



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

ŠIAULIŲ UNIVERSITETO
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *EDUKOLOGIJA*
(valstybinis kodas – 621X20026)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *EDUCOLOGY* (state code – 621X20026)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at ŠIAULIAI UNIVERSITY

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2014

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

| | |
|--|---|
| Studijų programos pavadinimas | <i>Edukologija</i> |
| Valstybinis kodas | 621X20026 |
| Studijų sritis | Socialiniai mokslai |
| Studijų kryptis | Edukologija |
| Studijų programos rūšis | Universitetinės studijos |
| Studijų pakopa | Antroji |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais) | Nuolatinė (2), iššęstinė (2,5) |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais | 120 |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Edukologijos magistras |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data | 2000-06-16, Nr. 831 / 2007-02-19, Nr. 225 |

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|---|
| Title of the study programme | <i>Educology</i> |
| State code | 621X20026 |
| Study area | Social sciences |
| Study field | Educology |
| Kind of the study programme | University studies |
| Study cycle | Second |
| Study mode (length in years) | Full time (2), part time (2,5) |
| Volume of the study programme in credits | 120 |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Master of Educology |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 2000-06-16, Nr. 831 / 2007-02-19, Nr. 225 |

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Background of the evaluation process*

The evaluation of the on-going study programme is based on the **Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (further – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the following main stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (further – the SER) prepared by the Higher Education Institution (further - HEI); 2) visit of the expert team at the higher education institution; 3) preparation of the evaluation report by the review panel and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

On the basis of the external evaluation report of the study programme, SKVC takes the decision to accredit the study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative, such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of the evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

1.2. *General*

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the SER and annexes, the following additional documents provided by HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

| No. | Name of the document |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1. | None |

1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

Siauliai University is a classical university composed of 7 faculties; the Study Programme of Educology (further – *Programme*) is implemented by the Department of Education in the Faculty of Education. There is also another study programme *Career Education* in the same Department and, in addition, the Faculty also has a Master's study programme *Physical Education and Sports Education*. The *Programme* underwent external evaluation in 2008 and was given *full accreditation*. It seems that the different Master's programmes do not have much cooperation with each other or with other universities in the country.

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. In addition to the SER, the evaluation is based on the site visits and meetings at the institution:

- Meeting with administrative staff of the University and of the Faculty
- Meeting with the staff responsible for the preparation of the SER
- Meeting with teaching staff
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with graduates
- Meeting with employers
- Visiting and observing various support services (classrooms, library, computer services, laboratories, etc.)
- Acquaintance with students' final work and examination material.

At the end of the site visit, the initial impressions of the panel were presented to the programme staff and administration.

The review panel also took into account the conclusions and recommendations presented by the former review panel. The *Programme* has been improved according to their suggestions, e.g., in the areas of participation in exchange programmes of both students and teachers, in-service teacher training, and improvement of foreign language skills. However, the panel notes that some recommendations provided by the former panel still need to be implemented. For example, English language, in particular, will be even more important in the future because of the University's policy which is focused on internationalisation, interdisciplinarity, exchange programmes, international research cooperation and publishing in international journals etc.

Owing to these trends, improving English skills should be a permanent priority of both teachers and students.

1.4. The Review Panel

The review panel was completed according to the *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 11/11/2011 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the panel on *17th October, 2014*.

- 1. Prof. dr. Pertti Kansanen (team leader)**, *Professor Emeritus of Education, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland.*
- 2. Prof. dr. Ilze Ivanova**, *Head of the Department of Education at Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art, University of Latvia, Latvia.*
- 3. Prof. dr. Fuensanta Hernandez Pina**, *Professor of Methods of Research and Diagnosis in Education at the University of Murcia, Spain.*
- 4. Dr. Marian McCarthy**, *Senior lecturer in Education, Co-director of the Teaching and Learning Centre, University College Cork, Ireland.*
- 5. Ms. Žaneta Savickienė**, *Director of Vilnius Educational Information Centre, Lithuania.*
- 6. Mr. Andrius Ledas**, *Student of Vilnius University study programme English Philology, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The descriptions of the *Programme's* aim and intended learning outcomes are written according to the standards presented in the educational research literature and following the hierarchy of the terminology: mission or purpose, aims and goals, and objectives. In general, they are clearly defined and accessible in the AIKOS system, in the website of the University and in different booklets. The panel notes that the aims and intended learning outcomes are based on the academic requirements. They are also justified by the needs of the labour market; this was also confirmed during the meetings with the stakeholders. The procedure follows the requirements presented in the *Methodology for evaluation of higher education study programmes*.

The SER describes how the *Programme* is implemented following the national requirements, and those of the University and the EU. Although these documents are quite abstract at master's level, it can be seen that the *Programme* fits well in the mission of the University and is needed in the region.

The aim of the *Programme* is described by taking into account various requirements. The title of the *Programme*, Educational Studies or Educology, is all-encompassing and defined by referring to interdisciplinary knowledge that is necessary for the comprehension of education in general and for research-analyst activity, which is required by the educational organization's management or child's rights protection. The aim of the *Programme* is further defined by describing what the students will be able to do after successful completion of the *Programme*. At the same time two specializations, namely, Education Management and Management of Child's Rights Protection, are mentioned for the first time, vary vaguely, however. The specialisations could be more clearly defined when presenting the aim of the *Programme*.

The intended learning outcomes are presented by dividing them into three categories: awareness, ability and understanding. They are also justified by providing research evidence and are reviewed and updated regularly. The panel notes that the name of the programme, its intended learning outcomes, content and qualification awarded are compatible with each other.

The uniqueness of the *Programme*, and its difference from other programmes of education studies offered by the University, is highlighted by the detailed justification of the inclusion of particular subjects in the curriculum. This can be clearly seen also in the two specialisations: Education Management and Management of Child's Right Protection.

To sum up, the aims and intended learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible. They are based on academic and professional requirements as well as on the needs of the labor market; they are in line with the requirements for second cycle university studies and are regularly reviewed and updated. The area of the aims and learning outcomes fulfils the legal requirements for second cycle study programmes and the evaluation criteria presented in the *Methodology* (58.1; 58.2; 58.3; 58.4).

Strengths:

- Programme aims and intended learning outcomes are clear and consistent with the type and level of qualifications offered.

- Programme aims and learning outcomes are grounded on strategic national, international and University's documents.
- Programme aims and intended learning outcomes are easily accessible.

Areas for improvement:

- Two specialisations could be presented more clearly when presenting the aim of the *Programme*.

2.2. Curriculum design

The *Programme* is implemented in full-time and part-time study modes; the volume in credits is, however, the same. Full-time studies require 2 years and part-time studies 2.5 years, both consisting of 120 ECTS. Every semester consists of 30 ECTS as is required. The panel notes that the curriculum is based on the adequate documents and meets the legal requirements.

The curriculum is presented thoroughly. The sequence of the study subjects and progress of the studies are rational and are presented in detail, starting with the study field subjects; they are logically divided into three semesters. The specialisations start in the second semester of studies and the fourth semester is devoted to the Master Thesis. The part-time studies are comprised of five semesters.

The study field subjects start with the traditional basic areas of education (philosophy of education, sociology of education, psychology of education, etc.) and continue with more content-oriented areas (childhood education, andragogy, comparative education, educational systems, etc.). It is worth noting that there is continuation of the research method courses in the *Programme*. These courses are of great importance for the successful preparation of the Master Thesis. In general, the curriculum is very well planned and the sequence of the study subjects is carefully justified.

The descriptors of the study subjects are provided in the SER, Annex 3.1 where the various subjects are presented very thoroughly, including the assessment criteria and the list of required reading. All the subjects are presented according to the same pattern; the responsible teachers for each module are mentioned: aims of the study subject and learning outcomes side by side, subject content and academic hours, teaching methods, assessment methods, completion time, assessment criteria and required reading. This Annex together with other tables gives an exhaustive description of the *Programme* curriculum; it is as detailed as possible avoiding, however, too normative an approach. The preparation of the Final Master's Thesis is also

regarded as a separate module and its content is consistent with requirements for the research master's degree.

There are books in English included in the list of required reading; rather big differences can, however, be noticed among the different study subjects. The majority of the required literature sources are up to date and well-known international books are also included in the reading lists, ensuring that the students are provided with the latest knowledge in their field. However, during the meeting with different target groups, it was found that the books in English are not frequently used, after all. Furthermore, there could be much more English references in the Master's Thesis.

In summary, the area of the curriculum design of the *Programme* fulfils the evaluation criteria presented in the *Methodology* (59.1 - 59.6) and the legal requirements for second level study programmes.

Strengths:

- Thoroughly prepared and transparent curriculum design.
- Coherence of the *Programme* and alignment to the mission of the University.

Areas for improvement:

- More readings in English could be used.

2.3. Teaching staff

The number of professors, associate professors and lectures is in line with the requirements of the legal acts and exceeds them: 6 professors, 11 associate professors and two lecturers (PhD) are teaching on the *Programme*. The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate and their scientific activities comply with the subject for which they are responsible. The teaching staff turnover is reasonable; 7 from 19 – 20 lecturers have been working continuously in the *Programme* and new competent teachers have also joined the *Programme* during the period under evaluation. The average age of the teaching staff is 49, and both experienced teachers and young colleagues are working in the *Programme*; that is something to be commended. The lecturers themselves, however, would like to get more systematic qualification improvement/professional development, on a national level if possible.

The teaching staff is developing its professional competences by participating in the international mobility programmes. Both teachers and students usually use the Erasmus mobility programme. Nevertheless, the numbers of outcoming lecturers and, especially, incoming

lecturers are rather moderate. Even though the teachers are members of different professional associations (ETEN, ENMCR), it would, however, be fruitful to widen the current range of the organizations and also to join the well-known educational research associations: European Educational Research Association (EERA), Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA), and the most influential American Educational Research Association (AERA), etc. The membership in these associations is of great importance for the development of the research activities directly related to the *Programme*.

The number of scientific publications varies a great deal among the teachers. There are a few articles published in international journals, but there are practically no high impact factor publications in the peer reviewed journals. However, the number of publications in the national journals is rather high. The university has its own journals, such as “Young Researchers’ Works”, “Teacher Education” or “Social Education”. Publishing in national publishing houses is also necessary; nevertheless, teachers should be encouraged to publish internationally more.

The working load of the teachers needs to be taken into consideration; the role of teaching is too dominant compared to that of research activities. At the moment the volume of the research makes 35 % of the whole teachers’ workload and it is not sufficient when compared with the teaching activities. The balance between the teaching and research should be reviewed, when possible.

Teachers of the *Programme* cooperate closely with the social partners. Siauliai University is a regional university with close cooperation with Siauliai city and district schools. This is of great importance when updating the *Programme* according to the changes in the labour market and conducting practice-based research.

In summary, the area of the teaching staff fulfils the evaluation criteria presented in the *Methodology* (60.1 - 60.6) and the legal requirements for the second level study programmes.

Strengths:

- Competent and motivated teachers.
- Staff participation in activities in its own special fields (ETEN, ENMCR).
- Cooperation with regional and local partners (Siauliai city).

Areas for improvement:

- Links with international research associations (EERA, NERA, AERA).
- Number of high impact factor publications in international peer reviewed journals.
- International contacts, visitors and congresses.

- Opportunities for in-service training.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

In general, the review panel agrees with the statement in the SER: “The material base created for a successful implementation of the *Programme* is favourable and the methodical sources are sufficient.” (SER, pg.19). The visit to the University confirmed that the library is renewed, facilities used for the studies are sufficient, wifi access is available in the library and in other premises. It is worth noting that the childcare service for the University community members is also provided on the premises of the library.

The lecturers have recently (year 2008-2012) published numerous textbooks to be used in the *Programme*, in addition the library subscribes periodical publications and provides useful databases; the necessary teaching materials are adequate and accessible. The number of English books has been increasing; this increase is supported by the policy of internalisation at the University. Further investment in the facilities is, however, needed. At the moment the number of foreign language literature texts needs to be complemented with the newest literature.

In summary, the area of the facilities and learning resources fulfils the evaluation criteria presented in the *Methodology* (61.1 - 61.4).

Strengths:

- Adequate classrooms in size and quality.
- Wifi and different data bases.

Areas for improvement:

- Number of foreign language literature texts in the library.

2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment

The admission policy is based on a clear scheme derived from the composition of the competitive score. The range of the highest and lowest competitive scores is, however, quite wide indicating various backgrounds of the students. This causes some problems in organising the studies. The programme team is, however, fully conscious of this situation and applies certain means to deal with it, e.g. by offering supplementary studies and providing distant learning possibilities, or by using innovative study methods. The number of drop-outs has, on

the other hand, increased despite the academic and social support. The programme team and the administration should further use all possible means for improving this situation. The number of applicants has been consistently declining too; this fact should also be taken into consideration.

The *Programme* provides quite a wide range of academic, non-academic and social supports for the students (informational lectures, meetings, e-mail; students' organizations, arts and sports, medical services, childcare; social help, loans). Furthermore, special attention has been paid to the student mobility programmes, the cumulative assessment system, short-term summer courses, as well as to the problems of unemployment. The panel notes that this area of the *Programme* functions quite well; nevertheless efforts should be put in place to keep the same level and to increase it. The students are encouraged to participate in the research activities of the Faculty, the best works are published in the scientific publications of the University.

The assessment system is transparent and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes; it is presented to the students at the beginning of every course; cumulative grades are usually used. Several principles are applied (validity, reliability, clarity, expedience, impartiality) when assessing the students. Feedback about their achievements is given regularly to the students. The procedure of the assessment of the Final Master's Thesis is also in line with aims, learning outcomes, assessment criteria and required literature.

It is worth mentioning that disabled students also have free access to the facilities in the entire Faculty. In summary, the area of the study process and students' performance assessment fulfils the evaluation criteria presented in the *Methodology* (62.1 - 61.7) and the legal requirements for second level study programmes.

Strengths:

- Various forms of student supports are available.
- The students are involved in the research activities of the Faculty.

Areas for improvement:

- Declining number of applications to the *Programme*.
- Students' participation in international exchange programmes.

2.6. Programme management

The internal quality system of the University guarantees clear distribution of responsibilities and accountabilities. The process of the quality assurance is presented in detail on both the

institutional and also on the faculty levels in the SER. In addition to the study process, attention is also paid to the improvement indicators. The voice of all stakeholders is taken into account (lecturers, students, employers, etc.). Regular self-assessment is performed with the production of annual reports; information is open and available for all stakeholders. The close relationships with stakeholders are maintained, e.g. through personal discussions, during students' practice and their visits to the Faculty. The feedback is used in the internal evaluation process and for the implementation of the reforms.

The information booklets for the entrants, a newsletter about the international studies, the development of Internet applications, and the improvement of study possibilities for disabled students and those who have family, or who try to combine studies and work, may also be considered as indicators of effective and efficient internal quality assurance.

The University has developed a special system, an Internal Study Quality Management System (ISQMS), which monitors the quality assurance also at the institutional level. The panel notes that the management of the *Programme* is transparent. This system allows for the dissemination of information effectively and makes the continual development and the improvement of the programme possible.

During the discussions with the different target groups it was clear that there is close cooperation with the social partners. They employ the students and the graduates of the *Programme*. This cooperation is, however, mostly non-formal and could be more systematic.

In summary, the area of the programme management fulfils the evaluation criteria presented in the *Methodology* (63.1 - 63.5) and the legal requirements for second level study programmes.

Strengths:

- Strong system of study quality management.
- Close relations with social partners.
- Different levels of responsibility for decisions are clearly defined.
- Students' voices are heard.

Areas for improvement:

- Cooperation with stakeholders.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To increase the cooperation and collaboration with the corresponding programmes inside the faculty and with other universities in the country.
2. To improve English language skills, which seem to be one of the main obstacles to the development of international cooperation and to enhancing students' international mobility.
3. To review the balance between research and teaching.
4. Interdisciplinarity is one of the main principles in the aims of the *Programme*. This could be made more visible by maximizing interpersonal learning in the assessment, for example by using case studies and school projects.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE *

There are no examples of excellence.

V. SUMMARY

The Programme as a whole is a systematic and compact construction following the legal requirements and the documents required; it also fits well into the larger university mission. The *Programme* is transparent and easy to access through different information channels. Its aims and learning outcomes are systematically presented and their connections to the subjects, methods and assessment procedures are clearly presented. It meets the requirements of good curriculum design. The teaching staff is competent and their research is directed to the area which they represent in their teaching responsibilities. The facilities and learning resources are adequate and appropriate to fulfill student needs and the strong internal quality assurance system makes the improvement and development of the *Programme* possible.

In addition to the many positive aspects in the Programme the review panel found some viewpoints worth considering:

The *Programme* has two specialisations; their role in the presentation of the *Programme* could be made clearer as early as possible.

The University emphasises the principle of internationalisation in its future perspectives. To further this aim, a language programme, especially in English, should be launched. It is necessary for numerous reasons: to cooperate with influential international research associations, to publish more in high impact international journals, to invite more international visitors, to

participate more in international conferences, to increase student participation in exchange programmes, to increase English reading in the assessment procedure.

The content of the subjects needs permanent updating and alternatives for required reading should be considered regularly.

The further development of the teaching staff is a constant problem for various reasons. Financing is a challenge of its own; systematic in-service training, however, can be arranged in a variety of ways. These possibilities should be investigated consistently.

All possible actions should be taken to control the declining number of the applicants and to retrieve the drop-outs back to the study process.

** if there are any to be shared as a good practice*

VI. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Educology* (state code – 621X20026) at Šiauliai University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation of an area in points* |
|-----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Programme aims and learning outcomes | 4 |
| 2. | Curriculum design | 4 |
| 3. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 4. | Facilities and learning resources | 3 |
| 5. | Study process and students' performance assessment | 3 |
| 6. | Programme management | 4 |
| | Total: | 21 |

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Grupės vadovas: Team leader: | Prof. dr. Pertti Kansanen |
| Grupės nariai: Team members: | Prof. dr. Ilze Ivanova |
| | Prof. dr. Fuensanta Hernandez Pina |
| | Dr. Marian McCarthy |
| | Ms. Žaneta Savickienė |
| | Mr. Andrius Ledas |