

Evaluation report

Evaluated point	Grade	Comments
Scientific impact of research	Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The R&D outcomes are in general of satisfactory academic standard; within which there are research fields in which the standard is good. • There is evidence that research generates international interest in certain fields. • Publications have been issued by domestic publishers and/or in domestic-recognised journals, some in internationally-recognised publishers and journals, and a few in leading international publishers. • Staff members are actively engaged in the publication and dissemination of research, but there is evidence of some unevenness both in the volume and quality of high-level publications per research member. <p>There is evidence that the unit is currently engaged in discussions that should stimulate enhanced scientific impact: for instance, relating to increased opportunities for collaboration within and across research units, as well as with external partners. The research imperatives of translation work might be more effectively articulated</p>
Sustainability and potential of research	Good	<p>The organization and management of R&D are generally clear and effective and take into account the specifics of the field. Measures for acquiring external funding and the composition of the staff base is testimony to the continued sustainability of the R&D. However, it may be necessary to implement measures to strengthen the underpinning structures for funding and the diversity within the staff base. A lack of strategic management and complicated structure limit the unit's research potential.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of PhD awards has increased and many PhD-students are employed as post-docs and as junior researchers in different projects. But the unit has no clear PhD-policy or effective PhD programme, with apparently little relation between PhD programmes and the research fields and subfields. • Research funding and the number of high-level publications per researcher have increased markedly during the assessment period, partly because the total number of research-active staff members has been decreasing. • The unit is actively seeking research co-operations in Estonia and internationally, although there is room for improvement in this regard for the sustainability of its research.

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Societal importance of research	Good	<p>The evaluators recognised the development plan of the University as a promoter of ‘intelligent lifestyle’ through societal improvement and enhancing the wellbeing of all citizens. Evaluators noted that academics from across arts and humanities were contributing to social engagement, to societal impact, to the creative, cultural and economic life of Estonia, and in particular to the city of Tallinn, through the integration of their research, scholarship, professional and practices. The continued refusal to develop clear scientific criteria and indicators that enable the capture and evaluation of complex ‘bodies of work’ and their impact (e.g. artistic research) requires urgent recognition by the Estonian Research Council.</p> <p>For example, the evaluators noted the contribution and significant public roles of the Research Centre for Landscape and Culture, the Institute of History Archaeology and Art History and the Baltic Film, Media, Arts & Communication, particularly in interdisciplinary work that explored bilingual clashes and research focusing on historical and social integration and intermingling in the urban landscape.</p> <p>Similarly of note was the public/private partnership between the film school and film and broadcasting media. This collaboration offers continuing professional development and research opportunities though the Centre of Excellence in Media and Digital Culture.</p> <p>The Archaeological Research Centre and Research Collection link positively to the Estonian National Museum and contribute to the public understanding of archaeology, history and identity (e.g. 5000 years of Jewellery in Estonia). The University could exploit these resources and partnerships more effectively (e.g. NATARC or through research in Asian Cultures and Language) with, for example, the Estonian Literary Museum or the National Museum. Such opportunities would enhance both the Unit’s scientific research and wider societal impact.</p> <p>Evaluators noted the contribution and impact on creative and cultural life of the nation as evidenced in the organisation of festivals of film and the advancement of the Estonia film industry, as well as broader international research and scholarship; for example, in the development of a photo archive associated with a personal cultural heritage and medieval influences on the American architect Louis Kahn who was born in Saaremaa.</p> <p>The evaluators noted that the selected areas of research endeavour had significant societal relevance and impact, but some lacked strategic focus and development to optimise their reach and significance.</p>

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<p>Scientific basis in the field is sufficient to conduct doctoral studies. (This question should be answered only if: a) institution being evaluated is conducting doctoral studies and; b) The field being evaluated is proposed to grant positive evaluation. If these conditions are met then: a) If the level of scientific basis is sufficient for conducting doctoral studies in every structural unit being evaluated, then the answer should be „yes“; b) If the scientific basis is not sufficient in some structural units, then those units should be listed.)</p>		<p>Positive. There is doctoral support for programmes in cultural studies, history and linguistics although the evaluators noted that the structural regulations and systems appeared to be contradictory with reference to the student experience. While there are smaller networks functioning at programme level there is no clear sense of a wider doctoral community.</p>

Summary assessment

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<p>Areas of special note as appropriate (Where necessary indicate sub-fields, assessment criteria, and/or structural units which, in the committee's opinion, were of a notably high level.)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An impressive number of translations has been produced in the period. • There are several noteworthy collections and archives, especially the Lotman archives and the academic library. • The research infrastructure of the School of Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communications was particularly impressive.
<p>Areas in need of improvement as appropriate (Where necessary indicate sub-fields of the field being evaluated, assessment criteria, and/or structural units which, in the committee's opinion, revealed significant shortcomings.)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more appropriate institutional mechanism for evaluating the contribution of translation work to the research base would be beneficial. • A more robust governance strategy for the arts and humanities would help maximise the scientific impact of the individual research groupings
<p>Assessment proposal to the Minister of Education and Research</p>	<p>To grant positive evaluation</p>	<p>no special comments</p>

Feedback

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<p>Feedback for institution (This question should be answered only if the institution asked for feedback from the evaluation committee in the self-report (about up to three specific areas of R&D which it finds to be currently important, e.g., related to its development plan).)</p>	<p>The University asked for recommendations concerning development of career models of academic staff, strategic development of R&D and merging of doctoral study programmes.</p> <p>In order to remain attractive for talented researchers, it is important that the University offers them both short-term and longer-term job prospects and perspectives. This requires a review and re-balancing of baseline allocations and competitive project funding. The task of the University is to communicate the explicit performance expectations of its academic staff and to systematically review these with the researchers on a regular basis. As to the R&D development, it is essential that the university or faculty management devises an ambitious yet realistic vision about its position in the academic landscape and discusses this with the researchers. The evaluation team noted a gap between the management and the researchers in this respect.</p>
<p>Suggestions for unit, institution, state etc (As appropriate, committee can give additional feedback for the structural unit, the institution, or the State (please specify whom feedback is directed to) according to the directive assessment criteria for regular evaluation (article 7).</p>	<p>Self-Evaluation: The self-evaluation report should be redesigned in order to prioritise analysis over description. The employment of descriptors such as ‘add facts’ is counterproductive and tends to lead to an emphasis on product over process throughout. The inclusion of a final section on strategic forward planning would be a more coherent summation of the self-evaluation exercise, while also providing continuity from one evaluation exercise to another.</p> <p>Evaluation of Scientific Impact: The panel has encountered wide-spread problems concerning the evaluation of publications in the humanities. The academic community of arts and humanities clearly lacks confidence in the criteria for scientific impact as presently formulated. What is needed for a more equitable and effective evaluation is: (i) Appropriate credit should be given for research undertaken in the production of monographs, the editing of and contributions to multi-authored work. (ii) The evaluation system should take account of the scientific quality of a publication irrespective of the language in which it is written. A multi-lingual system of evaluation is a matter of balancing three variables: (1) the scope (2) the subject and (3) audience. (iii) The current system fails to capture the range of research and the various modes in which it is produced. This is particularly evident in the absence of criteria for non-text based research [‘artistic’, ‘practice-based’]. A bench-marking exercise against other European models would be useful.</p> <p>Societal Impact: The academic community requires a more lucid definition of what is understood by societal impact; this</p>

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	<p>should be substantiated by exemplars drawn from a much broader range of domains than the impact of research on the economy. It is clear that enterprise and entrepreneurial approaches do not appear to be at the forefront of most institutions visited. There is also a need to outline the relationship between scientific and societal impact for research in these fields such that the criteria may provide an appropriate and effective framework for quality assessment of the research.</p> <p>Doctoral Programmes: While the research base for doctoral programmes is generally satisfactory, there are widespread issues around completion rates that are linked to extremely low funding levels. The current provision in Estonian is out of line with other European countries. Many students are by necessity in full-time employment, and carrying out their doctoral research part-time.</p> <p>Academic leadership: There is a lack of strategic leadership in (almost) all institutions. In many cases, the dean of the faculty or the director of a non-university research institute have a clear vision about the future of their unit, but are not successful in conveying it to the heads of department and the (senior) researchers. Therefore appropriate professional training and development in strategic management for researchers at various stages of their career is necessary.</p>