

APPROVED
With the Commandant of EMA
Directive No. 2113 of 12 December 2023

ESTONIAN MILITARY ACADEMY QUALITY ASSURANCE CONCEPT

1. General provisions

- 1.1. The Estonian Military Academy (hereinafter the Academy, or EMA) quality assurance concept (hereinafter the Concept) gives an overview of the Academy's principles, objectives and values regarding quality. The main aim of the objectives of quality assurance is to improve the core processes and supporting processes of the Academy. Activities for improvement can be implemented by representatives of all fields.
- 1.2. This document was compiled in accordance with the following legislations and documents:
 - 1.2.1. The Republic of Estonia Education Act
 - 1.2.2. Higher Education Act
 - 1.2.3. Vocational Educational Institutions Act
 - 1.2.4. Organisation of Research and Development Act
 - 1.2.5. Statutes of the Estonian Defence Forces
 - 1.2.6. Statutes of the Estonian Military Academy
 - 1.2.7. Internal regulation of the Estonian Defence Forces
 - 1.2.8. Ethics of the Estonian Military Academy
 - 1.2.9. Code of ethics of Estonian researchers
 - 1.2.10. Code of conduct for research integrity
 - 1.2.11. EVS-EN ISO 9001:2015
 - 1.2.12. Quality Management System (QMS) according to Bi-SC Education and Individual Training Directive 075-007
 - 1.2.13. AQAP 2110
- 1.3. Terminology used in the Concept:
 - 1.3.1. Quality assurance – a process within an organisation; part of managing to guarantee that the proceedings of a higher education institution are in accordance with its development and activity objectives and their sustainable improvement.
 - 1.3.2. Objective of quality assurance – to develop processes for improving them; specific activities for this purpose are laid down in the implementation plan of the EMA development plan.
 - 1.3.3. Process – a group of interconnected or mutually effective activities that turn input into output. If necessary, processes can be divided into sub-processes and activities.

2. Main task and core values of the Academy

- 2.1. The Academy is an institution of professional higher education on national defence; it is a unit of the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) in the immediate subordination of the Commander of EDF and in the area of governance of the Ministry of Defence. The activities of the Academy are in accordance with the legal acts that regulate the provision of higher education and military service.
- 2.2. The main task¹ of the Academy is to prepare military leaders of different levels and enhance military science to ensure the sustainability and leadership of national military defence. The main task supports the military culture of EDF and societal will to defend.
- 2.3. The areas of activity of the Academy that serve its mission are:
 - 2.3.1. provision of higher education and vocational education;
 - 2.3.2. provision of refresher training;
 - 2.3.3. research and development on national defence.
- 2.4. The core values of EDF are integrity, loyalty, professionalism, bravery, cooperativeness, and openness.
- 2.5. The core values of the Academy are creativity, aptitude, and efficiency. Creativity is a trait that helps people find new ways to solve problems and achieve results. Aptitude entails knowledge, skills, experiences, and attitudes that become visible from a person's sophistication and ability to discuss different topics and act in different fields. Efficiency is the ability to achieve results in the wisest of ways.
- 2.6. Parties of interest of the Academy are the institutions in the area of governance of the Ministry of Defence, the defence industry, the state, research and development institutions, the society, potential students, and employees.

3. Management

- 3.1. The Academy includes five subdivisions. Each subdivision is managed by a chief/head who is an immediate subordinate to the Commandant of the Academy. The Academy's structure is complemented by the Governing Council of the Academy (Academic Committee, Study Committee, and Development Committee), the Study Council, the Rectorate, the Advisory Board, the Curriculum Committee, the RPL Committee, and the Cadet Council (Figure 1).
- 3.2. The quality assurance and management organs that are involved in the core processes of the Academy are the Academy's Governing Council, the Rectorate, the Advisory Board, the Academic Committee, and the Development Committee.
- 3.3. The quality assurance and management organs that are involved in the core processes of academic activities are the Study Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the RPL Committee, and the Study Council.
- 3.4. The quality assurance organ that involves students is the Cadet Council.
- 3.5. Establishing and executing the objectives related to quality is the responsibility of the Rectorate.

¹ Development Plan of the Estonian Military Academy

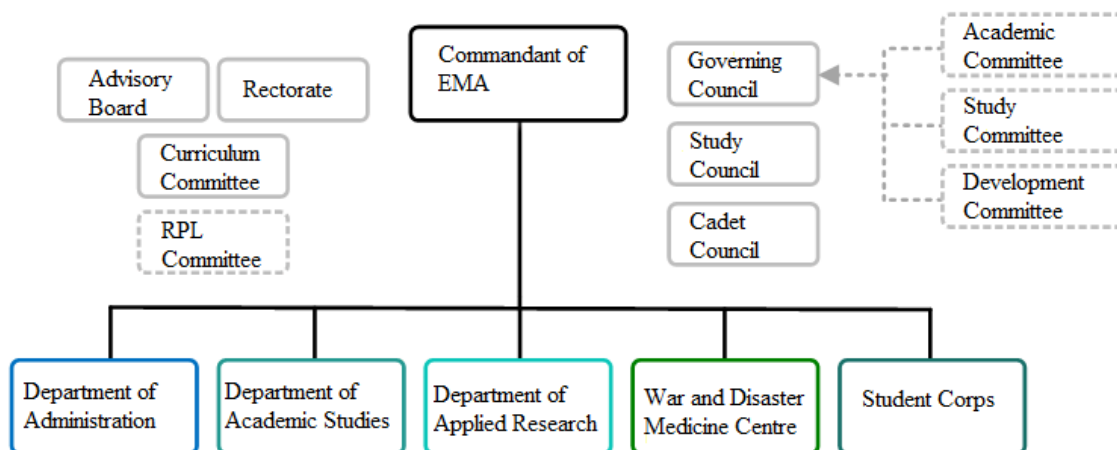


Figure 1. Structure of the Academy

3.6. To fulfil the objectives of quality assurance, the Academy follows the following principles:

- 3.6.1. we prioritise prevention of problems, not correction of mistakes;
 - 3.6.2. we utilise our resources in a purposeful and needs-based manner;
 - 3.6.3. we follow the Academy's ethical principles and related guidelines;
 - 3.6.4. we respect our fellow servicemen and citizens, ensuring that all our proceedings follow juridical and other requirements and are performed in a timely manner;
 - 3.6.5. the management leads by example in maintaining the relevance of the quality assurance system;
 - 3.6.6. we ensure that all our proceedings and activities are subject to constant development and improvement;
 - 3.6.7. we ensure that the development of the Academy is purposeful and verified, and helps to modernise the higher education institution while fostering innovation;
 - 3.6.8. we apply the quality culture, in the core of which are the Academy's ability to self-assess and enhance the development of processes;
 - 3.6.9. we ensure the performance of the Academy's objectives through constant improvement in three separate fields – leadership, education, and research, development and innovation;
 - 3.6.10. we constantly enhance and improve our quality assurance system;
 - 3.6.11. we strive to be as environmentally sustainable as possible in performing our development objectives and organising our everyday proceedings.
- 3.7. Updating and amending the manuals and instructions for quality assurance, and conducting research as assigned by steady instructions and annual directives are the responsibilities of the quality assurance specialist.

4. Quality assurance processes

4.1. The main fields of activities of the Academy are leadership, academic activities, and research and development. The head of the leadership process of the Academy is the Commandant/Rector of EMA, the head of the teaching process is the Chief of the Department of Academic Studies, and the head of the research and development process is the Chief of the Department of Applied Research. Core processes are endorsed by supporting processes and the quality system (Figure 2).

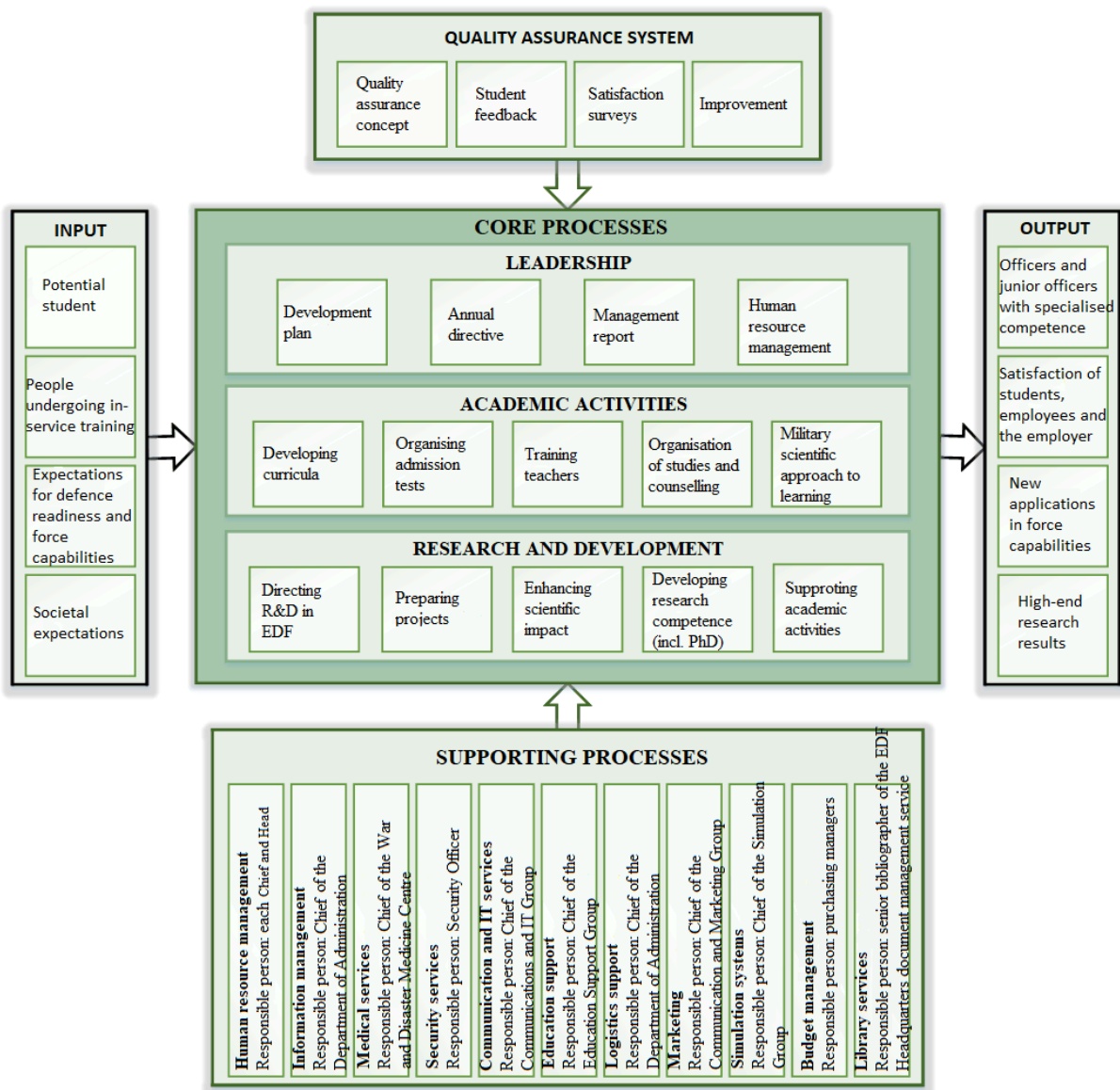


Figure 2. Processes of the Estonian Military Academy

4.2. The objectives of quality assurance are subject to the following activities:

- 4.2.1. the entire personnel is familiarised with the objectives (including the indicators for main activities) of the area of governance of the Ministry of Defence, and the directions of development of EDF and the Academy;
- 4.2.2. performing its main assignments is the Academy's contribution to serving the society;
- 4.2.3. following the ethical principles of the Academy;
- 4.2.4. optimally formulating all commands and assignments to make them unambiguously understandable to all employees and guarantee their duly performance;
- 4.2.5. the personnel of the Academy is additionally trained, if necessary, to achieve the objectives more successfully;
- 4.2.6. all resources are used in a sustainable and purposeful manner;

- 4.2.7. doubling is avoided when compiling regulations and guidelines;
- 4.2.8. involving and supporting the defence industry must be in accordance with the performance of the Academy's main assignments;
- 4.2.9. constantly analysing and improving different processes.

4.3. Quality assurance comprises five stages:

- 4.3.1. Defining the issue (determining needs and wishes)
- 4.3.2. Measuring (collecting relative data)
- 4.3.3. Analysing (data analysis and determining the reason-defect relationship)
- 4.3.4. Improving (complementing/optimising the process)
- 4.3.5. Monitoring (verifying improvement)

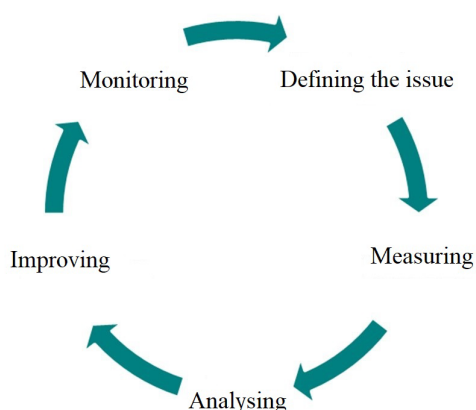


Figure 2. SAT-model

- 4.4. The quality assurance system works more efficiently when it involves all subdivisions of all institutions and is constantly updated. Substantial rotation means that each employee must be familiar with the quality assurance system and follow its principles in their everyday professional proceedings.
- 4.5. An integral part of the development and targeted improvement of academic employees is attestation and performance reviews. Immediate supervisors must determine the employee's work obligations for the succeeding period and, for active servicemen, the suggested course of service. Job descriptions of the Academy establish the competency requirements of employees that directly or indirectly affect the efficiency of the quality assurance system. The competency of academic employees is assessed and directed through attestation, determining the intended number of publications and change in scientific impact.²

5. Continuous and new surveys conducted in the Academy

- 5.1. The Academy's continuous surveys are surveys conducted regularly in a fixed period of time. Continuous surveys (Annex 4) help to assess the efficiency of the activities of the organisation and facilitate improvement.
- 5.2. The process of conducting continuous surveys is specified in Annex 2, and the schedule of surveys conducted by the quality assurance specialist in Annex 1.
- 5.3. The results of the surveys are made available to the intended target group (Annex 4).
- 5.4. The committees and councils of the Governing Council of EMA are involved based on their specialty as needed for analysing improvement suggestions.

² Procedures of Service for the Academic Staff of EMA

- 5.5. The need to amend continuous surveys is assessed by the Rectorate of the Academy.
- 5.6. Personal data and personal data of special categories are processed in EDF in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act, the General Data Protection Regulation, and the order for processing and protecting personal data in the Defence Forces.
- 5.7. The process flow for conducting continuous surveys in the area of responsibility of the quality assurance specialist is available in Annex 2.
- 5.8. The instructions for conducting continuous surveys in the area of responsibility of the Department of Academic Studies and the Department of Applied Research are established with a separate administrative act.
- 5.9. Suggestions for new surveys are presented to the Deputy Commandant of the Academy by each chief/head of the subdivisions of the Academy.
- 5.10. The quality assurance specialist will assess whether the suggested topic is already covered with existing surveys or previously conducted surveys (Annex 3).
- 5.11. The test period for a survey is three years. After that, the decision to add the survey to the list of continuous surveys conducted at the Academy is made by the Rectorate (Annex 3).

6. Assessing efficiency

- 6.1. The activities assigned by the Academy to assess the efficiency of the quality assurance system are as follows:
 - 6.1.1. Monitoring the indicators of the development plan (area of responsibility of the Commandant of EMA)
 - 6.1.2. Institutional external assessment (area of responsibility of the Commandant of EMA)
 - 6.1.3. Internal and external assessment (area of responsibility of the Chief of the Department of Academic studies for things related to studies; area of responsibility of the Chief of the Department of Applied Research for things related with research)
 - 6.1.4. Timely and relevant conduction of surveys (area of responsibility of the Chief of the Department of Administration)
- 6.2. Internal assessment is quality assessment conducted within the Academy. It involves conducting satisfaction surveys and other surveys depending on the feedback plan and development plan. External assessment is the assessment of the compliance of the Academy's quality in accordance with external requirements conducted by external assessors (e.g. EKKA³ and ETAG⁴).
- 6.3. The quality assurance specialist annually compiles the efficiency indicators of the application plan of the development plan, analyses these and presents the results to the Governing Council. To implement the development plan and relevant improvement activities, the yearly command of the Commandant of EMA is compiled annually and, when necessary, the implementation plan is amended.

7. Improvement

- 7.1. Improvements to quality are discussed each year at the Rectorate's final decision-making meeting and changes are made when needed.
- 7.2. Improvement is subject to the following principles:
 - 7.2.1. Relevant corrective activities;
 - 7.2.2. Monitoring by the management and, if necessary, follow-up activities;
 - 7.2.3. Organisation of external and internal assessment and making improvements based on their results;

³ Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency

⁴ Estonian Research Council

- 7.2.4. Directing employees to purposeful activities and constant self-development.
- 7.3. In case of any non-compliances, these are generally solved starting from the non-compliance with the highest potential risk factor. Non-compliances are documented with the term and responsible person for solving these, and when the responsible person has managed to eliminate the non-compliance, a respective notice will be made.
- 7.4. To determine and eliminate/reduce the causes of non-compliances, the following activities are implemented:
 - 7.4.1. Defining the non-compliance
 - 7.4.2. Studying the reasons for non-compliances, and in case of repeated non-compliance, relevant actions are immediately implemented
 - 7.4.3. Correct supervision of activities
 - 7.4.4. Suggestions by employees to improve the quality assurance system (Annex 6)

8. Quality assurance principles in research, development and innovation

- 8.1. Regulating and directing the research conducted in the Academy will ensure that the Academy is evolving as a higher education institution of military sciences.
- 8.2. The research and development activities of the Academy are in compliance with research ethics.
- 8.3. Compiling the plan for ensuring the research and development activities of the Academy is the area of responsibility of the Chief of the Department of Applied Research.
- 8.4. Research integrity dictates the planning, execution, authorship, publication and application of research.

9. Information management

- 9.1. The Academy ensures that all employees are familiar with the guiding principles and objectives of quality, and their individual contribution to achieving the efficiency of the quality assurance system and the consequences of failure to comply. The awareness of employees is guaranteed with the following activities:
 - 9.1.1. seminars for introducing the quality assurance system are organised once a year to give an overview of the principles and processes of quality assurance;
 - 9.1.2. new employees get a mentor whose job is to guide the new employee for them to perform their everyday assignments more efficiently.
- 9.2. In addition to assembling and updating documented information, the Academy ensures the following principles:
 - 9.2.1. information is identifiable by the title and described in an understandable manner;
 - 9.2.2. information is in an established format on paper as well as in electronic form;
 - 9.2.3. information is univocally formulated;
 - 9.2.4. basic information needed for everyday work is accessible and can be independently found in a reasonable amount of time (Annex 5);
 - 9.2.5. information is protected in an established manner;
 - 9.2.6. documents are compiled, preserved, destroyed and archived in compliance with the code of conduct of the Estonian Defence Forces.

Annexes 1–6 to this Concept are for official use only