

Evalveerimine 2010 Application EV6 Estonian University of Life Sciences, Biosciences and Environment

Expert's opinion: The volume and level of R&D activities in comparison to international criteria.

Subcriteria for evaluation	Evaluation	Comments
The research and development in the field being evaluated is characterized by a sufficient volume of financing taking into account the particularities of the field of research and the profile of the institution.	Positive	Rather a low proportion of staff are research active, but the PIs are responsible for raising a good level of research funding, including some large grants. There is some inefficiency in having many small grants. The majority of the funding is national, but there has been a significant growth of EC-funded research in FP6 and FP7, with involvement in 13 projects.
Research and development at the institution is characterized by contemporary and innovative range of topics for research.	Positive	The R&D strategy is somewhat uneven. A key requirement is to support the sustainable management of the Estonian environment, and to develop a multi-disciplinary approach to agro-systems and environment. Some research themes are rather traditional, reflecting the institution's history and purpose, but there is evidence of some cutting edge research.
The institution has international cooperation projects in the field being evaluated and/or participates in various international cooperation networks.	Positive	International collaboration enables attraction of more PhD students and researchers from abroad, and recent financing schemes in Estonia have helped this develop. There are PhD students from abroad; and one Post-Doc will begin a project in April 2010. There is shared supervision with foreign supervisors, and some defences abroad.
Experts' summary assessment	Positive	The staff numbers and research income are sufficient to produce high-level research output, but the transformation of this institution from its former role is still in progress. Nevertheless there is evidence of some cutting edge science. It will be a benefit that the academic mission is coherent.

Expert's opinion: R&D infrastructure (working premises and auxiliary facilities).

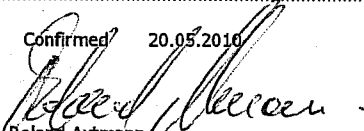
Subcriteria for evaluation	Evaluation	Comments
The institution's research groups in the field being evaluated have at their disposal the necessary working and auxiliary facilities (premises).	Positive	The University is well provided with space. There are several well-equipped laboratories, although space and facilities are not of uniform quality across all research units. The outstations are actively used in research, but the quality of research facilities there appears to be less advanced.
The working facilities (premises) at the disposal of the institution's research groups in the field being evaluated are modern and fit for purpose.	Positive	Although there are some very good laboratory facilities, a problem for inter-disciplinary research is that the laboratories are located in many different buildings, rendering inefficient the use of equipment, and inhibiting regular everyday communication.
The institution's research groups in the field being evaluated have at their disposal, in the case of experimental themes, the necessary equipment and instruments.	Positive	There is a substantial inventory of laboratory equipment, but different groups have access to infrastructure of varying quality. However, there appears to be an adequate coverage of the requirements, as well as being several collaborative arrangements for access to other facilities.
The equipment and instruments at the disposal of the institution's research groups in the field being evaluated are, in the case of the experimental themes, modern and fit for purpose.	Positive	Some equipment is relatively new, except for items that might be expected to have a longer life. There seems to be an adequate technical infrastructure, and a replacement strategy.
The institution's research groups in the field being evaluated have access to databases, specialized literature and other research infrastructures.	Positive	There is ready access to scientific literature at the university library and via international e-journal and research databases, and active scientific communication through numerous international networks and scientific organizations. The University also maintains collections that are used actively for research and international collaboration.
Experts' summary assessment	Positive	There is broadly an adequate level of access to research infrastructure, and in some areas, recent investment has brought the facilities up to a high international standard.

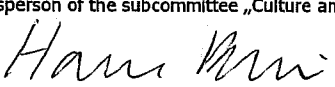
Expert's opinion: Qualification of researchers in comparison to international criteria.

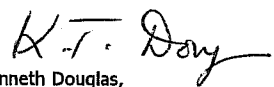
Subcriteria for evaluation	Evaluation	Comments
A sufficient number of research staff are employed at the institution taking into account the volume and particularities of the R&D activities of the institution and the field being evaluated.	Positive	The volume of staff to perform the teaching and research functions of the University is adequate.

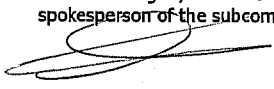
A sufficient number of the research staff have a recognized academic degree corresponding to Estonian legislative acts.	Negative	The staff include a relatively low proportion of research active staff. There is a surprisingly high percentage of the PIs who lack PhDs, and the percentage of staff with PhDs is lower than than in many research-active Universities.
Doctoral dissertations have been successfully supervised in the last five years.	Negative	There is an imbalance between the number of graduate students and the number of doctoral defences, and in the past it appears that completion times for PhDs have been rather long, with an unacceptable level of drop-out. However, this seems to be improving, and the majority of PhD students now appear to be on target to complete in 4-5 years. In some areas, there is said to be a lack of good supervisors and, thus, there is a training problem; this is being tackled by shared supervision under a new protocol.
Research staff in the field being evaluated have received sufficient national or international honours and/or awards.	Positive	There is a rather undifferentiated but sufficient list of different levels of esteem indicator, mainly national in level. There is a useful summary of the highest level awards in Estonia (eg National Science Awards). There was limited evidence of international esteem indicators.
Research staff have published per researcher in the last 5 years a sufficient number of articles in international journals or peer-reviewed research monographs taking into account the particularities of the field of research being evaluated.	Negative	The proportion of international outputs, and the overall number published, were relatively low, and depended on the productivity of a limited number of active groups. There is a high productivity of "Other" outputs, many being short pieces for encyclopaedias and popular science articles.
Research staff have filed applications for patents or for plant variety rights certificates in the name of the institution in the last 5 years.	Positive	There were several patents, mainly related to methods in veterinary medicine, and were also a number of approved plant certificates (Plant Breeders Rights) mostly for tree fruit and berry cultivars bred for adaptation to northern climatic conditions. The latter presumably provide an income stream.
Experts' summary assessment	Positive	The institution is in transition, but is making rapid progress to improve both its doctoral training and the number of defences, and its productivity in international published outputs. As a result there is some unevenness in the level of activity (both in quantity and quality), but there is clear evidence that a trajectory of improvement is under way.
Subcriteria for evaluation	Evaluation	Comments
Final assessment	Positive	The institution is in transition, but is making rapid progress to improve its research infrastructure, doctoral training and the number of defences, and its productivity in international published outputs. As a result there is some unevenness in the level of infrastructure provision and research activity (both in quantity and quality), but there is clear evidence that a trajectory of improvement is under way. Some of the work is already of a high international standard, and future prospects are good because of the coherent mission of the University.

Confirmed 20.05.2010


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