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Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre

Evaluation of Research in Information Sciences in Estonia

Institute evaluated

Tallinn Pedagogical University

Department of Information Studies

**Evaluation dates:
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Expert team:

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Part I

General Overview

At the request of the Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre, Tallinn (EHEAC), the evaluation team (hereafter named the “Team”) visited an institute in Estonia, carrying out research activities in information studies. The evaluation team comprised Professor Richard Hartley (Manchester Metropolitan University), Professor Maija-Leena Huotari (University of Helsinki) and prof. Pertti Vakkari (University of Tampere).

The institution to be evaluated was:

Tallinn Pedagogical University (TPU)

Department of Information Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences

- Chair of Book Studies (Head: Prof. Tiiu Reimo)
- Chair of Librarianship (Head: Prof. Aira Lepik)
- Chair of Information Studies (Head: Lecturer Elviine Uverskaja)

The Team was provided in advance with a self-assessment report from the institution, prepared by the members of their research groupings.

After a brief orientation meeting at EHEAC, the Team visited the institution over one day. At a series of meetings staff members of the various Chairs discussed their work. During these presentations as well as during the subsequent discussions additional information about the research activities was provided. This included additional documents such as copies of published papers. In addition the Team met with a group comprising the Head of the Department and the leaders of the three research groups.

Approach to the evaluation

The Team was asked to:

1. Judge the activities of research and development in the units evaluated and the research topics implemented by them to ensure the governmental funding for internationally recognised research and development.
2. Identify deficiencies in the activities of research and development unit.
3. Give recommendations on the development concerning research and development and research areas to the state of Estonia.

The Team received the following materials: A working schedule, principles and criteria for evaluation of the research units, evaluation guidelines for the ranking of research units, and a self-evaluation report created by the Department.

On a first evaluation point, the *quality of the research activities* was considered. This assessment is largely based on the records of scientific publications.

<i>Excellent</i>	<i>The majority of the submitted works are at a high international level and virtually all others at a good international level.</i>
<i>Excellent to good</i>	<i>At least one third of the submitted works are at a high international level and many others at a good international level, these together comprise a clear majority.</i>
<i>Good</i>	<i>The majority of the submitted works are at least at a good international level and virtually all others at a fair international level</i>
<i>Good to satisfactory</i>	<i>At least one third of the submitted works are at a good international level and many others at a fair international level, these together comprise a clear majority</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>The majority of the submitted works are at least at a fair international level</i>
<i>Satisfactory to unsatisfactory</i>	<i>A minority of the submitted works are at a fair international level</i>
<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>None, or virtually none, of the submitted works are at a fair international level</i>

Regarding the grading of the research activities, the Team was instructed by the EHEAC to reserve the term **excellent** for groups, which were found to be among the best 10% of the European groups in the corresponding field. Similarly, the term **excellent to good** should be used if the evaluated group was found to be among the best 25 % of corresponding European groups. The full scale comprised 7 levels, in addition to the highest ones the grades are **good**, **good to satisfactory**, **satisfactory**, **satisfactory to unsatisfactory**, and **unsatisfactory**.

Secondly, the *overall capability* of a research unit was evaluated based on a the combined assessment of the following criteria (each graded in three levels):

	Grade 0	Grade 1	Grade 2
Originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activity	descriptive, no novelty	some novelty/originality	original/novel
The strategy and perspective of research	no or bad strategy, no or unclear perspective for further research	fair strategy and perspective for further research	clear strategy and very perspective for further research
Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas	no multidisciplinarity, no relevant for other research areas	some multidisciplinarity, some relevance	good multidisciplinarity, good relevance for other research areas
The competence of research groups and their capability for development	low competence	there is competence, but no young postgraduate and postdoctoral students	there is competence and postgraduate and postdoctoral students
National and international co-operation	no particular national and international co-operation	some national/international co-operation	good or tight national/international co-operation
Success in applying for funds and grants	no particular success	fair success	applying successfully for grants and funds

Excellent - 12-10 (total grade), **Good** - 9-7 (total grade), **Satisfactory** - 6-4 (total grade) and **Unsatisfactory** - 3-0 (total grade).

As the result of this assessment one of the four grades **excellent, good, satisfactory** or **unsatisfactory** was given for the group.

Thirdly, the *implementation opportunities* for the research results and their importance for the Estonian society were addressed.

Finally, on a fourth evaluation point *the critical comments and recommendations* were asked to be given by the expert team.

Part II General Comments

The Expert Team was charged with reviewing the research work at the Department of Information Studies, Tallinn Pedagogical University. The Team was provided with a detailed self assessment document produced by the Department. The creation of this document was in itself a major undertaking for the Department and we believe that its very production has had an important impact on the Department in that it has caused the staff to reflect on their achievements, future directions and priorities. The self assessment document was generally well produced but it contained some errors and the Team was provided with a series of amendments on arrival at the Department. Furthermore the team felt that there was some confusion within the Department in the way that publications were assigned to the various headings. To take a specific example, an output at the Northumbria International Conference on Performance Measurement in Libraries and Information Services was not listed as a refereed publication but one of the Visiting Team has been involved in the organization of this series of conferences and was aware that papers are refereed.

The Team found the site visit very informative. The meeting with the Senior Management of the University was appreciated for the way in which it set the meeting with the Department into the wider context of the University and Faculty and their plans and aspirations. The willingness of the Department to amend the planned programme at short notice to enable us to incorporate an additional meeting was welcomed. Thus in addition to the meetings with colleagues in each of the research groups, it was helpful to meet with the Head of Department and the leaders of the research groups to discuss issues which cut across the operation of the whole Department. The opportunity to peruse a display of the Department's scholarly publications also aided the team in reaching its conclusions.

The Team was highly impressed by the level of activity and achievement of a very small but highly committed group of staff. We are aware that in the very short space of time since re-independence, the Department has remarkable achievements to its credit. These include the development and subsequent renewal of the curricula and a major contribution to the development of the library and information profession within Estonia. In addition the Department has been involved in several development projects and a research culture is clearly emerging. The Department has received at least seven research and development grants from the Estonian Science Foundation, UNESCO, Estonian Foundation for Informatics, Baltic Computer Systems Itera Ltd. and Manchester Metropolitan University together with involvement in several European projects. The Department has also produced a considerable number of publications both inside Estonia and internationally. Whilst the number of doctoral thesis completions in the Department is currently small, the completion

rate compares favorably with other departments within the Faculty. These are considerable achievements by a small group in a short space of time during which resources have been very constrained. The Team was impressed by the deep commitment to scholarly activity demonstrated by the Department; this commitment was clearly demonstrated both by the fact that several of the Department's research and development projects are subsidized from staff salaries and the enthusiasm exhibited by the staff during our discussions with them. There are constructively critical comments later in this report but the Team believes that these comments must be viewed in the context of these notable achievements and commitment to scholarly activity.

Later in the report, there are specific comments relating to each area of research activity however there are a number of general issues which the Team believes require urgent attention. The first of these relates to the Estonian Science Foundation(ESF). The fact that Information Studies does not exist within its current classification of disciplines has had a serious negative impact on the Department's ability to generate research funds: proposals have had to be written so that they could be presented to other subjects. Furthermore the Department has not been eligible for Estonian Science Foundation funding since 2002 because its research had not been subjected to external evaluation. The team recommends that as a matter of urgency the issue of the ESF's classification should be rectified so that a group of people who have already demonstrated achievement and further potential can be treated equally with colleagues in other disciplines. An understandable and perhaps inevitable consequence of this situation has been the Department's heavy involvement in essentially development projects albeit ones with a research component wherever possible rather than purely research projects.

Secondly the Team notes that whilst the Department has undertaken a critical self-analysis of its strengths and weaknesses and consequently has developed a list of "Directions for further development", it has not developed an action plan with targets, intended completion dates and resource implications. The Team believes that such a detailed "Action Plan" is an important tool to enable the Department to develop further.

Thirdly the Team did not detect evidence of monitoring or evaluation or progress and achievement at the levels of Department, Faculty and University within Tallinn Pedagogical University. In short it appeared that research was left very much to researchers to conduct as and when they were able rather than research being a process managed at various levels. In country's such as our own, it has been found beneficial to develop research management structures to increase research degree completion rates and ensure that scarce research funds are applied effectively. We suggest that Tallinn Pedagogical University should consider the benefits of this approach though, of course, we do not presume to suggest how this should be achieved!

Fourthly the Team noted the importance attached by the State to applied research which is relevant to the development of Estonian society. We note that it can often be challenging to generate publications of international interest from research which is primarily of local or national interest.

Finally the Team noted that the level of financial support for research students was so limited that those students had no alternative but to conduct supposedly full time research alongside full time employment. This situation inevitably has a number of consequences for research development. First of all it influences the choice of research question in that a research

student whose research question is of direct relevance to the employing organization is more likely to receive support in either time or money from the employer. In addition it inhibits the speed with which a research student's research is completed, reduces the completion rate for research degrees and thus limits the development of a pool of researchers willing and able to further develop the discipline.

Part III

Evaluation of institution

Department of Information Studies (*Head: researcher Elviine Uverskaja*)

The main fields of scientific work of the Department include:

1. Book and writing in Estonian cultural context
2. Library in a new information environment
3. New learning environment and services

The staff of the department

The Department of Information Studies comprises of three units: Chair of Book Studies, Chair of Librarianship, Chair of Information Science. Promotion of continuing education is supported by the Centre for Information Management. In 1999-2001 the Department was headed by researcher Sirje Virkus, since January 2002 the Head of the Department is researcher Elviine Uverskaja.

Research Grants from Estonian Science Foundation

Book in the Estonian cultural context (Grant Nr. 3846) Grantholder: L. Aarma. Research team: M. Lott, A. Möldre, T. Reimo, P. Juhani, K.-R. Kont, M. Põllu, M. Randma, R. Tammai, O. Teder. Duration of the project: 1999-2002. Finances: 173,000 EEK

Performance Measurement and Evaluation of Research Libraries in Estonia (Grant Nr. 4039). Grant holder: A. Lepik. Research team: A. Lepik, A. Nuut, T. Liivamägi, M.-N. Ilus. Duration: 2000-2002. Finances: 196 000 EEK

Study and Implementation of Distance Education in the New Learning Environment in Estonia (Grant No 3479). Grant holder: S.Virkus. Research team: Voldemar Kolga, Kristel Marmor (Linamaa), Anne Uukkivi (Samp), Marge Kõrvits, Kadi Erlach, Veronika. Rogalevich, Kristi Kulu, Vello Randla. Duration: 1998-2001. Finances: 120 000 EEK

Other research grants and applied studies

History of the Estonian book in the 16-19th centuries. Research team: T. Reimo, L. Aarma, L. Dubjeva, K. Tiisel, K. Bobrov, S. Jantson, G. Kangur, R. Tammai. Duration: 1998-2006. Financing: The studies have been funded from the team members' salaries and from the doctoral target funding. During 1999-2002 the research was covered by L. Aarma's research grant from the Estonian Science Foundation.

Estonian Book in the 20th and in the 21st centuries. Research team: A. Möldre (leader), M. Lott, A. Valmas, M. Järve, S. Metsar, E. Barkala, K.-R. Kont, I. Vaaro. Duration: 1998-2006. Financing: The studies have been funded from the team members' salaries and from the doctoral target funding. During 1999-2002 the research was covered by L. Aarma's research grant from the Estonian Science Foundation.

Preservation of national written heritage. Research team: T. Reimo, K. Konsa. Duration: 1997 – 2004. Financing: Research has been funded by the doctoral target funding, the further cooperation projects by UNESCO target funding.

Library in context: impact of social development on librarianship. Research team: A. Lepik (leader); T. Valm, K. Viigipuu, E. Koitmaa, M.-N. Iius, S. Sogenbits. Duration: 1998-2006. Financing: Research is carried out on the expense of the salaries and from the doctoral target funding (since 2004).

Impact of Information Literacy on Student Learning. Research team: Sirjõ Virkus. Duration: 2001–2004. Finances: 556 640 EEK as research grant from the Manchester Metropolitan University

Public sector information and usage social information in public sector. Research team: E. Uverskaja, Ü.-M. Papp, L. Tüür. Duration: 2000. Finances: 80 000 EEK - research grant from Estonian Foundation of Informatics

Principles of content and structure of citizen's information portal. Research team: E. Uverskaja, Ü.-M. Papp. Duration: 2001-2002. Finances: 190 000 EEK - grant of the Ministry of Economics and Communication.

The creation of the structure and text compiling for citizen's information portal. Research team: E. Uverskaja, Ü.-M. Papp, A. Kuiv, T. Nesterko. Duration: 2002. Finances: 45 000 - ordered by Baltic Computer Systems Itera LTD

Knowledge management and usage of information in public sector. Research team: L. Tüür, E. Uverskaja, K. Riismaa, K. Luht. Duration: 2000-2003. Finances: the project has been funded on the expense of the team members' salaries and doctoral target funding.

Research group: Book and writing in Estonian cultural context (*Leader: Tiiu Reimo*)

General Comments

The group has a long and strong research tradition at the Department. The research is focused both on the earlier Estonian book history in the 16-19th centuries and in the 20th century. The work of the group has been successful in terms of the number of doctoral degrees completed, and of the quality of the research. The two doctoral degrees finished at the Department in this decade originate from this research group.

In general, the quality of the research published is at a fair European level especially in the old book history. Most of the publications are written in Estonian, and thus directed to the Estonian audience. This is understandable due to the importance of the topic to the development of Estonian culture. However, the results and ideas created in the group are of interest to the European, and wider international research community in book and cultural history.

The group is oriented towards basic research, although its results have also practical applications. An example is the work done for assessing the condition of old collections of printed records. Their results can be applied in libraries and archives world wide.

The leaders of the group seem to have a relatively clear vision of the most important research problems to be tackled in the future. A serious threat to the realisation of the vision and to the continuity of the research is the current lack of doctoral grants, although the performance of the group in educating PhDs is good. It also seems that there are potential candidates to recruit, although restricted language capability (German, Russian, Latin) of the recruits may be a restriction in the future especially in the old book history. On the other hand, as a

consequence of the success in doctoral education, the group has two post doctoral researchers. This is a good sign for the continuity of the research.

The group has intensive co-operation with the professional community. It has also some co-operation with the University of Tartu. The restructuring of TPU will create opportunities for co-operation with the scholars in history and literature. The group is aware of this opportunity. At the moment it is difficult to estimate the contribution of the group in this respect.

There is also research co-operation with universities in the Baltic sea region broadly defined. It seems that the partners are carefully selected based on joint research interest and the co-operation focused on clearly chosen topics. It has produced joint research seminars and scholarly book projects on shared themes of interest.

The group has been fairly successful in applying research grants. It has received funding from ESF, Unesco, and Open-Institute-Budapest. Moreover, the head of the group has received in the nineties personal grants from well-known European research institutions.

Evaluation of Research Activities

The Team of evaluators judged the overall quality of the research to be *good*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

The Team of evaluators judged the overall capability of the research to be *good*.

	Grade
Originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activity	2
The strategy and perspective of research	2
Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas	1
The competence of research groups and their capability for development	2
National and international co-operation	1
Success in applying for funds and grants	1

The implementation opportunities for the research results and their importance for Estonian society

The results of the group can be applied at least in two ways for developing Estonian society. First, the work done in developing evaluation methods of the condition of old printed records has practical applications in preserving valuable old collections. The group has also potential to contribute to the digital preservation of Estonian cultural heritage. Second, the results concerning the cultural history especially during the Soviet era are important for the national identity and understanding. The group has disseminated its research results actively in the professional and Estonian community.

Recommendations

The research results created in the group are on a fair European level and of interest to the international research community. They should be reported more frequently in refereed international publications and conferences.

The group has a good performance in educating PhDs within the Department of Information Studies and the Faculty of Social Sciences. Currently the group does not have doctoral students due to the lack of grants, which may harm the continuity of research. It is recommended that doctoral grants be allocated to the group.

Book history is an interdisciplinary field. The group has created focused and functional international contacts with the universities in the Baltic sea region and central Europe. We encourage them to deepen this co-operation due to its potential contribution in the field of book history. It is also recommended that the group should establish more firm contacts with scholars with similar interest in the Estonian universities and within TPU.

The focus of the group is on basic research. We recommend that the group would enhance this trend of following the academic norms of research.

Research group: Library in a new information environment (*Leader: Aira Lepik*)

General Comments

The Team noted that the research area covered by this research group is very wide. Potentially it covers all library types and a large range of issues from information seeking behaviour of differing user groups through retrieval effectiveness and usability of electronic information products and services to a range of management issues e.g. marketing and performance measures and extending to the legal and social environment in which libraries operate. Thus the group attempts to undertake research in a broader area than many Library and Information Studies departments.

The Team observed that this research group has developed very strong working links with the profession and these links clearly include the active involvement of very senior figures in the Estonian library community. The Team believes that these close links are both a strength and a weakness. Clearly these links ensure that the research undertaken by the group is grounded in the real world problems facing libraries in Estonia: a clear strength for the group. However, a strength can also be viewed as a weakness. In our discussions with the group, we formed the opinion that at present the research issues addressed by the group are closely associated with the practical problems of library management. This has resulted in the scanning of the international library and information scene for developments which can be adapted for use in Estonia. Thus whilst this approach is likely to produce practical solutions for national and local library development, it may inhibit the opportunities for the group to contribute to the development of original and innovative research work in the field and to produce work of interest to the wider international community.

The Team noted that the group currently has one doctoral student and that the group leader is the Head of the Faculty Doctoral School.

The Team noted that the research group is aware of the potential for increased collaboration within the Faculty specifically with the Department of Public Administration and the Department of Sociology.

The Team noted that performance measurement and the use of performance indicators was one well-defined area of activity where this group has made some international contacts and has started to make some contribution to the international literature.

The Team observed that a main line of activity has been the introduction of the application of marketing concepts to libraries and believes that this is probably novel within the Baltic states even if accepted elsewhere. Additionally the Team noted the group's interests in diverse areas such as relating university library service to measured demand and in the development of library services to young people and to people in rural areas.

The Team noted that the group placed great emphasis on the use of quantitative data in its work and feels that perhaps this has been somewhat to the neglect of qualitative approaches which can be adopted profitably.

The Team was surprised to learn that there are a number of researchers within the National Library of Estonia with specific responsibilities for data collection about libraries across the country.

The Team felt that activity on areas other than performance measurement and library statistics was less well focussed and that there is a need for the group to consider carefully how its work can be more focussed into well-defined areas.

The Team believes that there is evidence of publication in Estonian and some evidence of publication for wider audiences particularly in the Baltic region. Indeed the group confirmed that its priorities to date had been publication in Estonian, followed by presentation at international conferences.

The Team had some difficulty reaching the evaluation grades for both research activities and overall capability of this research group which are indicated in the following sections of the report. However we have used the criteria and grades of the Agency to the best of our ability. Nevertheless we should perhaps record that the strict application of these grades has in this case produced a result which does not reflect the opportunities with which this research group is presented. There are considerable research challenges ahead for the international library and information science community in the development and delivery of quality information services in an increasingly digital world. If the group is able to follow the advice offered below and in the final recommendations of the report there will be opportunity for it to perform at a higher level than we have been able to evaluate it on the evidence which we gathered from the self evaluation document and from our meeting with the group.

Evaluation of Research Activities

The Team of evaluators judged the overall quality of the research to be **satisfactory**.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

The Team of evaluators judged the overall capability of the research to be **satisfactory**.

	Grade
Originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activity	1
The strategy and perspective of research	1
Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas	1
The competence of research groups and their capability for development	1
National and international co-operation	1
Success in applying for funds and grants	1

The implementation opportunities for the research results and their importance for Estonian society

Given that the group has such close contacts with the professional community its research work is clearly relevant to and important for the continued development of library services to Estonian society. Thus the work of this group is clearly relevant to and important for Estonia as it can make positive contributions to the development and effective use of electronic information resources which will be crucial for creating a knowledge-based society.

Recommendations

The group should consider focussing its activities in a smaller number of discrete, clearly defined areas. At present there is too great a danger of its efforts being spread too thinly across too broad an area.

The group should develop a research agenda which is more closely associated with the international research agenda in its chosen areas of investigation rather than an agenda which is currently driven by the development of libraries within Estonia. This seems particularly important given the existence of the research and development work at the National Library of Estonia.

Those members of the group working in the area of performance measurement might wish to consider the potential of adding qualitative approaches to their quantitative work and to this end there may be opportunities for productive discussions with colleagues in the New Learning Environments and Services Group regarding their respective methodological approaches.

It seems possible to us that by combining its interest in the development of library services to young people with the work of colleagues concerning citizens' information use and a citizens' portal, that the group may be able to carve out an area of work that is both of value to Estonian society and novel within the international information science community.

The work relating academic library services to the identified needs of specific user groups sounded novel and should be exposed to a wider international audience at the earliest opportunity.

The group should be more selective in its publication policy and should seek to place a greater number of papers in internationally recognised and refereed journals. This should lead to both increased international collaboration and increased recognition of the work of the group.

Research group: New learning environment and services (*Leader: Sirje Virkus*)

General Comments

This is a relatively large research group with four doctoral students. However, currently the lack of post-doctoral students limits the intellectual competence of the group to moderate.

The research focus is divided into two main sub-groups:

- 1) Distance education, e-learning, new electronic learning environments, information literacy/competence, digital libraries
- 2) Public sector information, citizens' use of public information, e-government & citizens' information portals, knowledge management, information literacy.

The methodological aspects linking the research interests of these two sub-groups are the human-centered approach to ICT, the constructivist viewpoint and the application of qualitative methods of inquiry. This approach to examining electronic information provision, development of electronic public information services, and use of information and construction of knowledge can be regarded as a novel approach within the field of information studies in the Baltic countries. Moreover, this approach has some relevance in the wider international context.

Another common theme is the focus on information literacy/competence. Research in this area has increased in prominence internationally in recent years and the group can be congratulated for being up-to-date with the choice of this joint theme of interest. There is a clear need for empirical research in this area both at the information systems' and the organizational levels. We can expect that researchers will benefit from each others' work and create synergy, maybe even beyond their own boundaries with the research group on Libraries in the New Information Environment.

The Team got the impression that the vision guiding the development of research in this area has not been totally clear. The focus on distance education was a deliberate choice in 1994 and it has proved very fruitful. However, the future direction is somewhat obscure.

The group has established a high number of multidisciplinary contacts within the Faculty of Social Sciences (e.g. education, psychology), the Faculty of Natural Sciences (informatics) and at the national level. The aim is to collaborate even more with the discipline of education in the near future, as the researchers have participated in the international conferences of this field in particular. Moreover, there is a high number of projects conducted with a variety of international partners in the Baltic and Nordic countries, Europe, USA and Canada. In these terms we can say that the research group is very internationally oriented and has established a wide international contact network within ten years.

This international and national multidisciplinary collaboration has enabled the group to acquire most of the Department's external funding. Many of the projects, though, are development rather than research projects in nature, and have contributed e.g. to setting up the IT infrastructure of the Department. However, the group has to be congratulated for getting a research component integrated in to some of these projects like e.g. in the EU-funded project

TEMPUS. The Team found it constructive that the researchers expressed their interest in setting up more focused research projects in the near future.

The publications produced are high in terms of quantity rather than in quality. Most of them are published in Estonia, and the number of international refereed papers and book chapters is still low. The publication policy is not documented yet, but the issue has been discussed between the group members. The group is aware that more high quality publishing channels should be deployed. The emphasis on disseminating research findings is placed on the national level first, in particular in the sub-group of the public information services.

The group was also aware of the overlaps of the research interests with the research group of Libraries in the New Information Environment.

Evaluation of Research Activities

The Team of evaluators judged the overall quality of the research to be from *good to satisfactory*.

Evaluation of Overall Capability

The Team of evaluators judged the overall capability of the research to be *good*.

	Grade
Originality/novelty of past and ongoing research activity	1
The strategy and perspective of research	1
Multidisciplinarity and relevance for other research areas	2
The competence of research groups and their capability for development	1
National and international co-operation	2
Success in applying for funds and grants	2

The implementation opportunities for the research results and their importance for Estonian society

The development of Estonian society has initiated the major lines of research within this group. Research in new learning environments emerged as the European perspective started to be adapted in 1994. It is clear that research in this area is highly appreciated and will have an impact on the development of new teaching methods (e-learning, e-curricula) as well as of information management in the public sector (e-government) in Estonia. Research carried out in the area of e-government could contribute to the development of the civic information society in Estonia. Moreover, the research perspective on information content provided via ICT would contribute to the development of the knowledge-based society.

Recommendations

The vision for the future orientation and choice of research topics should be more clearly stated.

The Team recommends that in its future research work the group will insist in having a basic research component in its applications for external research funding. This should be taken into account, for instance, in such research proposals as the 6th framework programme with an application related to setting up curricula for electronic degree programmes within the Bologna process (e-Bologna).

The Team recommends that future effort with applying research funding should be targeted to basic research with very focused themes. Moreover, the group should be more selective with international research partners and concentrate on academically well-established research partners.

Disseminating research findings to the wider international community should be encouraged especially in the area of public information management. The publication policy should be documented and more work should be targeted to peer-reviewed, international journals; the norms of which doctoral students should be made aware. International collaboration and editorial work in international journals supports this development.

The Team believes that there are opportunities for productive collaboration across the three research groups and recommends that these opportunities will be thoroughly investigated.

Part IV

Summary of evaluation

The execution of the evaluation exercise was facilitated by the provision to the team of a detailed self evaluation document well in advance of the evaluation visit and by a well-structured programme of meetings for the evaluation team. The staff of EHEAC were always efficient and helpful. The staff of the Tallinn Pedagogical University were responsive to the Team's request for an additional meeting and to all requests for further information.

Overall we found the staff to be enthusiastic about the development of the discipline and deeply committed to their scholarly activity. As noted in Part II of the report, we were very impressed by the scale of the achievement in curriculum development, professional development and research and development in a short period of time. The groups have already developed a considerable publication track record and have demonstrated their ability to bid successfully for external funds albeit more in the area of development than research. We found the staff of the Department to be aware of both their achievements and the limitations of those achievements. Whilst the Department has achieved much, there is scope for further improvement. We hope that the recommendations in this report will provide the Department with constructive advice which will enable to further improve its achievements.

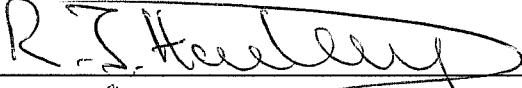
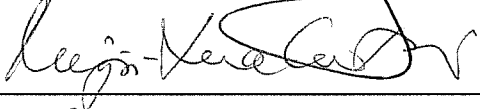
As Estonia develops a knowledge-based society there is considerable potential for the Department of Information Studies to make a notable contribution to that development. An Information or Knowledge-based society is all too often seen as simply a matter of Information Technology. In reality crucial components are information content and the effective organization of that content for effective use. These are areas where the Department of Information Studies can make a major contribution. The Department has demonstrated that it can deliver in many areas and now it has the challenge of making an important contribution to the development of Estonia in the coming years.

VI. Acknowledgements

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