

FACTSHEET

Higher Education

Estonia

Administration and academic staff

The collegial decision-making body of a higher education institution is the Council (*Nõukogu*), whose procedures for formation and bases of operation are determined either in the statutes of or in the Act governing the higher education institution. The council approves the statutes of the higher education institution (in case of *Tartu Ülikool* and *Tallinna Ülikool*, the statutes are approved by the Senate) and makes amendments to them, approves the statutes of the structural units of the higher education institution, adopts the development plans for the higher education institution, approves the study programmes, approves the budget and the report on its execution.

Higher education institutions are run by the Rector who is accountable to the Council. The Rector is responsible for the development of the higher education institution and for the effective use of its financial resources. Candidates for the position of Rector must either hold or have held the academic rank of Professor. The Rector is elected for a period of five years.

Academic staff until 2019

Until 2019, the academic staff of a university consisted of teaching staff and research staff. The teaching staff consisted of professors (*professor*), associate professors (*dotsent*), lecturers (*lektor*), assistants (*assistent*) and teachers (*õpetaja*). The research staff included leading researchers (*juhtivteadur*), senior researchers (*vanemteadur*), researchers (*teadur*), and early-stage researchers (*nooremteadur*). A member of the higher education institution research staff might have been engaged in teaching. Members of the teaching and research staff were elected for a period of up to five years.

Professorship

A university professor (*professor*) was a leading member of the teaching staff in his or her field of study, participating in research and development activities at an international level, who organised and conducted studies in the broad area of studies, lead research and development activities or other creative activities, had at least five years of research, development or some other creative activity experience, and held an Estonian degree of *Doktor* or a corresponding qualification.

A professor of professional higher education institution was a leading member of the teaching staff in his or her profession, participating in research and development or other creative activities and supervised students, members of the teaching staff and research staff involved in those activities, had at least five years of research, development or some other creative activity experience, and held Estonian degree of *Doktor* or a corresponding qualification.

An internationally recognised creative person, who had been awarded a degree of *Magister* or a corresponding qualification, was eligible for the position of a professor in fields of arts of a university or professional higher education institution.

Associate professors

A university associate professor (*dotsent*) was a member of the teaching staff who conducted studies in his or her broad area of studies, participated actively in research, development or other creative activities and supervised students and members of the teaching staff involved in

FACTSHEET

Higher Education

Estonia

those activities, had at least five years of research, development or some other creative activity experience, and held an Estonian degree of *Doktor* or a corresponding qualification.

An associate professor of professional higher education institution was a member of the teaching staff who participated actively in research and development or other creative activities and might have lead research and development or other creative activities in his or her profession, conducted teaching and supervised students and members of the teaching staff, had at least five years research and professional experience, and held an Estonian research degree or corresponding qualification.

A recognised creative person, who had been awarded a degree of *Magister* or a corresponding qualification, was eligible for the position of a professor in the fields of the arts of a university or professional higher education institution.

Lecturers, assistants and teachers

A lecturer (*lektor*) was a member of the teaching staff, supervised students usually of the first and second cycle of higher education programmes and might have been involved in research and development activities, and held an Estonian degree of *Magister* or a corresponding qualification.

An assistant (*assistant*) conducted seminars, practical training classes and practice sessions in the first two cycles of higher education, might supervise students and was involved in research and development activities. A university assistant held at least a master's level degree, an assistant of professional higher education institution held at least a bachelor's level degree.

A university teacher (*õpetaja*) conducted seminars, practical training classes and practice sessions in the first two cycles of higher education, might supervise students and was involved in research and development activities, and held at least a master's level degree. A teacher of professional higher education institution conducted seminars, practical training classes, practice sessions and performed other teaching tasks of a practical nature, and had a higher education qualification.

Academic staff since 2019

Since 2019, there is no differentiation between teaching staff and research staff in regard to academic staff of a higher education institution. The academic staff consists of professors (*professor*), lecturers (*lektor*), researchers (*teadur*) and teachers (*õpetaja*). Institutions have the right to establish ranks of academic staff positions.

Professorship

A university professor (*professor*) is a leading member of the academic staff in his or her field of study, participating in research and development activities at an international level, who has pedagogical skills and experience, including supervision of students, has at least five years of research, development or some other creative activity experience, and holds an Estonian degree of *Doktor* or a corresponding qualification.

A professor of professional higher education institution is a leading member of the academic staff in his or her profession, who has pedagogical skills and experience, including

FACTSHEET

Higher Education

Estonia

supervision of students, has at least five years of research, development or some other creative activity experience, and holds an Estonian degree of *Doktor* or a corresponding qualification.

An internationally recognised creative person, who has been awarded a degree of *Magister* or a corresponding qualification, is eligible for the position of a professor in fields of arts.

Lecturers and teachers

A lecturer (*lektor*) is a member of the academic staff, who supervises students in one or several cycles of higher education programmes and is involved in research and development activities. A lecturer holds an Estonian degree of *Magister* or a corresponding qualification, has pedagogical competencies, and has experience in research and development or in professional or creative activities.

A teacher (*õpetaja*) conducts seminars, practical training classes and practice sessions in the first two cycles of higher education, and holds at a higher education qualification.

Practical professional training included in professional higher education programmes may be conducted by a specialist, who has at least three years of professional experience, has secondary education and completed teacher training.