



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Lietuvos edukologijos universitetas
GEOGRAFIJOS PROGRAMOS (612X13020)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *GEOGRAPHY* (612X13020)
STUDY PROGRAMME**

At the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Geografija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612X13020
Studijų sritis	socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	pedagogika
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinės (4), iššęstinės (5,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Geografijos pedagogikos, gamtinės, visuomeninės geografijos bakalauro laipsnis ir mokytojo kvalifikacija
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997 m. gegužės 19 d.

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Geography</i>
State code	612X13020
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Teachers training
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	First cycle
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (4), part-time (5,5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Teacher, Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy of Geography and Natural and Human Geography
Date of registration of the study programme	19 May 1997

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The external evaluation of the Bachelor and Teacher Training study programme in *Geography* at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (hereafter, 'the University') was initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania nominating the international expert group (hereafter, the 'expert group' or 'assessment panel') formed by Professor Geoffrey Robinson (lately of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland – team leader), Professor Bjørn Asheim (University of Lund, Sweden), Professor Tommi Inkinen (University of Helsinki, Finland), Rytas Šalna (President of the Lithuanian Association of Geography Teachers) and Inga Bačelytė (final-year Bachelor student, Vilnius University).

The evaluation of the study programme ('the programme') made use of the following documents: Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania (2009); Procedure of the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes (2009); Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes (2010); and General Requirements of First Degree and Integrated Study Programmes (2010).

The basis for the evaluation of the study programme is the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), written and later supplemented in 2013, its annexes and the site visit of the expert group to the University on 18 December 2013. The Department of Geography and Tourism ('the Department'), located in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Technologies ('the Faculty'), is directly responsible for overseeing the programme's delivery and monitoring, with the Departments of Education and Psychology contributing to the implementation of the pedagogy subjects taught in the final year of studies. The site visit incorporated all required meetings with different groups: the administrative staff of the Faculty, staff responsible for preparing the self-assessment documents, teaching staff, students of all years of study, graduates, and employers. The expert group inspected support facilities and resources (classrooms, laboratories, library, computer facilities), scrutinised students' final works, and various other materials.

After discussions and preparations of conclusions and remarks, the expert group presented introductory general conclusions of the visit at an open meeting with representatives of all the stakeholders. The group subsequently met to discuss and agree the content of the report, which represents the members' consensual views.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme remains the only one in Lithuania where students graduate with both a bachelor degree and a teaching qualification for secondary schools specifically in Geography. It aims principally to satisfy societal demands in the labour market for teachers. To these ends, therefore, the programme aims are clearly defined, orientated to public needs and closely linked to the labour market demands.

The programme aims and intended learning outcomes have been completely revised since the previous external evaluation. They are now more closely linked to the provisions outlined in the latest national legal documents. The revised programme aims focus on the abilities that are characteristic of first cycle studies and that meet the modern goals of education: "to train competent teachers of geography with university education and a Bachelor's degree, who can perform professionally the role of teaching geography in modern society: ensure high quality teaching/learning geography and develop its new possibilities; extend personal, social, cognitive and cultural ... competences; and follow the acquired competences in self-contained pedagogical activity and extended learning" (SER, p.9, 2.1.5). The aims and outcomes are certainly consistent

with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered (bachelor degree and teaching qualification). Learning outcomes are well formulated and their relationship to the aims is clear. Important elements are the development of interdisciplinary and transferable work skills. The programme therefore includes training for communicating with other persons and presenting arguments clearly in writing and orally to various audiences. These are valuable tools to help graduates' integration in whichever areas of the contemporary labour market they seek employment.

The programme is well structured and the offered modules are compatible with the programme's overall aims. The number of component study subjects remains very high, however (63 courses or modules). The evaluation panel echoes previous concerns about the coherence of such a diversity of subjects, which could lead to a diffusion of the ability to meet the intended learning outcomes. It is recognised that teacher education has to provide much greater breadth than for graduates entering other geography-related professions. Nevertheless, the panel wonders if a core selection of broad courses (rather than an extensive range of narrow courses) should be available for students not intending to be teachers. The aims and learning outcomes of those broad courses could then be more orientated to employment as geographers outside the teaching profession. This might be less of an issue than at the previous evaluation, however. Despite tourism providing growing opportunities to satisfy student career aspirations, supported by an additional specialism in Tourism Management available outside the programme, students who met with the expert group affirmed that the majority intend to become teachers. Furthermore, the programme managers together with alumni and employers who met with the expert group are optimistic that opportunities for employment as teachers are opening up, consistent with the age profile of the present holders of teaching positions.

The revision of programme aims and outcomes since the previous external evaluation has been a marked success. The programme managers have themselves recognized the advisability of systematically conducting such exercises more frequently (SER p.11). It is notable, however, that the extensive range of professional consultations that influenced the programme revisions was largely restricted to Lithuania. Given the programme's uniqueness in Lithuania and the desire to raise the nation's higher-education standards to those prevailing elsewhere in Europe, it would be wise to draw upon the experiences of similar programmes in other countries to help not only in programme management but also in the refinement of aims and outcomes.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design satisfies all legal requirements. The content of the courses and modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies and meets the requirements of bachelor studies in geography and teacher education, in both full-time and part-time modes of study.

In conjunction with the revision of programme aims and learning outcomes, the programme design has changed and there are more changes proposed. In 2013 the programme covers three groups of subjects: subjects of general education, subjects of pedagogical studies and elective subjects. Some of the electives are from ranges established separately by the University and by the Faculty, but by far the majority are freely chosen from the programme's large palette of courses, leading to the accrual of 42.9 per cent of the programme's credits. Each subject grouping aims to enable the achievement of a specific set of learning outcomes. In total, the scope of the programme is considered sufficient to ensure all the intended learning outcomes. Courses are spread evenly over the four-year period (5.5 years for part-time students) and are logically linked. The extensive course palette covers a diversity of geography studies, which may be thought especially appropriate for students who are going to be teachers. Students have the opportunity to acquire sufficient geographical knowledge and practical skills.

Scrutiny of the course descriptions in Annex 3.1 of the SER revealed areas of overlap in the subject areas of some courses. For example, the courses "Geography of population and

settlements”, “Geography of the Baltic sea”, “Geography of Vilnius city”, “Historical geography of Lithuania” and “Lithuanian population and settlements” have some content in common. Similar areas of overlap occur in physical geography courses such as “Climatology” and “Applied climatology”. These are not exhaustive examples and despite the programme structure of general and elective university studies followed by study fundamentals, the evaluation panel believes that some consolidation is possible without compromising the good grounding in the breadth and diversity of the discipline that students undoubtedly receive. Consideration could be given to reducing the number of courses by creating new combined ones without the overlapping content. Another consequence of the extensive range of courses was presented to the evaluation panel in the meeting with alumni. Those beginning their school teaching careers after graduation have found it difficult to sort relevant material for the particular school programme from the vast accumulation in the plenitude of courses in their degree programme. It was unclear to the evaluation panel how the list of subjects taught is related, as claimed, to the Curriculum of Geography for General Education Schools (SER, p.11). Physical geography coverage outweighs human geography in the programme, whereas in the world generally as well as in school geography, attention to social and economic concerns is growing rapidly. Subject content that could be considered for growth includes the basis of regional planning, cultural and resources geography, and comparisons of developing and developed regions and nations. It is acknowledged that new subjects could only be entertained at the expense of other subjects or course contents. Such considerations would need to be part of the programme design’s ongoing comprehensive review.

More positively, however, the new modules on tourism are attractive elements and students are especially appreciative of the increased number of freely elective modules that characterise the new programme design. It is also a positive feature that there is growth in the coverage of subjects related to didactics, the processes of teaching geography; modern prospective teachers have to meet very high requirements regarding their pedagogical competences. It is unclear, however, why some of these courses are optional; for example, the methodologies of natural and social geographical research.

Communication and language skills are included in the programme’s intended learning outcomes but alumni and employers identify them as warranting improvement. The increase from eight to 20 credits for practical training will provide the opportunity to address the issue of communication skills and perhaps language training could be strengthened in courses that include competence in foreign languages among their intended learning outcomes. These include “Active methods of Geography teaching”, “Bachelor work preparation methodology”, “Course paper on the general basics of study field”, “Extra curricular activities in Geography” and “Integrated Geography learning” as well as in several courses on specific subject areas, such as Cartography, GIS, Geomorphology, Health Education and Topography.

Students consider that one of the best parts of the programme is field and remote practice. The majority of students opt to pay for the experience of field practice in a foreign country during which students apply theoretical knowledge and practical skills for complex learning and research activities. The programme provides alternative field practices for students who cannot afford to pay for the foreign experience but they believe them to be less satisfactory. This is perhaps an area for the programme management to address: that is, to ensure the alternative experiences are commensurate and reassure students of the comparability of the relevant intended learning outcomes.

3. Staff

The staff who contribute to teaching the programme meet all legal requirements and are well qualified to educate appropriately a future generation of geography teachers. Over half of the programme staff are professors or associate professors, with the qualifications required to hold

those levels of appointment. Their number and qualifications are adequate to enable the achievement of the programme's intended learning outcomes. The age profile means that turnover and continuity of staffing can be readily managed to ensure an adequate provision of the programme. The total number of staff involved is 19, a considerable reduction from previous years. Twelve of them are full-time teachers and seven part time. With recent reductions in student numbers enrolled in the programme the ratio of students to staff is about 13. This is increased however by the fact that lectures on general university education subjects and pedagogical studies are delivered to students from several programmes.

The programme participates in the Erasmus exchange scheme. Partners include universities in the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain and UK as well as in the neighbouring countries of Latvia and Poland. The Faculty has received a steady stream of exchange visitors over the last few years, albeit few participate in the programme, which nevertheless benefits from the experience of one or two staff teaching in foreign universities each year. More would be willing to take part but financial concerns are a hindrance.

Many academic staff engage in research directly related to the study programme. They discuss scientific results with staff from other universities, attend conferences, participate in international exchanges through Erasmus, and pursue personal staff development. Some staff members are active in collaborative projects mainly in Lithuania and a few internationally active staff have published in high-quality journals. On the whole, however, the level of scientific activity among the staff remains rather low. A major issue is the small number of publications in international peer-reviewed journals.

The supplementary document that followed the original SER provided information on new staff publications and collaborative activities. These do indicate positive growth of the staff's research networks. What is now needed is the further development of a staff ethos that would look towards publishing in high-quality international journals as expectable activities. More international participation in interdisciplinary programmes and more scientific peer-reviewed publications should be envisaged for the future. This in turn would impact on teaching activities and would give students new opportunities to contribute to current research themes. Such a development will not take place overnight and will need continuing Department and Faculty support to counter the current low level of available funding.

The Department acknowledges that in addition to the need to improve students' language skills, especially in English, some staff are also deficient in this respect. The University does offer various professional-development courses and the Department should encourage staff members to take up the opportunities to become more fluent in English. This would help to break down one of the perceived barriers to international research collaboration and publishing. It would also strengthen the presence and use of the English language in the programme, by both staff and students, if the University were to provide more financial support to buy English language teaching materials.

The staff have taken advantage of other staff-development initiatives and it is to their credit that they use a variety of innovative teaching methods such as problem-based learning, discussions, debates, visualizations etc. These methods, which are highly valued by the students, spark interest in the topics being taught and help them achieve the intended learning outcomes.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The previous external evaluation was highly critical of the resources available to the programme. It was therefore gratifying to observe the improvements that had been made in the subsequent two years. The Faculty where the programme continues to be delivered is located in spacious premises convenient for learning and research. Auditoria and classrooms have been renovated and are adequate in size and number for the programme's delivery. The auditorium and workplace facilities are adequate. The Faculty has a fair complement of computer resources (50

workplaces, SER, p. 27) and it would appear that geography students are able to use them when needed. There are an additional 15 workplaces with installed ArcGIS software usable by students. Equipment for use in physical geography practical studies has also been greatly improved by the purchase of up-to-date scientific instruments. Cartographic and other material collections, such as rocks and minerals, continue to be added to on a systematic basis.

Field practices are conducted in suitable locations and appear to be adequately equipped. The evaluation panel was reassured to note that good use is still being made of the previously threatened training base in Tamošava. Small practical classrooms, small sets of equipment and a large, albeit improved, student:staff ratio lead to multiple classes and increased teaching loads. Geographical practicals are as much a key part of the programme as is teaching practice. It is incumbent on the University to ensure that the Faculty is adequately funded to enhance still more the laboratory and equipment provision and ensure the development of those practical skills that are essential learning outcomes.

Library and reading room accommodation is good and major refurbishments of the library are being carried out. Access to electronic data bases has improved and a decent number of leading international databases available via the main university library – reportedly around 40 (SER p.29). There is still a serious lack of book resources, especially textbooks and international scientific literature including English language publications. The growth in electronic resources, and especially international scholarly publications, while welcomed, is not matched by their use by staff in course reference lists and by students in their theses. It was clear in their meeting with the evaluation panel that a lack of fluency in English was limiting students' understanding of the databases. The accessibility and use of the databases are in need of attention.

The expert group was pleased to observe that since the previous evaluation the programme has adopted several online tools to support teaching. The use of Moodle and other online platforms is a positive development. The SER (p.29) indicates that there is no methodological material prepared for geography lessons using a White Board. This is a further area that warrants attention. Given that the programme prepares future geography teachers, the expert group took particular note of the relative lack of didactic literature and specifically school geography textbook resources for students to use in their teacher training, for example in writing lesson plans and adapting material for lessons.

5. Study process and student assessment

The admission procedures meet all legal requirements and include variations to cater for non-standard entrants. The numbers of students admitted are determined by the competitive distribution of financial study baskets for the best students. In all recent years the places on the programme that are fully or partly funded by the state have all been taken up. There has been, however, a fall in the number of school leavers with geography qualifications and higher tuition fees have discouraged self-funding students. The outcome has been a sharp decline in student numbers entering the programme, from 85 full-time and 27 part-time students in 2010, to 49 and 12 in 2011, 27 and 6 in 2012, and 18 and 6 in 2013.

There are some positive consequences of this decline. All recent recruits had the programme as their first priority in their applications for entry into higher education, indicating a high motivation borne out by good performances in the various contests and other science-based events that contribute to the competitive scoring process. Alumni commented positively about the high motivation of current students. Qualitatively the student cohort is of a higher standard than in earlier years and the majority are intent upon becoming teachers. The reduced numbers, even with a smaller complement of staff, have made for a lower student:staff ratio that should enhance the students' ability to achieve the programme's intended learning outcomes. But such low numbers must be a cause for concern, not only with regard to the programme's own sustainability but also to the future of recruitment to geography teaching in schools, given that

the University has been Lithuania's major training centre of highly qualified geography teachers (SER, pp.38-9).

Studies appear to be well organised, ensuring an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of intended learning outcomes. An improvement since the previous evaluation has been the introduction of a greater variety of teaching and learning methods. All necessary information about the programme as a whole and about individual courses is made available at appropriate times and in a variety of ways including course descriptions in a Virtual Learning Environment. Timetabled activities allow adequate spare time for independent learning. Students particularly appreciate the physical geography components of the programme and greatly value the early training in field practices and other practical experiences upon which the department sets much store. Arrangements for teaching practice are good. Practice placements are of undoubted importance to the programmes and to future work experience, both in teaching and in tourism, where many graduates make careers. All stakeholders assert their high satisfaction with this aspect of the programme.

Senior students are involved in research activities and participate in scientific conferences, as well as having opportunities to present their work in seminars. Staff members spend considerable time with students and staff-student relations are excellent, confirmed at all stakeholder meetings with the expert group and evidenced by surveys of recent graduates. This greatly assists in the monitoring of students' progress and provision of an adequate level of academic support. Students' collaborative participation in staff research projects provides strong learning opportunities for those involved and constitutes a valuable kind of academic support. Several University facilities provide social support, including a Centre of Psychological Consultancy and other centres for Sports, Health, Culture and Languages. There are various measures to help students financially, such as by social and incentive grants and discounted hostel accommodation for part-time students.

Students have opportunities to participate in the Erasmus mobility scheme. Incoming exchanges may be considered as adequate, 15 foreign students having participated in the Geography programme between 2010 and 2013. The exchange students have come from the Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey. Additionally, two other students from Italy and one from Germany attended some courses. It is well understood that southern European countries are more attractive than other parts of Europe to northern European students. Nevertheless, the Department could benefit from expanding its exchange network to include universities in northern Europe with strong geographical traditions and high levels of participation in the Erasmus programme. Better publicity for the programme should be used to attract students from a wider range of countries. The SER does raise the possibility of including programme details in foreign languages on the Department website, a step that the expert group would approve.

Unfortunately, the programme's own students do not participate to any great extent in the exchanges. One contributing factor is that many students are in employment and cannot gain release for the requisite periods away. Another obstacle is undoubtedly the weakness in foreign languages, mentioned above in the section on Curriculum Design. Increasing the English-language content of the programme and integrating it better into the subject teaching will be positive steps to address the situation. But universities where the native language is other than English also expect incoming exchange students to be able to communicate in that nation's language, which acts as another deterrent to Erasmus participation. Students also expressed the view to the evaluation panel that they lack adequate information about the exchange programme and fear that a period away will lead to 'academic debt'. This is a misunderstanding and it is essential that students be provided with full and accurate information about their exchange opportunities.

The majority of students do gain foreign experience by their voluntary participation in the summer distant practice, referred to above in the section on Curriculum Design. Past and present students greatly value this experience, which has been largely in the countries of Eastern Europe.

Assessments include mainly tests, quizzes, colloquia and traditional examinations, scheduled to give adequate time for student preparation. Individual assignments are carried out and marked accumulatively during the academic sessions. The balance of assessment modes and criteria for a particular course are determined to suit the intended learning outcomes. Colloquia, quizzes and tests prevail in physical and human geography subjects; the subjects of pedagogic training use discussion and teaching observations. The combining of marks for these various assessments and examinations is carried out according to University procedures. Students are well informed about the assessment methods and are content with their implementation. Of particular note is the opportunity for students at the end of a course to self assess how closely their attainments approach the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The arrangements for preparing and presenting the final theses for examination are clear and rigorously followed. The expert group was concerned, however, by what it considers is a generally low standard of theses although they are awarded very high marks; though improved since the previous external evaluation, the theses are largely descriptive, make little reference to foreign language literature and continue to be of much lower quality than is expected in comparable institutions elsewhere in Europe. Assembly of a student portfolio was introduced in 2010, based on documents verifying learning achievement, observation of learning activity, discussions with mentors (during practice) and self assessment. It seems to be well embedded in the learning process.

Historically, the programme's graduates have enjoyed a high employment rate but principally in other professions than teaching (SER, p. 38). The programme managers are sanguine that this situation is changing; current students are more motivated to being teachers and future prospects for entering the teaching profession are improving, as discussed above. The evaluation panel acknowledges that the programme management maintains excellent contacts with alumni and employers in efforts to be aware of continuing developments in the workplace and to maintain the up-to-date relevance of the programme to employment opportunities.

6. Programme management

Extensive organizational changes have taken place since the previous external evaluation. The programme is now located in a recently created single Department of Geography and Tourism that forms part of the new single Faculty of Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Technologies. That the programme itself, in the midst of these structural changes, has been radically revised in its own structure, content, and material resources, responding positively to the recommendations of the previous panel and successfully implementing the changes in such a short time, less than two years, is a mark of the programme management's effectiveness.

Responsibilities for decision making and monitoring of the programme are clearly allocated at programme, faculty and university levels. Immediate responsibility for running the programme lies with the programme committee, which regularly gathers and analyses information on the programme's implementation. Evaluation and improvement processes involve representatives from students and social partners in the fields of educational and specifically geographical education methodology. Employers appreciate the continuing good contacts they have with staff and the programme committee. The Department provides regular opportunities for alumni to maintain good contact, including monthly lectures or seminars and other social occasions that encourage the discussions that can inform the programme committee's deliberations. Good staff-student relations allow timely intervention if necessary in local issues. More formal quality assessment and assurance processes are conducted by the programme committee and at faculty level. All measures appear to be efficient and effective. They have benefited from the inputs of a Study Commission that addresses the continuous assurance of study quality in the Faculty. The

expert group welcomed the University's stated intention to align its quality-assurance procedures with the European Higher Education Area guidelines.

The quality and size of the well-prepared and presented SER are indicative of an enormous amount of work and shows the weight placed upon the external evaluation. All stakeholders were consulted in its preparation. It is evident that the programme management team has been concerned to address the need for programme changes recommended in the previous external evaluation and also deriving from their own experience of conducting the self evaluation. In 2011, the expert group noted enhancements in the fields especially of pedagogy, didactics and teaching practice. The programme revisions have continued to address these areas.

The SER provides a comprehensive description of the management and monitoring procedures. Crucial to monitoring the programme are the regular collection and analyses of information from all interested parties in the programme – including alumni and employers but especially from students' course-evaluation surveys, the importance of which the SER rightly stresses. The evaluation panel encountered a contradiction, however, between the highly positive views about the staff and courses expressed in the meeting with students and the very negative views presented in the summary results of student surveys shown to the panel. This might be an unintended consequence of using a 10-point scale where 10 is worst: it could be worth checking. But it was also unclear to the expert group as to which years and which courses the various survey data referred and hence whether the surveys derived from current or former students. Whatever the reasons for the apparent discrepancies, it is essential that information presented to and gathered from students is better organised and managed than it would appear from this example. Although the students who met with the expert group were aware that they could view the results of the surveys, few were concerned to do so. They were content, however, that their views are known to the programme managers, who include them in the decision-making processes of managing improvements. The students were similarly content that disputed gradings were satisfactorily resolved on an individual basis: it would appear that they had no need to have recourse to the dispute settlement procedures included in the University's Statute, of which they seemed to be unaware.

Despite the substantial improvements of the programme there is one area that continues to be of great concern. That is the sharp decline in student numbers – what may colloquially be referred to as “the elephant in the room”. The SER outlines actions taken to attract students to the programme. The list is impressive and the SER claims that the actions have popularised the programme (SER, p.33). This is not reflected, however, in student numbers and it may well be that the Department should extend still further the ways in which it publicises the programme as part of a campaign to increase recruitment without compromising standards. Better information about the employment destinations of graduates could be a useful basis for targeting the campaign. The 10 alumni who met with the evaluation panel included mainly teachers, of whom several were graduates from the last two or three years and a few were from earlier years. Others work in tourism, an area well represented among the programme's stakeholders. They were all enthusiastic about the Department and the programme. Perhaps more could be done to use the alumni as programme ambassadors. In schools, teachers are the main motivators of students' selection of study programmes and more collaborative promotional events with the teaching alumni could be productive. The evaluation panel, however, acknowledges that there are factors beyond the Department's control, including recent limitations placed on entry to university education in general and a revised formulation of the competition mark for entry to geography studies, which impact upon the ability to fill student places.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a regular and systematic review process for the programme's intended learning outcomes and expand the inclusion of analogous programmes outside Lithuania in the consultations.
2. Continue to keep the course contents under review, reducing overlaps between courses and introducing subjects that align more closely with the discipline's latest developments and schools' curricula. This may be aided by more systematic consultation of the social partners in schools.
3. Pursue curriculum changes designed to improve students' command of the English language; these may include more formal language teaching and more integration of English and other languages in the geography study courses.
4. Encourage the take-up of staff-development opportunities to improve the English language skills of some staff and facilitate greater staff participation in international research, publications and teaching activities.
5. Continue to improve the equipment resources and address the persistent lack of book resources, especially didactic literature, textbooks and international scientific literature including English language publications.
6. Promote more active participation in the Erasmus programme of student exchanges; ensure that students receive accurate and comprehensive information and remove any perceived adverse academic consequence of a period away from the study programme
7. Address the continuing weaknesses in final-year theses, taking steps to improve the analytical content; and, given that the intended learning outcomes include competence in one or more foreign languages, consider the imposition of strict requirements to cite foreign-language sources.
8. Organise a concerted campaign, involving all stakeholder groups but especially teaching alumni, to improve the programme's public visibility and secure the rise in recruitment that is essential to the sustainability both of the programme and entry into the profession of geography teacher.

IV. SUMMARY

Programme aims and learning outcomes: *Strengths* – the parallel model of geographical study and teacher training allows a student to graduate with two qualifications, uniquely in Lithuania, as both a teacher and a geographer. In teacher training, practical placements provide good support for the acquisition of professional skills in the set of intended learning outcomes. Additionally the learning outcomes include a strong set of transferable skills, versatile competences and abilities that can be used in a variety of employment. *Weakness* – revision of study outcomes is infrequent and insufficiently draws upon the experiences of similar programmes in other countries.

Curriculum design: *Strengths* – the curriculum provides an extensive array of theoretical and practical courses that cover the breadth and diversity of the subject, with many optional courses that allow students to develop depth in specialist fields. Pedagogical training and practice are well directed to enabling students to qualify as well-prepared geography teachers. *Weaknesses* – there are overlaps in the content of some courses and communication and language skills warrant attention (which the current increase in practical training may well address).

Staff: *Strengths* – a well-qualified staff with extensive pedagogical experience; pedagogical and research activities, and national and international mobility amongst some staff, provide opportunities to strengthen their participation in the education process. *Weaknesses* – teachers' workloads remain quite high; the English language skills of some staff are low; and both these

factors contribute to the Department's relatively weak research profile and poor international visibility.

Facilities and learning resources: *Strengths* – improved equipment and other material resources now well support the programme, especially in its increased practical content. Online tools, including the Moodle platform, have been adopted to support teaching. *Weaknesses* – a serious lack of book resources persists, especially didactic literature, textbooks and international scientific literature including English language publications.

Study process and student assessment: *Strengths* – Excellent staff-student relations that underpin the high level of academic support given to students. Students value the opportunities for distant practice, the increased practical content of courses and the practice placements. *Weaknesses* – Students' participation in the Erasmus programme, both inward and especially outward, remains low, as does the standard of the final theses.

Programme management: *Strengths* – the commitment to improve the programme's quality; this is borne out by the comprehensive review of the programme and the successful introduction of a considerable number of improvements in response to the 2011 external evaluation and also prompted by the experience of carrying out another self-evaluation exercise. Quality-assurance procedures are well developed and make use of contributions by all stakeholder groups. *Weaknesses* – examples of information mismanagement in the presentation of student survey data and the perpetuation of student misunderstandings about the Erasmus programme. The inability to reverse or even stem the sharp decline in student enrolments.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Geography* (state code – 612X13020) at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	3
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:	18

*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. Geoffrey Robinson

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. dr. Bjørn Asheim

Prof. dr. Tommi Inkinen

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**LIETUVOS EDUKOLOGIJOS UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS GEOGRAFIJA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 612X13020) 2014-02-05
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-63-1 IŠRAŠAS**

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V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto studijų programa *Geografija* (valstybinis kodas – 612X13020) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
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	Iš viso:	18

* 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)

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IV. SANTRAUKA

Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai. *Stiprybės:* Lygiagretus geografijos studijų ir mokytojų ugdymo modelis užtikrina studentams Lietuvoje unikalią galimybę įgyti dvi kvalifikacijas – mokytojo ir geografo. Rengiant mokytojus, įgyti studijų rezultatuose numatytus profesinius įgūdžius labai padeda mokomoji (profesinė) praktika. Be to, numatomi studijų rezultatai apima griežtą perkeliamųjų gebėjimų, universalių kompetencijų ir gebėjimų, kurie gali būti panaudojami įvairiuose darbuose, rinkinį. *Silpnybės:* studijų rezultatai tikslinami retai, nepakankamai remiamasi panašių programų įgyvendinimo kitose šalyse patirtimi.

Programos sandara. *Stiprybės:* programą sudaro plataus spektro teoriniai ir praktiniai dalykai, apimantys plačias ir įvairias temas; yra daug laisvai pasirenkamų dalykų, padedančių studentams įsigilinti į specialias sritis. Pedagoginis ugdymas ir praktika organizuojami gerai ir užtikrina gerą geografijos mokytojų parengimą. *Silpnybės:* sutampa kai kurių dalykų turinys, be to, reikia atkreipti dėmesį į komunikacijos ir kalbų įgūdžius (šios problemos sprendimą gali palengvinti šiuo metu padidėjęs dėmesys praktiniam mokymui).

Personalas. *Stiprybės:* kvalifikuoti, didelę pedagoginę praktiką turintys dėstytojai; pedagoginė ir mokslo tiriamoji veikla ir nacionalinis bei tarptautinis kai kurių darbuotojų judumas užtikrina

galimybę stiprinti jų dalyvavimą švietimo procese. *Silpnybės* – dėstytojų darbo krūviai išlieka pakankamai dideli, kai kurių darbuotojų anglų kalbos įgūdžiai silpni; abu šie veiksniai prisideda prie to, kad Katedros moksliniai tyrimai (*profile*) ir tarptautinis matomumas palyginti silpni.

Materialieji ištekliai. *Stiprybės:* geresnė įranga ir kiti materialieji ištekliai šiuo metu labai padeda įgyvendinti programą, ypač kai dabar daugiau dėmesio skiriama praktikai. Mokymui sustiprinti įdiegtos internetinės priemonės, įskaitant *Moodle* aplinką. *Silpnybės:* ir toliau labai trūksta knygų, ypač didaktinės literatūros, vadovėlių ir tarptautinės mokslinės literatūros, įskaitant leidinius anglų kalba.

Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas. *Stiprybės:* puikūs personalo ir studentų santykiai, kurie sustiprina studentams teikiamą aukšto lygio akademinę pagalbą. Studentai gerai vertina tolimosios praktikos galimybes, sustiprintą dalykų praktinį turinį ir mokomąją praktiką. *Silpnybės:* studentų dalyvavimo *Erasmus* programoje lygis (atvykimo ir išvykimo) išlieka žemas, reikalavimai baigiamiesiems darbams taip pat neaukšti.

Programos vadyba. *Stiprybės:* įsipareigojimas pagerinti programos kokybę, kurį patvirtina išsami programos peržiūra ir daugybė patobulinimų, sėkmingai atliktų reaguojant į 2011 m. išorės vertinimą bei remiantis patirtimi, įgyta rengiant kitą savianalizės suvestinę. Remiantis visų socialinių dalininkų grupių rekomendacijomis parengtos kokybiškos užtikrinimo procedūros. *Silpnybės* – blogas informacijos tvarkymas teikiant studentų apklausų duomenis ir nuolatiniai studentų ginčai dėl *Erasmus* programos. Negebėjimas panaikinti ar bent sustabdyti staigaus stojančiųjų skaičiaus mažėjimo.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Sukurti reguliaraus ir sistemingo programos numatomų studijų rezultatų tikslinimo procedūrą ir į konsultacijų procesą įtraukti panašias, ne Lietuvoje įgyvendinamas programas.
2. Ir toliau tikrinti dalykų turinį, siekiant, kad dalykai mažiau kartotųsi ir kad būtų įtrauktos temos, labiau susijusios su naujausiais pokyčiais dalyko srityje ir mokyklų bendrosiomis ugdymo programomis. Tam galėtų padėti sistemingas socialinių partnerių mokyklose konsultavimas.
3. Atlikti studijų turinio pakeitimus, skirtus pagerinti studentų anglų kalbos mokėjimui; tai gali apimti formalesnį kalbos mokymą ir didesnį anglų bei kitų kalbų įtraukimą į geografijos studijų dalykus.
4. Skatinti darbuotojus domėtis tobulinimosi galimybėmis, siekiant, kad pagerėtų kai kurių darbuotojų anglų kalbos įgūdžiai ir kad daugiau darbuotojų dalyvautų tarptautinių tyrimų, publikavimo bei mokymo veiklose.
5. Toliau gerinti įrangos išteklius ir spręsti knygų, ypač didaktinės literatūros, vadovėlių ir tarptautinės mokslinės literatūros, įskaitant leidinių anglų kalba, trūkumo problemą.
6. Skatinti studentus aktyviau dalyvauti studentų mainų programoje *Erasmus*; užtikrinti, kad studentai gautų tikslią ir išsamią informaciją, ir pašalinti visus pastebėtus neigiamus akademinius padarinius, atsiradusius dėl studentų nedalyvavimo studijų programoje tam tikrą laikotarpį.
7. Šalinti nuolatinis baigiamųjų darbų trūkumus, stengiantis pagerinti jų analitinę dalį (*content*), ir, atsižvelgiant į tai, kad numatomi studijų rezultatai apima vienos arba daugiau užsienio kalbų mokėjimą, apsvaistyti, ar nereikėtų taikyti griežtų reikalavimų dėl šaltinių užsienio kalba citavimo.
8. Surengti bendrą kampaniją, kurioje dalyvautų visos socialinių dalininkų grupės, o ypač dėstantys absolventai, siekiant padidinti programos matomumą visuomenei ir užtikrinti stojančiųjų skaičiaus didėjimą, nes tai – esminė programos tvarumo ir nuolatinio geografijos mokytojų profesijos gretų papildymo sąlyga.

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

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)

¹ Žin., 2002, Nr.37-1341.