Malmfors	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden)
Eero Puolanne	University of Helsinki (Finland)
Cees Karssen	Wageningen University (The Netherlands)
Olev Kalda	Veterinary and Food Board (Estonia)

Component Assessments

Organisational management and performance	Conforms with requirements
Teaching and learning	Conforms with requirements
Research, development and/or other creative activity	Conforms with requirements
Service to society	Conforms with requirements

Strengths, Areas for Improvement and Recommendations

Strengths:

- *The student numbers at the Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMÜ) have remained stable at 4650–4900 in recent years despite the economic, banking, and euro area crises, while at other similar universities in the Baltic States and across Europe the student numbers have fallen significantly. The effective use of recognition of prior learning and work experiences has helped the University retain its students and attract students of different backgrounds.*
- *EMÜ has been able to create a cosy and caring atmosphere, which is greatly appreciated by students.*
- *An open management style is used effectively across the University.*
- *EMÜ has good working relationships with its stakeholders, including employers, alumni and professional associations who are regularly involved in study programme development among other things.*
- *EMÜ has significantly influenced the development of rural life in Estonia by collaborating with various supervisory boards who oversee this field, as well as with other decision-making bodies.*
- *The infrastructure is continually being improved and modernised.*

Areas for Improvement and Recommendations:

- *In order to provide a clear and more precise management system, EMÜ should regularly review its strategic and operational documents, the list of which is currently too long – strategies, sub-strategies, priorities, action plans, etc. – and optimise them, as needed.*
- *EMÜ marketing, including international marketing, needs improvement in the wider sense – more attention should be paid to a pro-active approach; for example, marketing for some unpopular subject areas.*
- *The Department of Marketing and Communication should undertake the planning and monitoring of media communications and different public-oriented activities, as well as collect, assess and communicate feedback from those activities. EMÜ's English web site needs improvements that will insure it is clearly focused on internationalisation.*
- *More English should be used in both teaching and learning in order to help students be more competitive and prepare them for a potential career outside Estonia or in an international business operating in Estonia.*
- *To enhance EMÜ's international competitiveness, student and staff mobility should be increased, both outward and inward.*
- *To provide students with competencies in information searches, a compulsory course in information searches should be introduced at the beginning of their studies.*
- *EMÜ should review its feedback systems to increase their comparability and effectiveness.*
- *Supervision of research should be improved; a uniform standard should also be applied to those PhD students who perform their research outside EMÜ. An analysis of staff workloads between teaching and research duties would be beneficial.*
- *EMÜ would benefit from more collaboration with foreign universities as*

well as with the University of Tartu and the Tallinn University of Technology, regarding students, teaching staff, infrastructures and study programmes.

Assessment Report

Self-Evaluation Report