



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Šiaulių universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "SOCIALINIS DARBAS"
(valstybinis kodas – 6281JX006)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF "SOCIAL WORK" (state code -6281JX006)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Šiauliai University

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Socialinis darbas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	6281JX006
Studijų sritis (studijų krypčių grupė)*	Socialiniai mokslai (<i>Socialiniai mokslai</i>)*
Studijų kryptis	Socialinis darbas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Socialinio darbo magistras (socialinių mokslų magistras)*
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2014-02-04

* skliaustuose nurodomi nauji duomenys, kurie pasikeitė nuo 2017 m. sausio 1 d. įsigaliojus Studijų krypčių ir krypčių grupių, pagal kurias vyksta studijos aukštosiose mokyklose sąrašui bei Kvalifikacinių laipsnių sąrangai.

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Social work</i>
State code	6281JX006
Study area (Group of study field)*	Social sciences (<i>Social sciences</i>)*
Study field	Social work
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second (Master)
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time – 1.5 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of social work (Master of social sciences)*,
Date of registration of the study programme	04-02-2014

* in brackets new data provided, valid from 1 January, 2017 after List of study fields and groups of study fields Framework of qualification degrees came into force.

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of December 20, 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – 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 prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team to the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

Based on external evaluation report of the study programme, SKVC takes a decision to accredit 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 is evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area is evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

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

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC.

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

The study Programme is being implemented in Šiauliai University, a state higher education institution, a public entity acting as a public body and having a special status established by *the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania* and other legislation. The Programme implementation is ensured by the Department of Health and Social Welfare Studies of the Faculty of Education Sciences and Social Welfare in cooperation with Kyiv Open International University of Human Development, Ukraine (UU) and other departments of the Faculty and divisions of the University (Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities and Art, Faculty of Technologies, Physical and Biomedical Sciences, E. Study Centre). (SER p. 1).

The Self-Assessment team was formed to analyse the implementation of the programme and to prepare the self-evaluation report.

The present review has been carried out under the guidelines and procedures of SKVC. Conducting evaluation of the Study Programme, the External Evaluation Team (hereinafter EET) has acted in compliance with the “Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes” (Order No 1-01-162 of December 20, 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education) and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The initial stage included the preparation of the self-assessment report by the University. This was read and commented on by the team of experts, after which the team visited the University on 6th December 2017. During the visit, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the programme with faculty administrators, teaching staff, students, alumni and employers. The evaluators visited the library, offices, teaching spaces and facilities related to the programme.

After the visit, the expert group held a meeting for discussing and amending the content of the evaluation report to represent the opinion of the whole group.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was assembled according to the *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 6th December 2017.

1. **Mr. Damien Courtney (team leader)**, *Fellow Emeritus CIT, Former Head of Faculty, Business and Humanities, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland.*
2. **Prof. dr. Skaidrite Alma Gutmane**, *Professor, Rector, Latvian Christian Academy, Latvia.*
3. **Doc. dr. Marju Medar**, *Associate Professor, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia.*
4. **Mr. Saulius Davainis**, *Head of Social Activity Department, Republican Hospital of Kaunas, Lithuania.*
5. **Ms. Evelina Kripaitė**, *Student, Sociology and Criminology Study Programme,, Vilnius University, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The Study Programme *Social Work* of ŠU and Kyiv Open International University of Human Development “Ukraine” (UU) has been developed and is implemented in the Faculty of Education Sciences and Social Welfare, which is the only faculty in Lithuania with deep traditions and academic potential in the area of social and special education as well as in the areas of social, psychopedagogical, and special educational needs of people with disabilities and at risk of social exclusion.

It is oriented towards the preparation of professional activity and scientific research at community, national and international levels; as well as the ability to act in unspecified and complex circumstances, by providing assistance for persons in situations of congenital, acquired and old age disability.

A central aspect of the Programme is the focus on the integration of social rehabilitation (in terms of provision of social rehabilitation services) into the field of social work.

The Study Programme provides a second cycle university education in the field of Social Work that complies with European standards and prepares specialists who are highly qualified professionals in social work; who are able to assess at theoretical and practical levels the polifunctional nature of social work as an applied activity, studies and science field in the context of the assurance of social justice, health and life welfare in a changing society; who are

ready for professional-practical activity and scientific research at community, national and international levels; who, by providing assistance for persons who are in the situation of congenital, acquired and old age disability, are able to act in unspecified and complex circumstances. The study Programme *Social Work* is designed for full-time studies (1.5 years). The learning outcomes are reflected in the statement of the self- evaluation report (SER p. 1-2).

The Programme learning outcomes were updated in accordance with labour market changes and stakeholders' proposals and they clearly comply with the requirements for university studies of the second cycle and VII qualification level. They also integrate the requirements for professional competence.

What follows are comments on the evaluation of the programme aims and learning outcomes according to a number of criteria.

The aims of the programme and the learning outcomes are based on the Dublin second cycle Descriptor, the European Qualification Framework and the Lithuanian National Qualification Framework, academic and professional requirements, and linked to the Lithuanian state strategies and labour market needs. The Study Programme is based on the need for social workers in Lithuania and in the Latgale region. The aim of the Programme is formulated on the basis of the Description of Study Fields of Social Work, the expertise of researchers in the Department, close partnership between the Department and scientists of UU. The Programme aim is formulated by combining knowledge of abilities required for social workers' professional activities with various groups of clients as well as for conducting research, knowledge of professional abilities required for provision of social assistance and related services, and knowledge of social and personal competences. This knowledge and related activities is demonstrated in the evaluation report (SER p. 2-3) and by the members of administration, teaching staff, alumni and partners during the visit. During the evaluation meetings it was confirmed that the goals of social work study Programme are to prepare high-level specialists who can professionally react to social problems of recent years in Lithuania. (Meetings with administration, teachers, students, alumni and social partners).

The Study Programme *Social Work* matches the aim and learning outcomes of the study programme and specifies knowledge and awareness of prospective specialists, areas of and conditions for the application of special and general abilities. The Programme learning outcomes are in compliance with the *Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications*

Framework Level 7 which accords with Dublin Descriptors of Study Cycles, and corresponds to the qualification of the study field - Master degree in social work and the qualification of social worker. The preparation and improvement of the Programme is based on international and national documents of Lithuania and the Ukraine, which have influenced the design of the Programme curriculum. They were formulated following methodological recommendations for learning outcomes and the underlying principles defined by Pukelis et al. This knowledge and related activities are demonstrated in the evaluation report (SER p. 3) and confirmed by the members of administration, teaching staff, alumni and partners during the visit. (Meeting with administration, teachers, students, alumni and social partners). **The aims and learning outcomes of Social Work Study Programme are in compliance with the type and cycle of studies, and with the level of qualification.**

Programme aims and expected learning outcomes correlate with academic and professional requirements and meet the Description of Procedures for Development of the Professional Competence of Social Workers. The aim of the study Programme is to prepare and develop professional social workers, who are able to empower a person, group and society through reflection, and are able to act independently. The study Programme is based on the integration of knowledge and abilities necessary for social workers' professional work with persons and groups with a disability; to prepare for professional-practical activities and scientific research at community, national and international levels; as well as the ability to work in unspecified and complex circumstances by providing assistance to persons who are in the situation of congenital, acquired and old age disability. All this knowledge and related activities are demonstrated in the evaluation report (SER p. 2-3) and by the members of teaching staff, students, alumni and partners during the visit. **The Programme aim and learning outcomes comply with the requirements for Masters' studies** - students are able to prepare for self-dependent research work or for other types of work which require scientific knowledge and analytical abilities. **The Programme learning outcomes comply with the requirements indicated in the Descriptor of the Procedure of Professional Competence Development of Employees of Social Service Area** in aspects of general, specific and professional competences; and the aspects of specific requirements for qualification category of the social work expert, as well as defining the purposefulness of the training of second cycle specialists (SER p. 6; Annex 10).

Correlation between the Programme title, learning outcomes, content and qualification awarded. The Programme title, aim and learning outcomes comply with social workers' activity

defined in *Lithuanian Classification of Occupations*; they comply with the definition of social work indicated in *Law on Social Services* (2015). The specificity of the profession is foreseen in the mentioned documents and the descriptor of the study field is highlighted in the Programme learning outcomes and the study subjects of the Programme of *Social Work*. This creates the basis for future specialists *to perceive the contexts of groups that are excluded, namely disability and old age, to be able to assess in a critical and reflective manner the situation of persons, and to search for solutions of developing an inclusive society in the national and international area.* At the the same time it defines the uniqueness of the Programme (SER p. 6). **The Programme title, aim and learning outcomes clearly indicate the nature of future specialists' activity and acquired abilities.** This approach is presented in the evaluation report and reported in the meetings of administration and teaching staff during the visit (Meeting with administration and teaching staff).

The aim of the programme and the learning outcomes relate to Lithuanian state strategies, labour market needs and the demand for social workers in the Latgale region. Statistical data and different analyses show that the need for social workers in Lithuania is increasing in recent years, that it is related to the extent and dynamics of economic, sociocultural, moral values and changes that are taking place in society, changes in the social environment, increasing migration, outbreaks of violence, psychological health issues, and other phenomena negatively influencing the quality of life as well as the re-organization of institutional care in Lithuania. The Programme was updated on the basis of current market needs and ŠU Strategy which is oriented towards innovations in science, art and studies at international level to promote regional and national advancement and increase the internationality of studies. The Programme is consistent with the aims of Kyiv Open International University of Human Development and is oriented towards increasing cooperation with other higher education institutions and research institutes in Lithuania and abroad. Programme learning outcomes are related to the international aspect of cooperation between the Ukraine and the EU, and between the Ukraine and Lithuania at the political level (*Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology between the European Community and Ukraine*). **The needs of social workers with specific knowledge for working with disabled people and the demand for the education of social workers in the Latgale region is evident.** The Programme is in line with the European Commission's support for the Academic Network of European Disability expertise which provides the Commission with analysis of national situations, policies and data. Information about the need for social workers is presented in the evaluation report (SER p. 4-5) and reported during the evaluation meetings with administration, teachers, alumni and social partners. **The compliance of the Programme aim**

and intended learning outcomes with academic and professional requirements, as well as social and labour market demands is evident.

The Programme aims and learning outcomes are in compliance with the mission, aims and strategy of the higher education institution. The aim of the Programme complies with the main provisions of *Šiauliai University Strategy 2015–2020* which is related to the preparation of highly qualified specialists by responding to demand in the region and the country for quality specialists training. The Programme aim and learning outcomes comply with the strategic aims of the University that foresee an increase in research and art activity, as well as an increase in the internationality of studies, the improvement of the study process in response to labour market changes, and the social advancement of region and country: *the consistency is related to the orientation to conduct research and professional development in the international context as well as modelled technologies and methods of social work for persons who experience disability and old age.* The Programme learning outcomes and the possibilities of mobility during the studies ensure the increase of internationality, the attraction of highly qualified researchers, the increase of researchers' international mobility, and the development of intercultural social innovation (SER p. 4-5). During the evaluation meetings with administration, teachers, students, alumni and social partners it was confirmed that the aims and learning outcomes of the *Social Work* study Programme is to prepare high-level specialists who can react professionally to social problems of recent years in Lithuania and in the Latgale region (Meetings with administration, teachers, students, alumni and social partners).

Programme goals and objectives are consistent with Šiauliai University mission, goals and strategy. Objectives stated in the ŠU strategy regarding improvements in the study process comply with the Programme aim and outcomes in terms of both meeting the market needs and increasing the intercultural dimension of studies. The objective of increasing an international aspect of studies is closely related to the Programme outcomes which are aimed at the development of intercultural competence in an interdisciplinary team and various cultural environments, by ensuring continuous student international mobility within the framework of the Programme (SER p. 5). **The mission, operational objectives and strategy of the higher education institution are related with the Social Work Study Programme and understood by all stakeholders.**

Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes described in the evaluation report correspond to the mission, operational objectives and to the strategy of the higher

education institution. Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are described clearly in the report. **Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are linked to academic and professional requirements.** The Faculty internal procedures are established, implemented and coordinated by the Faculty Council and the Dean's Office. The Faculty divisions perform functions and maintain hierarchical relationships set out in the University normative documents which are based on the principles of democratic culture. The organizational structure allows for the planning, organization, control and implementation of the Study Programme as well as seeking the intended learning outcomes. Improving the study Programme is implemented in collaboration with the Study Programme Committee. These documents and related activities are presented in the evaluation report (SER p. 26) and expressed during meetings and discussions with the administration and teaching staff members, social partners and alumni (Meetings with the administration and teaching staff members, social partners and alumni).

Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are publicly accessible. The aim and learning outcomes of the Programme are publicly available in the University websites. The Department teachers, students and the Head of the Marketing Studies Group pass on information on the Programme, its curriculum, aim and outcomes when visiting schools of Šiauliai Region and other regions, participating in Career Days organized in schools and the University, meeting pupils in public spaces (e.g. "Scientific Cafe"), exhibitions and annual study fairs. General information about the Programme is provided in specialised publications ("Kur stoti" and alike) and informal social networks (e.g. Facebook). Additional information about the studies is provided in the Faculty and the Department by face-to-face meetings and by phone. Students get acquainted with the Programme aim and learning outcomes during *Information Week* and the first lecture, when the course unit, its learning outcomes and correlation with the Programme learning outcomes are introduced. Students have open access to the university library (SER p. 4; (Meetings with the administration and teaching staff members, social partners and alumni).

The teachers together with the students of the Study Programme disseminate information on the Study Programme, its content, goal, and learning outcomes to teachers and students. The evaluation report (SER p. 2-6) and evaluation meetings with teachers and students confirmed that students are welcome to discuss different academic issues with the department study Programme administration and with the Study Programme Committee level. The most popular form of consultation is a meeting and direct communication between a teacher and a student. The Moodle system is available for students and used by teachers. A student centered

approach is used by teachers (Meetings with the administration and teaching staff members, students, social partners and alumni).

The comprehensive overview of the study Programme is distributed to students by highlighting good practice examples and success stories that can inspire potential applicants to study. Contact information for the school graduates is shared by links to websites. ŠU has created a platform for the dissemination of the study programme.

Difficulties in organizing studies in both countries at the same level and quality, teaching methods and facilities.

Students and teachers have language difficulties, especially during practice. Proficiency in three languages is needed: the mother language, English and Russian.

The study Programme when offered in two different countries is more expensive such as e.g. travel and language translation costs.

It became clear during the visit that more discussion about study Programme common aims and learning outcomes should be shared between all stakeholders.

2.2. Curriculum design

Programme meets the general requirements for second cycle degree study programmes.

The Programme structure: is in line with legislative requirements: the Programme is based on Lithuanian higher education legislative requirements, and the Programme corresponds to ERASMUS+ and Joint European Masters' Programme requirements. In this sense the Programme is innovative. The Programme has been developed within the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and is in full agreement with the European Bologna process requirements. (SER p. 7-12; Annexes 1, 2; Meetings with teaching staff, students and alumni).

Study Subjects (modules): The content of subjects consists of two types of modules: scientific research organization; and ones of particular aspects of social work – mainly Health and Life Welfare in a Changing Society. The logical links between the subjects are sufficient. However,

the absence of the updated European Social Agenda with regard to Life Welfare and Disability is considered a deficiency in the Programme.

The contents of subjects and study methods: The content of the modules correspond to a Masters' level of studies in Social Work. The Masters' degree studies provides an opportunity, on the one hand, to further students' understanding of a particular question (e.g. working with disabled people), and on the other, to consider different ways of advancing students' skills gained from previous undergraduate degrees. The Curriculum shows that graduates from the Joint Masters' degree in Social Work will be able to combine research, crisis intervention and general strategies to attain results in the field of Social Work. The expected results are designed to improve the quality of life of the community or even of a single individual.

The interdisciplinary methodology in the Masters' Programme Curriculum is highly valued. There are two research journals published by the Department of Social Work ("Social Welfare: Interdisciplinary Approach", "Special Education – Baltic Journal". The interdisciplinary approach facilitates the education of generic social workers who can work with people with disabilities in a multicultural environment. The main idea is to promote and achieve an inclusive society, which is integrated by different elements on the study Programme (teaching and assessment methods).

The scope of the programme: there should be more focus on hermeneutical knowledge, theological and ethical competences and, due to the Programme's joint structure, more intercultural and interreligious skills, and interdisciplinary working proficiencies. The interdisciplinary approach could be further enriched with subjects like theological anthropology; social philosophy may be substituted by "Caritas" theology which would provide a more focused perspective, especially as in both the Ukraine and in Lithuania "Caritas" organizations are very strong.

The content of the programme does not correspond fully to subjects and topics characterized by the European Social Agenda such as social cohesion, solidarity, subsidiarity and Caritative cohesion. European normative and legislative documents relating to Social Work should be integrated in the study Curriculum. We recommend that a didactically precise methodology should be used in the Joint Programme.

2.3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff members from the study programme meet the requirements provided for in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and in the University requirements. Teachers' qualifications are compliant with intended learning outcomes. Teachers' participation in scientific research complies with their scientific research areas. The Joint Masters' study programme of the 2nd cycle *Social Work* is implemented by 21 teachers, who are highly qualified professionals and who meet the requirements for study programme *Descriptor of General Requirements for Master Study Programmes*: 18 (86%) teachers from both higher education institutions possess scientific degrees, 2 of them have a PhD degree in social work, 3 (14 %) teachers have experience in practice. They are studying for or have graduated from doctoral studies and actively participate in the scientific research implemented by the Department. The study subjects are delivered to ŠU students by 13 highly qualified professionals: 4 professors, 7 associate professors and 2 lecturers. 8 Programme teachers are exclusively supervisors and advisors of Master Theses or Scientific-Research Practice in Social Work. In 2016 – 2017, 1 ŠU associate professor delivered lectures to UU students, 9 ŠU teachers (2 professors, 4 associate professors and 3 lecturers) are research supervisors of UU students' practice and advisors of Master Theses. All teachers of the Programme are professionals in the area of the subjects they teach and the scope of their research interests complies with the taught subjects.

The historical background of teaching Social Pedagogy in ŠU (80% staff have experience in special pedagogy) is oriented towards education sciences and social welfare, in research and in studies. There is good Cooperation with other departments and topics in the social sciences. Peer reviewed publications include journals of Šiauliai University: "Social welfare interdiciplinary approach"; Baltic Journal of special education; "Specialusis ugdymas" Siauliai University.

Recent doctoral theses confirm the progression in teachers' qualifications (A. Batūraitė, 2016) (SER p. 14; Annexes 3, 4). **Whilst the teachers from both universities have different experiences of pedagogical, research and practical work, they have the required qualifications for the achievement of the learning outcomes and the quality assurance of the studies. The study subjects are implemented by the teachers meeting the qualification requirements for the positions** (Meetings with administration and teaching staff).

The cohort of academic staff is sufficient. The ratio between the academic staff and students is appropriate, which gives the opportunities for teachers to deal with students individually and supports the reaching of learning outcomes. The ratio between the Programme teachers and students is changing year by year, but typically one teacher works on average with a group of 22 students. The ratio of students between masters' thesis supervisors and advisors is also appropriate: mostly 1 supervisor and advisor has 1-4 students per year. All this information is presented in the evaluation report and reported by administration staff and teachers during the evaluation meetings (SER p. 14-15; Meetings with administration and teaching staff).

The creation of conditions necessary for teachers' professional development. The conditions are created for the professional development of ŠU and UU teachers. The necessary attention is paid to academic staff's professional development that is related to both the quality parameters of the Programme implementation and the dynamics of the teacher's professional career. Teachers experience professional development in several ways and it is often complex: by teaching, research activities and other activities, which are focused on community or other groups. Improvement priorities for the Programme teachers' pedagogical competences were the use of innovative study methods, assessment of students' achievements, the improvement of the study Programme in relation to student feedback, the links of learning outcomes with assessment methods, the use of virtual environments, teachers' internships at research institutions related to the improvement of social work competences (SER p. 15; Annexes 3, 4).

All the teachers implementing the Study Programme have experience of scientific research in the field of social sciences or professional activity in different research projects. Teachers' scientific competence is demonstrated in scientific publications and research activities. During the period of analysis ŠU teachers prepared 75 articles on social work topics published in reviewed science periodical publications, in Lithuania and foreign countries, 1 scientific study was published, 4 methodical aids, 6 guidebooks, 1 project study and reports of these read at various scientific conferences. UU teachers prepared 10 articles on the topic of social work and related to the subjects taught in the study Programme; 1 scientific monograph was published, and 1 dictionary of terms of social work in the Russian and English languages (SER p. 16; Annexes 3, 4).

ŠU teachers' professional/subject-specific activity as well as the internationality of their teaching and qualifications upgrade are shown by their participation in international and national internships, seminars, training and social work camps. Teachers developed their competences in the areas of social work, methodology of scientific research, application of innovative study methods, and the English language, by going to the USA, Canada and Great Britain. Teachers have participated in exchange programmes (e.g. 28 Erasmus programme visits, 9 ŠU teachers and 1 UU teacher), their preparation and implementation of study subjects ensure the internationality of the studies, the updating of subject-specific knowledge and higher quality of studies, innovativeness and the quality of studies management studies. According to academic exchange (Erasmus) programmes, 20 teachers from USA universities, Germany and elsewhere delivered lectures in the area of social work to the Programme students; on the other topics of social welfare 23 teachers from universities in Great Britain, Finland and elsewhere also delivered lectures (SER p. 16; Annexes 3, 4).

The Department conducts applied scientific research, as well as implements national and international projects. The teachers of both higher education institutions actively participate in international project activities and conduct the research in the area of their scientific interests (Project SOCPEDKOM; Project LIEPA; Project POZCOPING). During the review period, ŠU teachers prepared and implemented 8 scientific and exchange projects (7 international and 1 national): GRUNDTVIG, MODPART, SOCNET, LIEPA, Lets' study!, *Designing a Model Geared towards Participation of People and Groups at Social Risk in the Labour Market* (LLIV-223). For scientific achievement and the inclusion of persons with special needs in activities, the project *Creation of the Ideal Model of Vocational Counselling for Children and Youth with Special Educational Needs* received an award in Poland and Lithuania for the best project implemented during 7 years. ŠU and UU also implement joint scientific research on the topic of social work (the Project *Development Prospects of the System of Vocational Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities*). ŠU teachers actively participate in social activities: they are members of various associations or social work groups (the President and members of the Association of Lithuanian Social Work Schools, the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW), the Lithuanian Scientific Society, the Association of Schools of Social Researcher, Lithuanian Art Therapy, the Working Group of Social Services Plan Preparation of Šiauliai City Municipality, and one member of Šiauliai City Municipality Working Group in the Area of Public Safety, Social Affairs and Health/Preparation of Strategic Development Plan for the Year 2015–2024) (SER p. 17; Annexes 3, 4; Meetings with administration and teaching staff).

The Programme teachers participate in international and national scientific seminars, internships, scientific conferences (193 various ways of professional competence development for 21 teachers, national and international events of various intensity, 9 on average). The teachers of both universities read 26 scientific reports at international scientific conferences abroad (including Finland, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Poland, Russia) during the last three years in the areas of the subjects taught. **The teaching and research experience of academic staff is sufficient for the attainment of learning outcomes. They are actively involved in research activity, develop their own professional qualifications and disseminate their research results. The researchers of the Department review doctoral dissertations, are supervisors for doctoral students, review scientific articles and are members of various associations or professional groups. They are organizers and participants of international events and actively participate in the activities of scientific, methodological and administrative events.** All this information about teachers' qualifications and research activities are presented in the evaluation report (SER p. 16-17) and its annexes. During the evaluation meeting the teaching staff showed that they have a close connection in the teaching area and are well qualified (Meeting with administration and teaching staff).

The qualifications of the academic staff of the Programme are ensured by applying the University systems of competition and assessment. An evaluation of teachers' research and pedagogical achievements is held every 5 years, which empowers them to improve their professional qualifications and to ensure the regular development and quality of the studies process. As part of the evaluation process teachers are continuously involved in the improvement of the higher education's pedagogical and didactic competences. Teachers are appointed in accordance with a publicly announced competition. During the assessment, a teacher's pedagogical and research activities are evaluated taking account of their research output (research in research journals and participation in national and international scientific events on social work issues). The results of student surveys about the teacher's abilities to teach a study subject and assessment by the Chair and Department colleagues of the Department all form part of the academic quality system (SER p. 15).

The evaluation report (SER p. 18; Annexes 2, 3) and meetings during the visit show, that teachers working in the Study Programme have extensive pedagogical, research and practical experience and are able to convey high-quality knowledge and experience to students, as well as utilizing their connections to Social Work activity. During the evaluation

meetings the teachers, students and alumni confirmed that the MOODLE system is used in teaching, which provides good opportunities for students to learn. All the study material is available in Moodle. Teachers are good supervisors and give students individual consultation and advice. All open and private Skype meetings are available for students. Videoconference facilities are used for teaching and learning.

The academic work of the Programme planned for teachers is in accordance with the principles of the pedagogical workload of the SU academic and research staff. The Programme teacher's workload is composed of four parts: 1) *contact* work with students; 2) scientific work; 3) activities of publicizing and popularizing, introducing academic and other activities to society; 4) upgrading of qualifications and organizational activity. The volume of teaching hours for one tenure comprises 36 hours per week and 1584 hours per academic year. The volume for one tenure of pedagogical work comprises not more than 976 hours per academic year, of which not more than 720 are the hours of contact work with students and not less than 256 are the hours of non-contact work. Not less than 448 hours are allocated for research activity per academic year; up to 160 hour per academic year are allocated for upgrading of qualifications, organizational and publicizing activities (an equal distribution for research and studies is recommended). During the period under review the workload of full-time teachers fluctuated between 750-800 hrs. This conforms to the *Description* requirements. Currently, the increased number of positions occupied is determined by the stable number of MA students and the growing number of foreign students undertaking Bachelor studies. Teachers' professional development is discussed at meetings of the Department: teachers share their experiences gained from study trips, seminars and conferences. In addition, annual reports summarising teachers' working experience are compiled by the teachers and the Department at the end of each year. The social work competence of the Programme teachers form part of their curriculum vitae (SER p. 27; Meetings with teaching staff). **The academic workload of teachers is flexible and gives them the possibility for developing their own academic qualifications in personal research area.**

Social work teachers have a good knowledge of inter-university research with a positive influence on the development of teaching methodologies and joint publications.

The Study Programme enjoys good cooperation with social partners, students and municipalities, as well as with different kinds of stakeholders who can provide good methodological inputs for the Programme's sustainability and development.

Teachers gain good experience in management of the study Programme; they solve problems of intercultural differences; organize, monitor and provide proposals for the improvement of the practice process.

Teachers have international experience in the area of providing psychosocial rehabilitation assistance for persons with disabilities and a decrease in social exclusion which is a EU priority as evidenced in its 2020 strategy.

There is a need for a number of improvements.

80% staff have experience in social pedagogy which they should be encouraged to apply in their social work activities.

There is need to enhance the quality and international character of the studies, to improve the composition of staff cooperation with foreign universities. This should be expanded and visiting teachers should be encouraged to give lectures on social work not only through the Erasmus exchange programme but arising from cooperation agreements signed with other universities.

Higher quality and efficiency of international cooperation would be ensured by developing teachers' communicative skills in the English language during internships and courses.

Internationalization should be improved as regards visiting professors from other countries.

Specialists with an interdisciplinary approach to research should be invited for its practical addition to the student Curriculum. There should be more visiting teachers from other countries with experience of the elderly and of rehabilitation.

Teachers actively participate in research and project activities and conduct extensive international applied research; therefore, they should be encouraged to prepare more high-quality articles for publishing in citation reviewed science databases.

Programme teachers should be encouraged to participate in short-term expanded internships in institutions and national authorities designed to consider social work developments and trends related to study programmes of social work.

More active participation of teachers in public activities and associations of social work should be encouraged.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

Teachers and students have good facilities and equipment that is appropriate for the attainment of the learning outcomes of the programme. Implementation of the Master of Social Work study Programme is ensured by the Department of Health and Social Welfare which is part of the Faculty of Education Science and Social Welfare.

Students have good learning conditions, suitable classrooms, laboratories and practice places. Students can use 7 classrooms, 7 rooms, 2 computer classrooms, 3 laboratories. Premises are suitable for the study process and has such equipment as computers with software and visual technologies (multimedia). Some premises are available with audio systems, interactive boards, portable sets of TV and video equipment. Premises, facilities and furniture are comply with the health and safety requirements.

There is the Centre of Distance Studies, the Centre of Study Resources and classrooms for problem-based teaching and the Centre of Information Resources for students with special needs in the Faculty of Education Science and Social Welfare. A multisensory room equipped with light, music, motion and other equipment was established for the creation and implementation of positive stress managing strategies.

The University supports learning of students with special needs. The Faculty of Education Science and Social Welfare facilities are customized for students with special needs. There is a lift, adjusted WCs, elevators, special furniture, magnifying equipment for the visual impaired, compensatory computer control and navigation equipment.

The Siauliai University Library is equipped according to the required standard. The quantity, quality and relevance of reading materials matches the needs of students. It is an important resource used for the implementation of the study Programme. It is noteworthy that it is sufficiently stocked with necessary literature in English, articles and methodological publications. There are 170 computerized workstations, free Wi-Fi, subscribed databases, scientific journals and other material. **Students are trained in ‘learning to learn’ techniques.**

Kyiv Open International University of Human Development, the Ukraine (UU), facilities are also used for the implementation of the Programme. It was confirmed to the review team that for students UU provides a methodological, research and practical base for the training of qualified specialists in Social Work, as written in the SER. In UU there are the complex of physical rehabilitation, and the centre for medical service and support for people with disabilities, where students of the Joint Programme can develop their practical skills working with the most recent equipment. The rooms are newly equipped with modern technology and computerized work stations. UU has more experience of working in a Moodle environment which is one of its priorities, and it is used to organize the study process and provide distance learning. The review team is assured that UU facilities are suitable for study needs. The usable area of the library is 1342 sq.m., the reading room is 1070 sq.m. with 446 seats. There are 237,716 copies of books of which 19,932 are devoted to professional preparation.

The review team did not have the opportunity to visit the UU facilities and learning resources.

Both universities provide a wide range of internship placements in different social work fields such as centres for homeless people, children's day care centres, dependency rehabilitation centres, centres for people with special needs, social care centres and NGOs.

An inclusive society is the basis for interdisciplinarity and integrating different elements of the study Programme. Good opportunities exist to practice real social work in specific situations such as in the Ukraine war zone.

The Review Team did not have the opportunity to visit any of Kyiv Open International University of Human Development's facilities and learning resources in the Ukraine.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Entrance requirements are well-founded, consistent and transparent. It is a Joint Programme with UU. It takes 1.5 years of full-time studies. It should be in the Lithuanian and English languages but most of the students and stakeholders told the review team that shared subjects are mostly in Russian. Students get a Joint Masters' Degree in Social Work. Persons who have completed an undergraduate degree studies programme are accepted. Priority in offering places on the Programme are given to graduates of social work and social pedagogy

study programmes. Competitive score structure is the sum of the weighted average and additional points of the Diploma Supplement. Students from other universities have to write a paper and take bridging courses which contain experiential learning (lectures/training). The Review Team believe that methodology for the development of the Joint Programme should be improved.

Organization of the study process ensures proper implementation of the programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Students would like to add courses in medical knowledge, psychology of people with disabilities and sociology. The review team suggest more courses in medicine and more connections with clinics.

Students are encouraged to take part in scientific, artistic or applied sciences activities. Research related activity is used in a practical context. Students are encouraged to take part in research with their teachers. Students are involved in research about the needs of municipalities.

The study Programme supports teacher and student mobility, and collaboration in the form of conferences with other universities. This raises the Programme quality and has the added value of joint publications with other universities, including UU.

The focus on international studies and intercultural experience in the field of social work and social rehabilitation include a cooperation project with the Ukraine. Students working in international teams widen their understanding of different cultural contexts.

Students are provided conditions to take part in mobility programmes. Students have opportunities to take part in ERASMUS programmes e.g. Siauliai students go to the Ukraine for two months during the second year of their studies. They conduct social work practice in a foreign country and have the possibility of having a working knowledge in foreign languages (English and Russian).

The higher education institution ensures proper academic and social support. 50% of study fees are paid by the University. Students have the opportunity to get scholarships, loans, social support and support from Lithuanians living abroad. Students with a disability receive support from the university.

The system of assessing student achievements is clear, public and appropriate to assess the learning outcomes. Students noted that they like reflections, discussions, practice diaries and round table discussions. Teachers and students meet to discuss and plan before their practice for best outcomes. And after practice they reflect on what might have been improved.

Professional activities of the majority of programme graduates correspond to the expectations of the programme staff and employers. Employers and social partners noted that students coming into practice had more knowledge and less practical skills. Students learn skills while in practice. Students come to organizations timidly but after a while, they articulate their arguments more boldly. Some students gained employment with Šiauliai district municipality. Students are proficient in dealing with paper work and documents and had a good understanding of this. There is a consensus that their knowledge of the law is sufficient.

Working in two different countries is innovative and a learning process for each side. Students get two different diplomas.

In students' opinion the broad approach in the study Programme improves their skills. Students like the teaching methods – distance learning, discussions, seminars, project work and knowledge of applying for funding.

There is an innovative approach to social work, including research, interdisciplinarity and integrated practice, working in social network and case studies.

The learning and teaching atmosphere is good; students have opportunities to travel and learn a language. They have contacts with students of other nationalities.

The programme corresponds to the state economic, social and cultural future development needs. The Programme meets the needs of the region, groups of clients, municipalities and social services. Stakeholders stated that the main idea is to prepare generalists rather than specialists. Members of the probation service stated that they would like to participate more in the decision-making regarding the Programme development and operation.

Fair learning environment is ensured. Academic support is available through *students' individual studies*, by applying methods of *information retrieval, theoretical analysis and synthesis*, and *activity analysis*.

The University has online journals, online databases. ŠU has a Moodle platform. EBSCO. UU is an open learning institute.

Students are provided opportunities to make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures.

Students confirm that they are members of the Study Programme Committee and that teachers assist them in developing their research skills. Emotional contact between students and teachers is positive. Teachers engage well with them in the study process, take account of their views and develop a good sense of functionality.

2.6. Programme management

The responsibilities for decision-making regarding the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme are clearly defined. The principles of quality assurance at University and Faculty level are ensured by the development of an internal studies quality management system at Siauliai University which emphasizes the implementation of quality values in the context of cultural dialogue throughout the study process.

Internal quality assurance mechanisms are clear, effective and updated regularly. The mission of the Joint Study Programme, as stated in the self-evaluation report, is to create the conditions for students to achieve more knowledge, abilities and experience than a Programme implemented by one institution can provide. For this purpose the Programme provides the staff mobility, interdisciplinary and inter-institutional cooperation opportunities for students and academic staff.

Feedback from the stakeholders of the study programme is collected and analysed regularly. Feedback is used to improve the programme. It was stated in the SER and confirmed at the meetings that Programme quality and responsibility for its management is

ensured at different levels – University, Faculty, Department, Joint Programme Study Committee, lecturers and students.

There is a good quality control system. The Department has a Quality Month as part of the study Programme where partners and students are expected to participate in meetings and develop ideas on how to improve the study Programme. Feedback is collected regularly from students. The Study Programme Committee has two meetings per year on the topic of learning outcomes, where social partners, government members and students participate. They have videoconference meetings too.

At the University level the Senate and the Rectorate make decisions regarding study quality assurance issues. The main decisions related to the development of the Programme are decided by the Faculty which ensures that the Programme is in line with trends in science and studies. It also coordinates, selects and certifies the content of study subjects.

The quality of the Programme at Department level is ensured by both higher education institutions: by the Department of Health and Social Welfare at Šiauliai University and by The Department of Social Work and Pedagogy of the Social Technologies Institute of Kyiv Open International University of Human Development, the Ukraine.

The Joint Study Programme Committee is responsible for the monitoring and development of the Programme quality. The Programme would benefit from greater involvement by the social partners in formal management functions and curriculum design.

All stakeholders (teachers, students, social partners and alumni) **are involved in appropriate aspects of programme management and administration.** Authors of the study course descriptors prepare and make corrections to the Programme academic subjects. Teachers are responsible for the preparation of lecture and ensuring that the Programme aims are implemented.

Students are responsible for their individual study results and individual work. They give feedback about the study process. After graduation students are interviewed to ascertain their opinions about the aim and other aspects of the Programme. The results are used to improve the Programme.

Internal and external evaluations are carried out to ensure the effective management and quality assurance of the Programme.

It is also noted that the recommendations from the expert team of 2013 were used in the development of the Programme.

The University promotes the study programme publicly through the Šiauliai University website.

The Review Team welcome the opportunity they had during the visit to engage online with three UU teachers. The process would have benefitted, however, from engagement with UU management and social partners, and may have better informed the Review Team of the quality of the relationship between SU and UU.

2.7. Examples of excellence

1. The Study Programme is innovative as evidenced by the joint development by Siauliai University in Lithuania and Kyiv Open International University of Human Development in the Ukraine, and its inter-university content.
2. Cooperation between Lithuanian and Ukrainian students is achieved through working in international teams. Exchange of teachers increases competences and understanding of different service provision from different countries' perspectives.
3. The cohort of academic staff, their professional development and research skills ensure the sustainability of the Study Programme. Teachers are involved in scientific research and the implementation of local, international and collaborative projects. Teachers from the two universities cooperate well using their practical knowledge and experience, along with their social partners and municipalities, in Programme development.
4. The Study Programme and Library have excellent facilities and equipment which contribute to the attainment of learning outcomes. Students with disabilities are accommodated very well.

III.RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The latest aspects of the European Union's Social Agenda should be included in the Study Programme.
2. There is need for a didactically precise methodology which has to be worked out and properly described.
3. An interdisciplinary paradigm should be further developed to enhance the Programme's methodology.
4. Learning outcomes of the study Programme and subjects need to be better monitored for consistency and achievement.
5. More international specialists should be invited and better use made of the Erasmus programme. Improvement of the teachers' communications skills in English is necessary.

IV. SUMMARY

This is a Joint Study Programme for the Master of Social Work developed between Siauliai University, Lithuania and Kyiv Open International University of Human Development, Ukraine. It is a second cycle study programme worth 90 ECTS. It consists of full-time study for a period of 1.5 years' duration.

The Study Programme is innovative, as evidenced by its joint development and inter-university content. Aims and learning outcomes are in compliance with the type, cycle of studies, and the qualification level. They generally comply with the requirements for Masters' studies. Students are capable of preparing research work which requires scientific knowledge and analytical abilities. The correlation between the Programme title, learning outcomes, content and qualification create the basis for future specialists to understand the contexts of marginalized groups, disability and elderly persons; to ensure the ability to assess and reflect in certain situations; and to search for an inclusive society.

The aims of the Study Programme correspond to a methodology of empowerment. The Study Programme is based on the integration of knowledge, necessary for Social Workers' professional work, to provide assistance to persons suffering from a disability, and to undertake research at community, national and international level.

Analysis of statistical data indicates that the Programme provides an education to specialists who are in great demand in the region. The Programme complies with the main provisions of Siauliai University Strategy (2015 – 2020), which is related to the preparation of highly qualified specialists, by responding to the needs of the region and the country.

The organizational structure of the Programme ensures its sustainability and implementation.

The historical background of teaching Social Pedagogy is the main strength of the Study Programme development. It corresponds to the European Commission's ideas on the development of an inclusive society.

The Curriculum content consists of two orientations: scientific research organization; and practical social work. The logical links between the subjects are sufficient but an interdisciplinary methodology would enhance the Programme. The Curriculum requires further

updating and innovative development. The interdisciplinary approach would be enriched with subjects like *Caritas* anthropology and theology, and a deep understanding of what “Caritative Social Work” means. The European Social Agenda should be updated emphasizing such categories as: social cohesion, solidarity, subsidiarity, equal rights, social inclusion and participation. European normative documents related to Social Work developments in Europe should be integrated in the Study Curriculum.

Didactic methodology of the Joint Programme should be outlined and enhanced.

The cohort of academic staff is sufficient for achieving the learning outcomes. All teachers implementing the Study Programme have practical experience in Social Work, and participate in different national, international and collaborative projects, and research activities.

More teachers from abroad should be involved in the Study Programme, through better use of the Erasmus programme, for a more precise understanding of what “Interdisciplinary research” and “Modular instruction” mean.

The Library of the University is well-equipped for reaching the learning outcomes, and for access by students with a disability.

There is a good culture and system of quality assurance evolving. Effective relationships between teachers, students and different stakeholders are central to the Study Programme’s management and operation.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The Joint Master study Programme of Human Development “Ukraina” Social Work (state code 6281JX006/628L50001) at Siauliai 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	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students’ performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	4
	Total:	20

*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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