

Adopted

Pursuant to Senate Regulation No.6

Dated 20 February 2012

Tallinn University Academic Charter

The Academic Charter of Tallinn University (hereinafter *Charter*) formulates the way in which Tallinn University (hereinafter *university*) defines itself as an educational, research and cultural establishment in the context of Tallinn, Estonia, Europe and the world. It regulates the university's educational and philosophical principles and interprets the basic values of university life and academic culture of the university. All other university regulations are pursuant to the principles embodied in the Charter.

Educational and philosophical principles of Tallinn University

The university mission is to support the sustainable development of Estonia through research and the application of research results, the preparation of intellectuals, public debate and facilitation of academic partnership.

Following the principles of the *Magna Charta* of the European universities, Tallinn University further develops the traditions started in medieval Europe and the goal of the university is to develop and impart knowledge irrespective of religion, ideology, economic pressure and governmental policy and to nurture a community of scholars and students dedicated to that activity.

For its members, Tallinn University is an interdisciplinary and creative development environment that supports the growth of everyone both professionally and personally and is based on the principle of academic freedom. Every member of the university independently sets the goals for his/her academic development and is responsible for his/her decisions and the results of his/her actions. The university provides all motivated students with the opportunity to acquire both the competence corresponding to their specialization, as well as the knowledge and skills corresponding to their broad and varied intellectual interests. For its teaching and support staff, the university is an intellectual environment with a constant dialogue between different subject fields and the acquired synergic knowledge is matched with the development needs of modern life. Tallinn University is a research-based university and does everything possible to create the best possible conditions to enable free and effective

research and creative work for students, at the same time honouring the principles of the code of ethics of Estonian researchers. The university is dynamic and open in all respects and constantly introduces new knowledge and ideas into Estonia from around the world.

Tallinn University is an institution that develops society as a whole and enriches the cultural life of Tallinn and Estonia in general. The university contributes to the growth of critical self-reflection of society by favouring the participation of its scholars in the discussion of the problems within society and encouraging its members to be intellectually active in the public arena. The university understands its role in actively shaping Estonian society by developing the attitudes and values necessary in a knowledge-based society. The university interprets its participation in the development of society as using its competence to assess the general development of society, to analyse and acknowledge its needs and to support knowledge-based governance. Part of its interpretation is to also create and communicate innovative knowledge that is future oriented, to create and develop Estonian as scientific language and to support the development of the Estonian culture in various ways.

The university's participation in society's development occurs mainly through:

- The University Board of Governors, a body that unites people whose views and opinions closely approximate the university ideology, who hold leading positions in politics, economics, research and cultural life, who are open-minded and whose way of thinking is future oriented;
- The university development activity, providing initiatives that foster cooperation with the Estonian and global business community, creating joint programmes, allowing input into social innovation and development of the creative industries environment;
- The creation and development of opportunities for lifelong learning in the university that reflect the needs of society;
- Collaboration with the city of Tallinn, a process that relies on the *Cooperation Agreement* between the University and the City. The aim of this agreement is to develop the intellectual environment of the city and support the activities of the city that are specifically related to the knowledge spheres of the university;
- Cooperation of the university with the regions of Estonia, through initiatives that rely on the *Regional Development Strategy* of the university. This strategy aims to assist in the development of regional education and culture by collaborating with other influencers in similar fields, in order to develop regional centres of competence based at the colleges in Haapsalu and Rakvere;

- Cooperation of the university with the city of Tallinn and other institutions of culture, education, research and healthcare, whose principles are embodied in cooperation agreements that include using the university competences in defining and solving broad-based tasks.

Tallinn University is dedicated to modernizing and promoting the Estonian university culture and strengthening the mutual cooperation of Estonian universities.

In a rapidly developing and changing world, it is not possible to predict all the knowledge and skills that a person might need in one's specialized work in the future and it is not the goal of the university to provide it. One of the most important aims of university education is the development of the individual. This development process is based on academic knowledge and skills and the accompanying ability to critically treat all kinds of information, to independently define problems and solve them, to separate the important from the unimportant or more precisely – the skill to learn and put the acquired knowledge into practice. A broad-based educational background provides the student with the skill to adequately assess real situations and the ability to find one's way in different scientific, political and cultural discourses. It also provides the ability to think independently, critically and creatively and to constantly acquire new knowledge.

Basic values of Tallinn University

The cornerstone of the university's values is **academic freedom**. Every member of the university independently sets the goals for his/her academic development and is responsible for the decisions made and results of actions. The university respects the right of a student to choose a specialization, change it, to select subjects and the forms of performance in those subjects. It also respects the freedom of scholars in selecting their research interests and topics by protecting their academic independence.

The basic values of Tallinn University are:

- **Openness**
- **Quality**
- **Professionalism**
- **Unity**

OPENNESS is achieved by focusing on the new scholarly thinking throughout the world when planning university activities; by external assessment of the university; by promotion of Estonian and international cooperation and by the international openness of the university's internal environment. The openness of the university is apparent in its increasingly international orientation, its participation in solving Estonian social issues and predicting social developments and in the involvement of employers in the university decision-making processes.

Openness is supported by:

- The educational and philosophical processes of the university, which are fixed in the charter and are the basis for the activities proposed in the Development Plan;
- The orientation of the university towards cooperation, support for joint undertakings by the university and the creation of necessary conditions for university employees that facilitate external cooperation;
- Posting university employment positions internationally, the involvement of external experts in the assessment of candidates and other requirements established in the employment regulation;
- Careful observance to the agreement of good practice in the internationalization of universities, the targeted allocation in the budget, the programmes of the university and the Rector's visitor programme that brings leading foreign researchers to the university on a regular basis;
- The Study Programme Statute that requires an upper intermediate level of proficiency in at least one foreign language for all bachelor level graduates of the university and the recommendation of advanced level of proficiency in a foreign language for graduates at the master level.

QUALITY is a parameter that characterizes all university activities. In TU, quality is treated as an *agreement* based on international standards of different fields and ideals. The university members involved in a field *agree* on the quality of different university fields of activity and its indicators, the ways of achieving it, and the methods of assessment by including the involved parties and considering the trends in the European higher education and research area. All members of the university are responsible for the quality of their activity and its development.

Furthermore, quality is ensured by the agreement of practice of good quality in Estonian public universities, pursuing the quality assurance standards and guidelines of the European higher education area and the European charter for researchers and guidelines for the employment of researchers.

PROFESSIONALISM stands for the high level, specialized and professional self-realization and constant self-development of all university members and alumni. Professionalism is evident in the ability of the university graduates to successfully compete in the labour market, to which research-based study, enriched with practical tasks, is a precondition.

UNITY is expressed through the cooperation of university members in setting and achieving common goals as well as the development of the culture of “*We*”, both of which create the basis for establishing a common TU identity that projects a clear and unique image. Unity is also evident in the friendly relationships, built on mutual respect, between the academic and support employees and the students. It is also apparent in the readiness of subject fields to cooperate in the development of an interdisciplinary academic environment.

Unity is supported by:

- Students have a 20% representation in the university Senate and the decision-making bodies of the academic units;
- Common goals are set out in the university Development Plan, ensuring the cooperation of the academic units;
- Prominent university scholars introduce the outstanding work accomplished at the university, through a series of public lectures.