



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus universiteto
***SOCIOLOGIJOS* STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS (62405S102,
621L30001)**
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF STUDY PROGRAMME
SOCIOLOGY
(State code – 62405S102, 621L30001)
at Vilnius University**

Grupės vadovas:
Team Leader: Prof. Tamas Rudas

Grupės nariai:
Team members: Prof. John Holmwood,
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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Sociologija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	62405S102, 621L30001
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Sociologija
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Sociologijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	Valstybinis kodas 62405S102 – 2007-02-19 Švietimo ir mokslo ministro įsakymu Nr. ISAK-225, valstybinis kodas 621L30001 Švietimo ir mokslo ministro įsakymu – 2010-05-03 Nr. V-635

INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<i>Sociology</i>
State code	62405S102, 621L30001
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Sociology
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Level of studies	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2)
Scope of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Sociology
Date of registration of the study programme	State code 62405S102 - 19 of February 2007, under the order of the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. ISAK-225, state code 621L30001 – 3 of May 2010, under the order of the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-635

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	4
1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	4
2. Curriculum design	5
3. Staff	5
4. Facilities and learning resources	6
5. Study process and student assessment.....	6
6. Programme management	6
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	8
IV. SUMMARY	9

I. INTRODUCTION

Vilnius University (VU), established in 1579, is the oldest and largest institution of scientific research and academic studies in Lithuania. VU is structurally divided into academic and non-academic units, and by their status the units are categorized as core and branch divisions. The principal activities of the academic units of the University are research and/ or studies. The core academic units are the Faculties of the University and other comparable divisions (12 faculties, 7 institutes, and 4 centres having the status of core academic divisions).

The last external international assessment of the Master study programme in Sociology (Programme) was performed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) in 2003.

The present programme evaluation is performed by SKVC. International expert team was led by Prof. Tamas Rudas. The other team members are Doc. Dr. Viktoriya Sereda, Prof. John Holmwood, Jurgita Bataitytė, Dr. Liutauras Kraniauskas and Saulius Olencevičius. Initial documentation was provided by Vilnius University and consisted of a Self Evaluation Report (SER) and dedicated annexes. The site visit was undertaken on 6th - 7th of November 2012. A later meeting was held to discuss the Programme further and write Evaluation Report.

The review panel confirms, that documentation provided before and during the site visits was well prepared and delivered on time. The visit and meetings at Vilnius University was well and professionally organised by the hosts.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims and learning outcomes of the Programme are clearly articulated, both in terms of individual courses and overall description of the Programme. A comprehensive appendix of course documentation was provided with the Self Evaluation Report. This showed that the course descriptions and their aims and outcomes were clearly specified, and that the information provided was clear and standard across modules. They are publicly available in the sense of being available for scrutiny by relevant authorities and concerned parties, but not very accessible. Good practice suggests a website description setting out the overall programme and its component courses in clear and accessible language, with the formal course descriptions and aims and learning outcomes accessible on the website by ‘clicking through’.

The degree is concerned to develop advanced, postgraduate competences in sociological theories, research design and methods (qualitative and quantitative) and in specific fields of application of sociological knowledge. This is professionally justified and fits with labour market needs, as described by social partners, graduates and current students. However, the Programme team could address market needs more extensively, especially with social partners and alumni, who expressed their willingness to provide advice.

The aims and learning outcomes are appropriate for the degree, though there are some areas of weakness in terms of structured opportunities to develop research methods skills independently of particular dissertation research projects.

The Programme is clearly and appropriately described.

2. Curriculum design

The Programme evaluation panel confirms that the curriculum design meets legal requirements, where these are applicable to the Programme. The courses are appropriately distributed across the curriculum to provide an even distribution of workload for students. The course topics were not repetitive and where there was an apparent repetition of some content in undergraduate courses – for example, relating to research methods courses and courses in theory, which are compulsory in both programmes - it was confirmed by staff and students, that this was undertaken at a more demanding postgraduate level.

The content of the courses is consistent with type and level of studies and appropriate for the achievement of learning outcomes. However, one potential limitation is that there might have been expected, that more opportunities would have been provided for students to expand the range of their skills in research methods. Academic staff provided a clear rationale, where they regarded the degree programme to be focused in research terms on the dissertation research to be undertaken by the student, where course choices were designed to enhance their skills for their particular project. There was evidence from social partners and from students that opportunities to enhance research methods skills outside the methods used in a particular research project would have been welcomed. This would also be consistent with practice at other European universities, where an explicit programme of advanced research methods training is normally made available within a Masters programme in Sociology.

There is also a concern that the courses in the Programme tend to be determined on the basis of the preferences of staff and their availability to teach. While this is appropriate for some elective courses, there might be more attention paid to the structure of the degree in terms of increasing the number of compulsory courses.

There is clear innovation in the use of some methods, less commonly available at other universities, but this is alongside the absence of explicit instruction in other techniques and a general lack of use of standard, secondary data bases in dissertations. In the view of the Programme evaluation panel, this is a consequence of a lack of explicit attention to the outcomes desirable for each student to achieve, in contrast to allowing each student to find their own route through the courses on offer.

3. Staff

The study programme is well-supported by the staff associated with it. There are 7 Professors, 6 Associate Professors and 2 other members of staff associated with the Programme. The bulk of the teaching is provided by the professorial staff. These meet the requirements for second cycle programmes in terms of the relevant qualifications and research experience of staff. The staff are well-qualified by virtue of both prior education, practical research in the areas covered by the Programme and by participation in staff development programmes.

There are good local staff development programmes and opportunities to participate in international training/ mobility programmes, for example, the “Internationality in sociology and criminology studies” programme and methods training funded by the Research Council of Lithuania. There are also good arrangements for sabbatical leave to conduct research. There was clear evidence, that early career staff are encouraged in professional development. However, the Programme evaluation panel also suggests, that there may be advantages for direct international benchmarking of the department against other departments with similar research interests for professional development to have a collective, as well as individual aspect. In this way, there could be greater opportunities for incoming mobility as well as outgoing movement of staff and students.

4. Facilities and learning resources

There is not much space provided for individual members of staff, who rely on collectively provided and shared working spaces. However, these spaces – in the Library of the University and also the Library of the Faculty of Philosophy were of excellent quality and there was strong evidence – reported by academic staff and students alike – of high quality interactions among students and staff. The Department had a high degree of ‘esprit de corps’ and mutual commitment among staff and students.

The teaching facilities, computing equipment, etc are all excellent and the library and other teaching materials very satisfactory. The Faculty of Philosophy has two computer rooms: Room 111 for lectures/seminars for an audience of 23+1; and Room 112, which is an open access room for 23+1 visitors, with computers operating the main software packages for the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data were available. However, virtual learning environments (VLE) was relatively undeveloped with few staff seeming to use Moodle or WebCT or their equivalents (as reported by students).

5. Study process and student assessment

The Programme evaluation panel was satisfied with the admission requirements, which are a prior Bachelor’s degree in Sociology or equivalent degree programmes (with the possibility of making up any deficit in background from courses in the undergraduate degree). The Programme provides a strong emphasis on theory in applied contexts, but as remarked earlier, is a little weaker in terms of the systematic training in advanced research methods at postgraduate level. There is some indication of a tendency on the part of students to emphasise qualitative research methods, despite academic staff emphasis on quantitative methods as a strength of their Department. Students are encouraged to participate in research through internships and in their dissertations, though it would also be beneficial if the latter were published in some form (eg. online). Students participate in mobility programmes, though the numbers doing so remain small. Support for students is strong and commented favourably upon by students. Assessment criteria are clear, as evidenced by the course descriptions contained in Annex 1 of the Self-Assessment Report. These contain clear, detailed descriptions of the assessment strategy, which are well-justified in the light of the expressed learning outcomes. The assessments are appropriate to the programme level. No specific vocation is associated with the Master degree and social partners did not seem to distinguish between graduates of the undergraduate degree and graduates of the Master programme. This might be improved with more explicit attention paid to extending research methods training as a component of the degree. However, students were successful in the labour market and employers expressed themselves satisfied.

6. Programme management

The structures for the management of the degree programme are clearly articulated, albeit in the view of the programme evaluation panel, with many layers, which may delay change and implementation. Information and data was regularly collected. This involves student evaluation of courses after each semester, discussion of the evaluations and programmes by the Study Programme Committee and annual report to the Dean’s Office. Student representatives are also actively involved in the discussions of these evaluations. However, the Programme team did not seem to make use of stakeholders/social partners in providing feedback about the Programme. There was a high confidence in informal processes, which was justified, but less awareness of the possibility that this could make the Department less outward looking. There was little evidence, that the Department sought external benchmarks for their activities. The evaluation panel felt, that there should be attention to ensuring that the Programme team addressed and

resolved any issues raised by annual courses and programme evaluations, for example, by instituting a formal report on actions taken.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review panel recommends that more attention is paid to curriculum design and especially to the collective 'ownership' of the Programme, especially in terms of its compulsory components and the enhancement of research methods provision.
2. Review panel recommends the development of international 'benchmarks'; suggests that particular departments with similar research interests and standing within their own national contexts be identified and their curricula and other activities be used to develop local aspirations. This could lead to more formal relationships being pursued.
3. Review panel recommends more attention be paid to recruitment and the enhancement of student numbers, perhaps by seeking to recruit more strongly from outside the Department's own undergraduate programme.
4. Review panel recommends more engagement with alumni and social partners; comments to the evaluation panel suggested considerable goodwill toward the Department and willingness to be involved.

IV. SUMMARY

Master study programme in Sociology attracts excellent students to the Department. The academic staff have strong scientific competences. The latter maintains a strong identity and good interpersonal relations with students. This is facilitated by a favourable staff-student ratio and attractive premises and good facilities for students. The Department is a little too ,inward‘ looking. There is also a tendency to understand its Programme as an aggregate of the courses offered by individual members of staff. The strong identity and ,esprit de corps‘ of the Department could be used to good effect in greater self-conscious collective engagement with its future development.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Sociology* (state code – 62405S102, 621L30001) at Vilnius University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	4
4.	Material resources	3
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	19

*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.

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**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
SOCIOLOGIJA (VALSTYBINIAI KODAI – 62405S102, 621L30001) 2012-12-13
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-148 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Sociologija* (valstybiniai kodai – 62405S102, 621L30001) vertinama teigiamai.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	4
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	19

* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Antros pakopos *Sociologijos* studijų programa pritraukia puikius studentus. Akademiniis personalas pasižymi aukšta kvalifikacija. Tai atsispindi stipriame identitete ir geruose tarpusavio santykiuose su studentais. Tokius rezultatus leidžia pasiekti geras personalo ir studentų santykis, išvystyta materialioji bazė. Katedra pasižymi šiek tiek per didele orientacija „į vidų“. Taip pat vyrauja tendencija studijų programą suvokti kaip atskirų studijų dalykų sumą. Stiprus identitetas ir „kolektyvo dvasia“ galėtų būti sėkmingai naudojama studijų programos tobulinimui.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja daugiau dėmesio skirti studijų programos sandarai, ypačiai – kolektyvinei atsakomybei už jos vykdymą, atsižvelgiant į privalomuosius dalykus ir mokslinio tyrimo metodų tobulinimą.
2. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja remtis tarptautinio palyginimo gairėmis; siūlo panašių mokslinių tyrimų interesų turinčioms ir atitinkančioms nacionalinį kontekstą katedroms, identifikuoti vienoms kitas bei jų studijų programų sandarą, taip pat kitas sritis naudoti vietiniams tikslams įgyvendinti. Tai gali paskatinti siekti formalesnių ryšių statuso.
3. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja daugiau dėmesio skirti studentų pritraukimui ir jų skaičiaus didinimui, galbūt priimant daugiau studentų ne iš tos pačios katedros po bakalauro studijų.
4. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja palaikyti aktyvesnius ryšius su absolventais ir socialiniais partneriais; ekspertų grupė vizito metu pastebėjo jų rodomą gerą valią ir norą padėti.

<...>

Paslaugos teikėja patvirtina, kad yra susipažinusi su Lietuvos Respublikos Baudžiamojo kodekso¹ 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

¹ Žin., 2002, Nr. 37-1341.