

CASE STUDY: FINAL CASE STUDY

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University Factsheet

University Title	University of Tartu
Location/country	Tartu, Estonia
Public or private	Publik university
Year when the institution was founded	1962
Number of overall students of the institution	17493 students (incl 5100 part-time/adult students). Under the students we list only degree students. In addition to them there were 21393 learners (non-degree students) in 2009
Degree/non-degree	17493 degree students 21393 learners (non-degree students)
Number of academic/research and non-academic/administrative staff	Total: 3517 Academic: 1718 Non-academic: 1799
Number of faculties	10 faculties and 5 colleges
Kind of degrees offered (if possible including EQF)	Diploma of Professional Higher Education (6) Bachelor (6) Master (7) Doctoral (8)
Date of the Case Study	May 2010

University-specific best practices in relation to the 10 Commitments

Commitments	Best practice from your university's Case Study, if applicable
	University of Tartu
1 Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies	3; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3
2 Providing education and learning to a diversified student population	3.3; 4; 5
3 Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners	3.3; 4; 5
4 Providing appropriate guidance and counseling services	5
5 Recognising prior learning	3; 3.3; 4;
6 Embracing lifelong learning in quality culture	3.3; 4;
7 Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning	3.2; 5
8 Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students	3; 3.3; 4; 5
9 Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes	3.3; 4; 7
10 Acting as role models of lifelong learning institution	3,2; 3.3;



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1. Basic Information

Institution: University of Tartu

Country: Estonia

Staff involved with the Case Study of the institution:

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2. Brief Analysis of the Case-Study process (key-questions):

- To what extent was the report discussed within the institution?
- How would you describe the Case Study process (what were positive aspects and encountered difficulties)?

The case study is composed by the Open University Centre in cooperation with Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Research and Institutional Development and Finance Office.

The report is discussed within the Open University Centre. Different aspects of the case study are discussed with above-mentioned offices. The final case study will be sent to the Office of Academic Affairs and Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs.

3. Universities LLL-Vision& Mission& goals

3.1. Please briefly describe the overall University Vision¹ concerning ULLL

3.2. What is the Mission² of the institution towards ULLL?

3.3. What are the goals³ of the institution towards ULLL? What is the schedule for these goals?

3.4. Amongst these goals, please choose the 3 LLL priorities for the next coming years until 2015

In 2009 the University of Tartu Strategic Plan 2009-2015 was approved. English version available in Internet: <http://www.ut.ee/544423>. In this document first time the LLL concept is fully integrated into general policy paper of the university. The strategy is supported by University of Tartu LLL Principles approved in April 2009. (In previous policy documents the importance of widening study opportunities for adults was mentioned but mostly in connection with degree studies and e-learning. Next to it separate strategic documents for CE and e-learning were worked out).

The vision, mission and goals of LLL are formulated according to the university strategic plan and LLL principles.

According to the University of Tartu LLL Principles the LLL includes degree education leading to diploma (both university level initial degree education and degree studies for adults) and CE ending with certificate (including pre-studies - courses supporting one to enter into next study level, professional development courses, and studies in the field of interest as well as requalification courses).

In this case study degree studies for adult learners and CE are considered under LLL activities. These activities include:

- **Degree studies for adults** – most of the students have to pay the tuition for these studies.

- **Open University studies** (obtaining degree via distance education) – adult students fulfil the same curricula that in initial education and will receive the same diploma. The only difference is in delivery. The students are coming to study once a month on weekends and study more independently supported by study materials and e-learning. Usually the Open University studies

¹ **Vision:** Defines in a few words the desired or intended future state of the institution in terms of its fundamental objective and/or strategic direction in a long term view.

² **Mission:** defines the fundamental purpose of the institution, basically describing why it exists and what it does to achieve its Vision.

³ **Goals:** what do we want really? There are a lot of 'similar' words in a strategic planning activity: desired end states, plans, policies, goals, objectives, strategies, tactics and actions.

last a bit longer than in initial education.

- **Studying as extern** – this option is mostly meant for those students who have dropped out from university and for those who would like to graduate by taking the exams without requirement to participate in classes. The learners do not receive the status of student and they cannot take more than 15 ECTS credits per semester.
- **APEL** – accreditation of prior experiential learning. The university has APEL regulations since 2003. In each faculty and college has an APEL council who assess APEL applications and make decisions.

- **Continuing education** – all kind of courses and training with the aim to acquire new knowledge and develop skills. The CE is financed by learners, employers or by different projects.

- **Retraining and qualification programmes** – longer courses which consist of several modules and might last up to two years. These courses usually lead to new profession at the same level of education (for example courses to teachers of geography who would like also to teach biology).
- **Short courses** – either courses with open access or tailor-made programmes conducted to certain group of learners and might last from half a day to several month including
 - professional development and training courses;
 - liberal education and courses in the field of interest.
- **International Summer University** – courses conducted in summer for international audience.
- **Summer University for local people** – short courses in different subject fields conducted in summer (mostly in August).
- **CE learners studying together with degree students** – the person interested in certain subject from degree curriculum can study together with degree students (both full-time and open university students). If they fulfil all the requirements they will receive the CE certificate.
- **University staff training** – activities for supporting development of professional and social skills of the university staff.
- **Third-age University** – lectures and short courses for elderly people (usually project based and free for participants).
- **Science School for children** – the activities for school children includes courses for talented pupils in different subjects, science camps, children university (lectures for children), preparing for International Olympiads etc.
- **Seminars and conferences** – supporting development of professional skills and updating the knowledge of university alumni and specialists in study fields of the university.

3.1 Vision

According to the University of Tartu Strategic Plan 2009-2015 the vision of the University of Tartu is to be an internationally renowned research university, and the centre of academic life, culture and high-technology innovation in Estonia. In LLL principles are pointed out that the university should become to learning organization and promote LLL.

3.2. Mission

According to the university strategic plan the mission of the University of Tartu is to act as the leading force driving the development of knowledge-based society in Estonia and the guarantor of its continuity with the following strategic aims (which all supports LLL):

(3.1.) In all its fields of teaching and research, the University of Tartu ensures a standard that is internationally recognized and the best in Estonia.

(3.2.) The University of Tartu is an attractive learning and working environment, with an international staff and student body.

(3.3.) The University of Tartu has developed centres of excellence of international importance in teaching and research.

(3.4.) In cooperation with its partners, the University of Tartu exerts an active influence on Estonia's economic and cultural life and social development, communicates its activities to the public and promotes lifelong learning.

(3.5.) The University of Tartu is a flexible and smoothly functioning organization endowed with modern infrastructure.

3.3. Goals/schedule

In the field of LLL 3 important aspects should be considered: degree study opportunities for adults, CE (short courses) for all people interested in professional development or widening knowledge in the field of interest (including courses for pupils and third age participants) and university staff development activities.

The number of adult learners should increase. The volume of continuing education and retraining courses should increase 25% by 2015. The university staff should be international, highly qualified (in both research and teaching), and creative as well as capable of ensuring the effective and high-quality operation of the university. University staff is active in professional development.

To achieve the goals the university:

1. promotes LLL in Estonia;
2. supports staff in professional development and mobility as well as provides regular professional development opportunities for teaching skills;
3. enhances cooperation with different organisations to development curricula and CE programmes as well as LLL support systems;
4. improves access to education for different target groups;
5. offers various flexible study opportunities, organizes more courses in counties and via

e-learning, develops new CE courses, proposes new methods incl. instructed study possibilities at work-place;

6. develops APEL system;

8. promotes international cooperation for development of quality assurance systems and offer more courses to international audience.

3.4. Top 3 LLL priorities

The top LLL priorities are nr 2, 5 and 6.

4. LLL-path of your institution

- **How can the process and progress on the LLL-path of your institution over the last 10 years be described? How would a time graph look like with the main decisions and a short description of them?**
- **What were key incidents/highlights/achievements during these 10 years?**
- **What are the obstacles and challenges met (solved/unsolved problems/failures) during these 10 years?**
- **Which kind of organisation has been built in structural/personnel terms?**

The LLL has developed remarkably during last 10 years. In 1996 the Open University was established to provide life-long learning opportunities with aim to improve access to education and diversify study opportunities as well as to offer more flexible and student-centred courses. The Open University trade mark was established to coordinate CE and part-time degree education. The most important development areas concerning LLL have been adult degree education, CE, e-learning and APEL.

Within recent years different support systems, such as (1) Internet based Study Information System which includes both students in degree studies and learners in CE, (2) intranet including several instructions, templates and links to relevant documents, (3) online accounting system to manage invoices and see daily up-to-dated incomes and outcomes of internal accounts, (4) online system for vocations of the university staff, (5) electronic registration system for documentation etc have been developed for better management of studies.

In 1999 there were a bit less than 2000 Open University students (approx 16% from all students in degree studies). Today we have more than 5000 adults in Open University degree studies (approx 30%).

Since 1999 the number of CE learners has decreased from 10000 to 20000 and the number of courses from 400 to 1100. When 10 years ago most of the courses (93%) took place in Tartu then last year nearly 50% of courses took place via distance and e-learning or outside Tartu.

The number of Internet-based courses has increased from 14 in 1999 to more than 1000 in 2009.

Ten years ago nobody knew about APEL. Today it is common that prior studies and work experience are taken into account in degree studies. But the APEL requirements are also considered in organisation of CE and each participant who fulfils the requirements for completing the course will receive certificate with supplement where all the topics, lecturers, volume etc are described.

Highlights and achievements of LLL path

1996 – the Open University was established to provide more flexible life-long learning opportunities.

1996 – first Open university students were admitted to degree studies.

1998 – the university obtained first videoconference facilities as well as the first web-based course in the WebCT environment was developed and delivered.

January 2000 – the University Council gave priority to ICT-based learning at our university and the first education technologist was employed to assist the teaching staff in the development of web-based courses.

July 2000 – the Summer University was launched to offer short summer courses for local people.

2002 – the university started to elaborate APEL system.

February 2002 – the portal of the E-University of the University of Tartu was opened.

July 2002 – the International Summer University was organised to offer courses for foreign participants.

2003 – the University Council approved first APL regulations.

2005 – the University Council approved the CE strategy until 2008 and the e-learning strategy 2006-2010.

2006 – the university initiated the programme-based study management system for both degree education and CE.

2007 – the number of CE learners exceeded first time the number of degree students.

2008 – the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning was established to develop professional development system for academic staff and offer teacher training courses and counselling.

2008 – the University Strategic plan 2009-2015 where LLL concept is fully integrated where approved.

2009 – the University Council approved LLL principles of the University of Tartu.

The structure of LLL at the University of Tartu

The university uses decentralised model, i.e. we have established structures for coordinating the studies and the academic structural units conduct training. Degree studies and formal education acquired within the adult education system (Open University studies) are coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs and CE by Open University Centre. Both formal education, acquired within the adult education system, and CE are provided by the faculties and colleges. CE could be also organised by different structural units: Open University Centre, departments of IT and personnel, museums, library etc. As a rule, CE education is offered in the fields of studies that are taught in the university.

In Estonia a higher educational institution itself assumes the responsibility for the quality of tertiary education it provides and maintenance of this high quality. Today self-evaluation report is the basis for the accreditation. The process of evaluation is supported and coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs.

To assure the quality of CE the university have adopted internal legal norms. These norms enact requirements for training programmes (the essence of a training, endorsement of the programme, etc) and the certificates issued after passing the course. The head of a structural unit, organising the training, is responsible for the quality of organisation and content of the training.

To support quality assurance the university initiated the programme-based study management system for both degree studies (incl. degree studies for adults) and CE with the aim to involve more students and learners, employers and unions to the process of development of curricula as well as CE programmes to respond better and more flexible to the needs of society.

5. LLL-future at your institution

- **How do you see the future perspective of your institution?**
- **How do you plan to reach your goals (described under 3.3.)**
- **What are the next steps?**
- **What are the conditions to meet?**
- **Which trends have an influence on your institution?**

To achieve the LLL goals set in the University of Tartu development plan it is important to involve all the faculties, colleges and administrative units.

The Open University Centre who is responsible for development of CE and e-learning initiated roundtables for development of CE and e-learning in different subject fields. All the faculties and colleges

were asked to participate and discuss the development possibilities as well as suggest activities to reach the goals. Eight round-tables for CE took place in October and November 2009 and five round-tables for e-learning in the beginning of 2010.

All the thoughts were concentrated and analysed. According to the proposals the action plan for CE for 2010 was composed and people responsible for certain tasks appointed. I must say that it is very content-rich and challenging. Most of the activities are focused to the widening of CE offer as well as support and marketing activities. The action-plan for e-learning should be ready by the end of April.

At this stage it is difficult to say how this model works, but some actions to fulfil the action plan have started nevertheless that some faculties are not very active in the process and need a lot of support and motivation. The first review of the realisation of CE action plan should take place in May.

To plan academic staff development the programme council for development of teaching and learning was established where all faculties and colleges are represented. The development plan until 2014 was composed to fulfil the set goals: to work out training and development system, enhance mentoring, counselling and different support systems and provide research-based analyses to support these activities.

The biggest influence to the LLL market has current economical situation and decreasing number of population.

The number of participants in CE courses depends a lot on the economical situation. Since salaries have been decreased and the unemployment rate has increased fewer learners are coming to short courses because they have to pay fees for CE. Nevertheless there are several ESF programmes that promote and support LLL provision in Estonia these funds are planned mostly for vocational adult education and liberal (hobby) education institutions. At university level there are funds for curricula development, APEL activities and university staff training.

At the other side many unemployed persons are decided to come back to the university to finish interrupted studies. From the autumn 2010 there will be starting a support system for dropped out adult students to bring them back to the university.

Decreasing number of population forces university to widen target groups and offer different study possibilities. Therefore it is good time for new initiatives.

6. Funding systems of the institution and the LLL activities

- **Please explain how is your University's definition of LLL – do you follow a more holistic perspective for the whole institution or do you have in financial terms different budgets**

allocated? If you have not a separate LLL funding stream, then please give the information on the total University budget and give an indication on how you define and measure in your University (also including services & provisions)

LLL includes degree education leading to diploma (both university level initial degree education and degree studies for adults) and CE ending with certificate including pre-studies (courses supporting one to enter into next study level), professional development courses, and studies in the field of interest as well as requalification courses. In this case study under LLL are considered degree studies for adult learners and CE.

The budget of degree studies for adults are composed from student fees (80%) and places financed by Ministry of Education and Research (20%). In 2009 the state ordered study places for 309 people (approx 70% teacher training).

The budget of CE is composed 34.7% from training projects (incl. both public, private and international recourses), 32.4% fees paid by student, 21.6% fees paid by the organizations (incl. both public and private recourses) and 11.3% state finances (the Ministry of Education and Research finances requalification programs for teachers, courses for talented pupils and requalification studies for teachers).

Table 1:

	Please specify the year	University's Total Budget	LLL Total Budget	Science and Research Budget
Approximately-10y ago (e.g. 2000)	1999	515.6 million EEK (32.9 million EUR)	31.2 million EEK (1.2 million EUR)	141.1 million EEK (9.0 million EUR)
Approx. 5y ago	2004	888.0 million EEK (56.7 million EUR)	78.6 million EEK (5.0 million EUR)	278.4 million EEK (17.8 million EUR)
Current	2009	1509.5 million EE (96.5 million EUR)	126.5 million EEK (8.1 million EUR)	603.8 million EEK (38.6 million EUR)
Future	2015	2600 million EEK	156 million EEK	1100 million EEK

		(166.1 million EUR)	(10 million EUR)	(70.3 million EUR)
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Table 2:

Sources of income	Current University's Total Budget (2008)	LLL Total Budget (2009)
Public	71.7 %	26.0 %
Student fees	8.3 %	65.3 %
Industry	2.2 %	4.2 %
Research *		
Other (income from foreign recourses incl. EU programmes as well as profit from real estate etc)	17.8 %	4.5 %
Total	100%	100%

* It is not possible to estimate how big amount of income comes from research. Mostly the research is combined with development projects which are financed either by public or private organisations, foreign investors or EU programmes.

- **What are the allocation procedures within the institution? Who decides what and how? In general? Who controls the income?**
- **Approximately what percentage of the budget could be used by the institutional leadership to implement new initiatives?**
- **What does the institution perceive as strengths and weaknesses in terms of it's funding, and how could weaknesses be remedied and strengths be further enhanced?**
- **Which trends/future perspectives you see for the funding streaming?**

There is no separate budget for LLL. The university general budget is composed and administrated by the Finance Office. It incorporates budgets of faculties and structural units. Each faculty and structural units has sub-accounts and the dean or head of structural unit is responsible for the

budget and administrates their own incomes and outcomes. All the payments are done by the Finance Office but the invoice should be signed by the person responsible for the sub-account.

The financial board of the university is responsible for allocation procedure for state finances. Other incomes (incl. student fees from degree studies and CE as well as projects) are planned by each faculty or structural unit.

The common budgetary database is worked out to support administration of budget. Each person responsible for sub-account can see their up-to-dated incomes and outcomes online.

The university has worked out the overhead system for incomes. The percentage of overhead differs. For CE and research projects it is 12% and for adult degree studies 24%. This money is meant for administration of the university as well as development activities. It is incorporated into the university general budget. It is impossible to say how much is used for implementation new initiatives since it is up to each person responsible for sub-account. ESF funds are widely used for development of LLL.

Since the state finances do not cover all activities the strength of the system is that the persons responsible for budgets should be active in finding additional resources and open-minded to different activities including widening LLL opportunities. But from another side for many academic leaders it is easier to get additional resources for scientific and research work and the LLL is considered as last option. So the choice depends a lot on the attitude of leaders in faculties and structural units.

The majority of the LLL income comes from the participants' fees. This could be considered as strength since the people are used to pay for the studies, but from another side it depends a lot on the economical situation.

I hope that in the future more LLL activities at the university are financed by the private institutions and enterprises. Today only 10-15% of the university level professional training courses are financed by private enterprises. In adult degree education less than 1% of fees are paid by organizations since the employers should pay quite high tax if they finance degree studies.

7. Institution's/ LLL-Staff

1. Do you have staff who are described as LLL staff – if so, please describe their functions and positions

- **How many are internals/externals?**
- **How many full and part time staff?**
- **How many persons are involved in total with the LLL-provisions in your institution?**

In 2006 the university initiated programme-based management system for degree studies and for CE. In result of this initiative each faculty, college and structural unit providing CE had to appoint a programme managers for degree studies and for CE.

The position of programme manager in degree education is usually part-time job and the managers are appointed from academic staff. There are no separate programme managers or teaching staff for adult degree studies unless the curriculum is conducted only part-time. Therefore most of the university staff is involved in provision of adult degree education. Also some professionals outside the university (I estimate that less than 10% from all teaching staff) are involved in teaching process.

In CE the programme-managers are partly appointed from academic and partly from non-academic staff and the workload varies from part-time to full-time. The programme managers could organise the courses fully by themselves or be supported by support staff (CE coordinators). In faculties and colleges who organise more CE separate units for CE are established. Altogether 60 (mostly part-time) programme managers and coordinators are involved in organisation of CE. Only 15 of them work full-time for CE. Most of the courses are conducted by the university lecturers and professors. More than half of total academic personnel (1300) are involved in provision of short courses. Also university non-academic staff and professionals are involved. Today approx 1/3 of courses are instructed by professionals.

8. Institutions/ LLL-Target groups & Services

- **At which target groups are your provisions aiming?**
- **Which are the most interesting target groups for your institution and why?**
- **Which kind of support services are established for the target groups and how effective are they enhancing their achievements?**

Concerning LLL the most important target groups in adult degree education are people interested in master or doctoral degree. The most attractive curricula are in social sciences: law, economics, psychology, tourism management, teacher training etc. In total the university offers more than 70 different curricula in adult degree education.

Another important task is to attract more international students. It is mostly because the population is decreasing and each year less young students are coming to the universities.

The biggest target groups for university CE are school teachers and people working in the field of medicine. Approx 40% of the courses are focused on school teachers and 20% to doctors and nurses. The other important target groups are managers, clerks, schoolchildren and higher education institutions' staff. In 2009 approx 10% of participants at University of Tartu CE courses were the teaching staff from different universities and higher education institutions. The number increased since many courses were financed by European Social Funds.

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

9. In depths SWOT-Analysis⁴

- On the basis of the 3 priority goals, please complete a SWOT Analysis to assess your institution's capacity to further develop into a LLLU (please provide your institutions definition of a LLLU or give a explanation to which concept you refer (BeFlex+/LLL- Charter, etc)

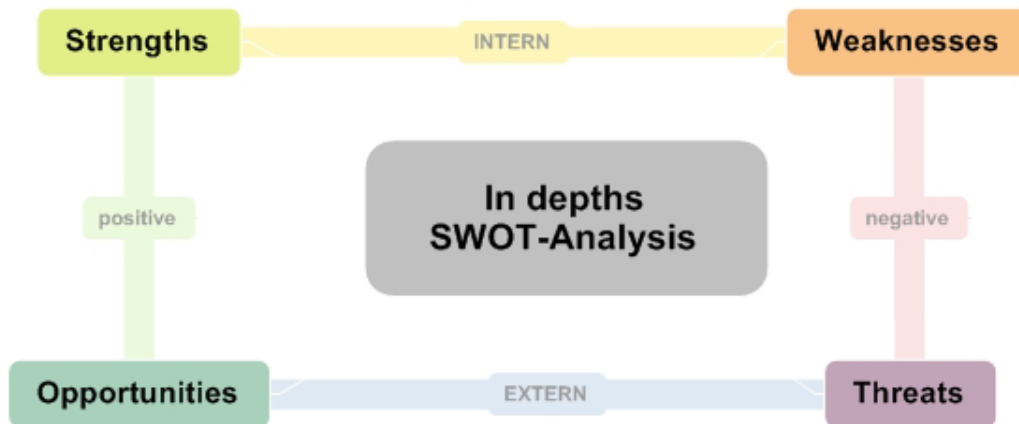
Strengths

- Facilities and long history to offer part-time studies and CE courses.
- Competent and experienced staff.
- Good self-development possibilities for all employees.
- Wide range of flexible study opportunities in different fields of subject: medicine, social sciences, humanities and natural and exact sciences.
- Research based knowledge.
- Recognition at national and international level.
- Representatives and facilities in regions.
- Credit-bearing possibilities in CE and APEL system.

Weaknesses

- Academics have no time to work out and/or conduct CE courses.
- The best providers are overloaded and they are not interested in conducting courses in Tallinn or other counties.
- All the faculties and colleges have not jet recognised the need to offer short courses and flexible LLL opportunities.
- The academics are sceptical about diversifying APEL possibilities.
- If the volume of CE is increasing it might affect on quality.
- Lack of resources and investments to widen LLL opportunities.
- Due to the size of the university and decentralised model it is complicated quickly respond to the training enquiries.
- The CE courses tend to be too theoretical.
- The university is not well known as CE provider among many companies.

⁴ A SWOT analysis must start with defining a desired end state or objective. The aim of any SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving the objective. These come from within the company's unique value chain. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories: internal factors (S W) and external factors (O T):



Opportunities

- ESF measures and funds for staff training and curricula development at universities.
- Current economical situation supports participation in LLL (unemployed people are coming back to finish their studies, professional development is important for economic growth etc).
- Demographic situation supports new initiatives (work-based studies, APEL, new courses, modules etc) in universities (less traditional students, need to find additional funds to survive etc).
- Offer more study opportunities in Tallinn and Harju County where almost half of population is tended to.
- ESF measures and funds available for organisations and companies for staff development.
- Planned financial support schemes (ESF funds) for adults to finish their university studies.
- Integrated and interdisciplinary solutions (applied research, training, counselling etc)
- International market (for e-learning, blended learning, Summer and Winter University etc).

Threats

- Current economical situation (since the rate of unemployment is high and the salaries have been decreased the people are not able to pay the fees, but approx 2/3 of the LLL budget of the university comes from fees paid by the students and learners)
- The educational market in Estonia is liberal and there are many HEI-s and private CE providers

as well as foreign providers

- Demographic situation – Estonia is a small country and population is decreasing

(Please expand the textbox as necessary to include all relevant information)

10. Conclusion

- **please prepare a conclusion which summarises the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and offers a specific action plan to remedy weaknesses and to develop strengths**
- **please draft an overall sketch of your top 5 “Do’s and Don’ts” in the construction of a LLLU**

To widen LLL opportunities it is essential to offer more courses in different places in Estonia. The university has decided that more LLL activities should take place in Tallinn where the potential clients are but also many competitors: other universities, HEI-s and many private CE providers. The university already have some facilities in Tallinn and conducts law studies (also for adults) and some CE courses there. But to reach that goal the university should invest to widen the facilities and work out motivation system for academic staff to attract them conduct more courses in Tallinn. Quite a lot of attention should also be paid on visibility and promotion.

For this purpose we have planned different activities: to meet different stakeholders to introduce university activities, organise different events etc.

For example in the beginning of April second time the University of Tartu week in Tallinn took place. During one week several seminars, open lectures and short courses took place for various target groups: schoolchildren, teachers, specialists, managers in private and public sector, unemployed people, seniors, etc. This year it was very popular – more than 1000 people participated in these activities.

The most important in construction of a LLL university is that the idea is acknowledged and approved by the leaders of the university: rector, vice-rectors, deans, directors and heads of departments. The LLL concept should be incorporated into the strategic documents which should be supported by action plans where also persons responsible for certain action are appointed. In my mind the most difficult is to persuade academics to develop their teaching skills and offer different flexible study opportunities.