



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *INTERJERO DIZAINAS (612W20005)*
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *INTERIOR DESIGN (612W20005)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius Academy of Arts**

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Interjero dizainas
Valstybinis kodas	612W20005
Studijų sritis	Menai
Studijų kryptis	Dizainas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirma
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Dizaino bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	14/06/2002 No.1093

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Interior Design
State code	612W20005
Study area	Arts
Study field	Design
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (4)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor in Design
Date of registration of the study programme	14/06/2002 No.1093

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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 20 December 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 main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI)*; 2) *visit of the review team at the higher education institution*; 3) *production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of 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 was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

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

1.2. General

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

No.	Name of the document

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

Vilnius Academy of Arts (VAA) is a higher education school of art which organises university-level undergraduate studies, master studies, special professional studies, non-sequential studies, integrated studies, post-graduate art studies, and doctoral studies as well as conducts research and high-quality professional art activity. It perceives itself as an educational institution of visual art, recognised according to the fostered values, possessing socially-oriented highly-qualified staff of artists-pedagogues, aiming at implementation of advanced technologies and able to prepare professional artists, designers and architects competitive in the art market.

Studies at the *Department of Interior Design, VAA VF*, are organised on the basis of valid national legal acts, VAA documents (VAA Statute, Regulation of Studies, VAA mission and developmental strategy, Code of academic ethics, etc.), general principles outlined in the Bologna Declaration, and topicalities of the Tuning project. *Department of Interior Design* prepares first-cycle university-level specialists of interior design. *Department of Interior Design, VAA VF* has been realising the *Interior Design* study programme of the sphere of arts since 2002

The study programme was accredited in 2008 following an international expert review team formed by SKVC. The conclusion of the review resulted in unconditional accreditation of the degree for the period of six years. In 2011, the undergraduate degree in Interior Design participated in the programme for the enhancement of BA degree study programmes. The project sought to identify how innovative teaching methods are created and/or integrated in to the study programmes.

The programme is located on the VAA main campus in Vilnius.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on **22/04/2015**.

- 1. Mr. John O Connor (team leader)**, *Dublin Institute of Technology, Director and Dean, College of Arts and Tourism, Ireland*
- 2. Dr. Hanna Karkku**, *Aalto University, Planning Officer, Finland*
- 3. Dr. Aija Freimane**, *Art Academy of Latvia, Assistant Professor, Latvia*
- 4. Ms. Ilona Gurjanova**, *Estonian Association of Designers, Chair, Estonia*
- 5. Mr. Andrius Ciplijauskas**, *Beepart Creative Workshop, Director, Lithuania,*
- 6. Mr Vytautas Karoblis**, *Student, Lithuania*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims (to educate designers, who can work professionally, have their own style, have adequate technical knowledge and engage in professional development) and learning outcomes (for example learning outcomes E1¹, A2², C2³, D2⁴ for example) outlined in the Self - Evaluation Report (SER) are consistent with a first cycle education and they describe a solid syllabus for interior design studies. The programme aims and learning outcomes are clearly defined and available from different sources (including webpages). Both teachers and students were aware of their contents during discussions with peer review panel.

The programme was established in 2002 to meet the national needs for interior design services, and those needs still exist, as evidenced by good employment figures (based on the survey done by the programme, 75-100% those answering were employed) and verified by discussions with the social partners. Furthermore, they delineate an art-oriented interior design programme, with theoretical basis in art history and theory studies, proper grounding in drawing and painting, as well as technical tools (both computer programmes and workshop machines), under-

¹ Graduates will be able to work individually or in a team, meet set deadlines, demonstrate organizational skills, take responsibility for decisions made, flexibly adapt to various situations.

² Graduates will be able to properly choose and apply means of visual and verbal expression in creative activities.

³ Graduates will be able to create and implement functional and conceptual objects of interior design that match artistic and technological quality standards.

⁴ Graduates will be able to evaluate, describe and present the phenomena of contemporary interior design, their impact on cultural social context, communicate in specialty medium and society, take social responsibility for their creative professional activity.

standing of domestic and public spaces, and ability to work with colour and light in designing interiors. The programme also gives students adequate academic skills to continue in a MA programme in the interior design. In case they want to continue to MA programme in architecture at VAA, bridging courses are needed. The name of the programme reflects its content and learning outcomes, and the qualifications offered, are well-aligned.

2.2. Curriculum design

The programme is an art-oriented design programme and its curriculum design meets legal requirements, the overall extent of the programme is 240 ECTS, the number of ECTS in general subjects (15), study field studies (192) and optional studies (15) all fall within the regulations. The professional study subjects are spread evenly after the first semester, which is heavily theoretical (art history and theory). There is a logical progress from simpler concepts and tasks to the more complex ones, for example starting with domestic interiors and moving through smaller public spaces to larger ones, and courses are well integrated. Specialised professional subjects (according to type of interior space, construction, light, colour, presentation) are relevant for the study subject. The content of professional modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies, and descriptions of the courses are informative and mostly clear, but some descriptions of evaluation criteria were confusing - *Composition 1* description of assessment criteria is an example, and it could be improved by making the criteria into a table.

The programme emphasises on the one hand knowledge of art history and artistic production, and on the other understanding of technical systems and elements influencing our perception of space, and thus gives a solid basis for the kind of entry level work BA graduates would do. In some areas, such as use of colour and lighting, the programme appears to be very thorough. In addition to independent work, team-work has been introduced – this gives students better understanding of how professionals work – for example the *Library on the Beach* was a good example of that kind of project.

Where there seems to be opening for further development is the programme's lack of discourse on newer methods and ways of thinking, such as co-design or design thinking – they were mentioned during the site visit (meeting with teachers), but they do not appear prominently in the curriculum. To increase the specifically interior design related content, perhaps replacing some of them with now optional courses such as 20th c. Applied Art and Design (HB0030), Trends in Contemporary Architecture (MB0288) or even Introduction to Visual Culture Studies (HB0028). Also participation in courses such as Introduction into Entrepreneurship should be at least

strongly encouraged if a sizable number of students are working as freelancers or have their own design office.

Some issues to consider:

As the art history and theory package is provided for by the Academy for all the programmes, we understand that any changes in it would require negotiations on the Academy level, and that perhaps doing that with the whole Department of Design and maybe Architecture would be more successful.

The panel heard during the visit that there exists a dormant Master programme for interior design/architecture, and that there were some plans of restarting it, either as independent one, or as a part of a wider MA programme. We would recommend looking into this matter closely, as existence of second and third cycle would support the development of BA programme and ensure partly that the newest ideas and methods reach also BA students. It would also support recruitment of teachers with interior design background on the long run.

To ensure that students can keep their study motivation high, it would be good to have interior design related tasks from the very beginning of the studies.

2.3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff has been selected according to the local laws and orders, and it is adequate in number and experience to carry out the programme. None of the professors or associate professors of the Interior Design Department have doctorates, but as research proficiency is not among the main criteria of selection that is understandable – most of the academic staff from the other departments offering historical and theoretic course do have a doctorate, though. However, two of the professors of the interior design department supervise artistic parts of the PhD studies. Overall, 83% of the teachers of compulsory study field subjects are researchers and/or recognised artists. Furthermore, eleven of the design teachers are practising professionals, and they are supported by specialists and distinguished pedagogues from other departments (5) , The academic staff has quite a lot of teaching experience also in other programmes and institutions, as well as solid professional experience, even outside their own fields. Academic staff is also participating in the activities of professional organisations (such as Union of Lithuanian Artists, or Architects Association of Lithuania), which provides an additional way of contacting external stakeholders.

The professional activities of the academic staff are documented in annual written reports – and they are offered possibilities for professional development. It is mentioned that the Academy organises some courses for teacher development, but they are not specified and neither is how many teachers participate in them. However, there is active international collaboration

(14 visiting academics and artists between 2009-14, and 59 members of faculty travelling for an exchange, internship or presentation during the same period), and the faculty gains international experience through their own activities (competitions, exhibitions) or formal mobility activities. The EU funded project for updating the programme including teacher internships seems to have been quite successful. This successful line of creating useful contacts and finding about new methods of education could be supported further by targeted participation in Cumulus and Nord-plus (CIRRUS) activities.

The age structure is slightly skewed towards older generations, but that has been tackled by identifying new teachers, and the question of lacking interior design specialists among the staff should be solved once the first graduates have gained enough professional experience to work as teachers. Discussion with the panel also brought up the wish to change the theoretical contents of the programme as they did not give students understanding of the underpinnings of their own discipline in the very beginning of studies.

The discussion between the panel and the teachers showed that they are motivated, alert, aware of the development needs, though there were reservations as far as students' internationalisation went, familiar with the newest developments in design theory and practice, even if they had not been yet included in the curriculum, and showing collegial spirit towards the students. There was also familiarity with what was happening in the other programs and the Academy in general, and willingness to work with the social partners.

Rotating the head of the department is a good practice, and helps to bring new ideas and fresh forces to the development and management of the programme.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The studio facilities are adequate, and allow collaboration with students from the other programmes and departments and allow them to present their work to wider audience within the academy. The workshop (wood, metal, plastic) facilities are very well-equipped (for example laser cutter, CNC machine), well-ordered, well-maintained, had technical assistance available and occupational safety instruction were clearly visible. The photography studio and equipment were good. As the facilities are open to all students, interior design students should be further encouraged to use them for example building models and prototypes as well as documenting them.

The library is beautiful and has the relevant basic literature, periodicals and databases. What it lacks, however, is literature on the newest developments of design, and that should be the development target for the collection, whether in book, periodicals and database form. Stu-

dents are partly doing their practice with social partners in the facilities they provide for, and the facilities available for doing at the institution itself are good. Overall, the Academy facilities are very well maintained and renovated, the equipment used in study process is of exceptionally good level, there seems to be enough support staff (technical, services).

The arrangements for students' practice are well-thought and appropriate, the only target for development might be doing some of them in the neighbouring countries to give students the opportunity to build professional networks also in them.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The admission requirements are prepared based on the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Science, and they seem appropriate, although in addition to drawing and painting task, they could contain a 3D model task to test the applicants' spatial skills. However, we understand that this is an issue requiring decisions on the highest levels, as does the problem of applicants almost matching in number the study places available (for example in 2013 there were 29 applicants, with 18 having the programme as first priority, 28 having it 1-6 priority and 21 applicants invited to start studies), with the exception of 2011 and 2012 when there seems to have been real competition for study places in the programme. We have understood that funding is tied with the fixed number of students and due to that, the numbers cannot be lowered without a decision from higher up.

The study process is well organised, clearly described, transparent and well integrated, and gives the students understanding of the requirements they will meet when they enter the professional life. Students the panel met during the site visit seemed well aware of what was expected of them and could discuss freely of their education and their possible futures. Furthermore, the social partners, whether those taking in students for practice, or hiring graduates agreed upon that the students mainly had skills and knowledge that could be expected from someone with their education – there are always areas that could be covered better, for example better understanding of structure, or other types of public spaces, but these can be solved with curriculum development if deemed serious enough omissions – the social partners were aware what they should do if they wanted to discuss such changes.

Participation in research is not relevant on the BA level, but the students are encouraged to participate in competitions, creative activities organised by the alumni or creative workshops organised by social partners. Social partners and alumni also participate in programme activities such as student work reviews. Thus, there is communication to both directions. Some of the stu-

dent projects are also done in collaboration with “real” clients, and sometimes in collaboration with students from other programmes, all excellent ways to give students better understanding of professional practice. Academy also offers platforms for presentation of students’ works.

Otherwise, the academic staff is available for consultation for various issues. Individual study programmes are possible, possibilities are discussed with teachers and students are informed about job offers, exhibition opportunities etc. by email. There are number of services, e.g. sports facilities available, and the students can use the other educational and leisure facilities owned by the VAA. Finally, there is a dormitory available. Overall, the services, and information available on them seem quite adequate.

Participation in the international mobility programmes is a more problematic issue. As in many good programmes, there seems to be some suspicion on the usefulness of international mobility – that seems at least partially be due to a certain kind of imbalance in student exchanges: programme sends out good students and receives not so good ones, who do not use the educational options offered very wisely. However, the partners of the department are generally of good quality, and as the teachers are carrying out their own mobility, they perhaps should spend more time systemically studying curricula in their partner institutions and find reliable collaboration possibilities. Similarly, possibilities of doing practices on international internships should be studied, for example with the Nordplus programme in Nordic and Baltic countries, as there is funding is available for one week upwards.

The assessment system is explained to students at the beginning of each semester, and they are listed in the module descriptions, albeit not always very clearly. Most of the graduates answering the survey about the graduate placement were working within the field and some of them are carrying out further studies, so their activities do meet the expectations. However, only about half of the graduates of any given year answered the survey, and it is mentioned in the SER that eventually contact to some of the graduates is lost.

The students met were active, optimistic and appreciated their teachers especially for accessibility and their collegial relationship with the students.

Some issues to consider:

Improving knowledge of the partners’ school programmes and agreeing upon closer collaboration with some partners in order to ensure that the mobility experiences are academically and professionally satisfactory and establishing criteria for substitution of studies.

Are there any way of increasing applicant numbers to ensure some real competition for places, for example making the programme international – taught in English and marketed in for example in other Baltic countries, Poland, Ukraine and Byelorussia to start with.

In order to further involve alumni with the programme development and contacts with students, there perhaps should be some Academy level coordination of alumni activities and some new forms of contact, for example through social media.

2.6. Programme management

The programme management is arranged according to the pertinent laws and VAA regulations and responsibilities are allocated clearly. Preparation and supervision of the study programme, including quality assurance is the remit of the Study Programme Committee, which has teacher, student and social partner representatives. The committee has an advisory role, but is important tool for processing the information gathered on the success of the programme (regularly organised surveys of study quality, meetings with social partners and discussion in connection with the student work reviews) and it can make suggestions to the General Meeting of the Department, where those issues will be discussed.

Overall, SER describes many ways of interacting with the social partners and alumni, and that is a definite strength for the programme, and the partners we met during the visit knew how to interact with the programme. Alumni had been contacted in the past, and there were wishes that it would happen more often. Similarly, there was some interest in becoming a teacher in the department among the alumni – the programme has plans to start to recruit its own graduate as teachers in the near future, as they have acquired more experience. The first graduations were in 2006 and the prevailing thinking in the department is that about ten years of practice gives a graduate enough understanding and knowledge required for a teaching position.

The programme leadership is aware of issues needing improvement, for example recruiting more teachers with interior design background, and has a plan for doing that in the near future – there has also been some successful headhunting to recruit new teachers. The issues taken up by the academic staff shadowed closely those the panel had recognised as something to be addressed during the site visit. Some issues such as internationalisation are still in need of further development as student exchange numbers remain low, and teacher exchange could be used for doing closer analyses on possible host institutions to ensure that they are appropriate partners.

The programme, as well as the whole Lithuanian HE sector has experienced many large changes during the last years and such arrangements as bringing all BA programmes under same dean have created possibilities for teamwork between students from different programmes and improved collaboration between programmes in general. The Interior Design programme has re-invented itself in many ways, and due to that, its aims and goals, and the ways and tools for carrying them out are well defined.

Some issues to consider:

There are many indicators (e.g. exhibitions) for measuring the artistic quality of student (and teacher work), although it is not elaborated how those indicators are assessed (which exhibitions, competitions etc. are the most important).

2.7. Examples of excellence

1. Collegial atmosphere between academic staff and students
2. Staff is practising at the highest level
3. Rotating head of the programme– this ensures new thoughts and fresh forces in the leadership
4. *Library on the Beach* project is an excellent example of a state-of-art design assignment
5. Academy's investment in good technical and administrative staff (evidenced in good maintenance and support)

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introducing newest design theories and methodologies into the curriculum should be done either changing the contents of obligatory studies (on the long run) or through optional studies.
2. Improving students' access to international mobility through better knowledge of partner institutions.

IV. SUMMARY

Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well outlined and aligned and describe a solid art-based BA programme in interior design. They are also publicly available.

Curriculum design

The curriculum is relevant, well integrated and the studies progress logically from simple to more complex tasks. There should be more attention paid to the newest developments in design philosophy, methodology and practice, whether through further development of obligatory theory block or adding new modules to the optional subjects and recommending them to the students.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff is motivated, alert and aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and has positive attitude to the development of the programme and their own skills and knowledge. Action has been taken to recruit younger teachers to balance the age imbalance, and in the near future, also interior designers will be recruited to ensure that also interior design specialists will be joining the academic staff. Teachers have a collegial relationship to the students.

Facilities and learning resources

Facilities available are excellent, and the students should be encouraged to experiment with different materials and techniques for building models and prototypes. The library should develop its collection to include literature (whether on paper or digitally) on the newest design theory and methodology issues.

Study process and students' performance assessment

The study process is well organised, clearly described, transparent and well-integrated and gives students a good understanding of what is required them academically and professionally. The assessment system is explained to student at the beginning of each semester, and is also described in the module descriptions. Student Mobility should be a development target: better understanding of the curricula of partner schools assuages fears that mobility period would turn out to be just educational tourism.

Programme management

The responsibilities of programme management are clearly allocated, and all parties involved (teachers, students, social partners) appear to be aware of their rights and responsibilities - there are many ties between the programme and its social partners. The administration and academic staff are open to new ideas and recognise the issues needing development.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Interior Design* (state code – 612W20005) at Vilnius Academy of Arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	4
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	4
	Total:	22

*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:	Mr. John O Connor
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr. Hanna Karkku
	Dr. Aija Freimane
	Ms. Ilona Gurjanova
	Mr. Andrius Ciplijauskas
	Mr. Vytautas Karoblis

Vertimas iš anglų kalbos

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Į programos turinį reikėtų įtraukti naujausias dizaino teorijas ir metodologijas keičiant privalomųjų dalykų bloko turinį (per ilgą laikotarpį) arba per pasirenkamuosius dalykus.
2. Reikėtų didinti studentų galimybes pasinaudoti tarptautinio judumo programomis, geriau ištyrinėjus institucijų partnerių siūlomas programas.

IV. SANTRAUKA

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai gerai suformuluoti ir suderinti, tinkamai apibūdina vientisą, menu pagrįstą Interjero dizaino bakalauro studijų programą. Jie skelbiami viešai.

Programos sandara

Studijų turinys tinkamas ir gerai integruotas, o studijų seka logiška: nuo paprastesnių iki sudėtingesnių užduočių. Reikėtų skirti daugiau dėmesio naujausioms dizaino filosofijos, metodologijos ir praktikos tendencijoms ir toliau plėtoti privalomųjų teorinių dalykų bloką arba į pasirenkamųjų dalykų bloką įtraukti ir studentams pasiūlyti naujų modulių.

Personalas

Dėstytojai yra motyvuoti, aktyvūs, žinantys programos stiprybes ir silpnybes ir nusiteikę tobulinti programą ir savo gebėjimus bei žinias. Imtasi priemonių įdarbinti jaunesnių dėstytojų, siekiant išlaikyti dėstytojų amžiaus pusiausvyrą, o artimiausioje ateityje ketinama pasamdyti interjero dizainerių ir taip papildyti personalą interjero dizaino specialistais. Dėstytojus ir studentus sieja kolegiški santykiai.

Materialieji ištekliai

Materialieji ištekliai puikūs, todėl studentus reikėtų paraginti eksperimentuoti su įvairiomis medžiagomis ir technikomis gaminant modelius ir prototipus. Biblioteka turėtų plėsti fondą ir įtraukti literatūros (popieriniu arba skaitmeniniu formatu) naujausiais dizaino teorijos ir metodologijos klausimais.

Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas

Studijų eiga puikiai organizuota, aiškiai aprašyta, skaidri ir gerai integruota, leidžianti studentams aiškiai suprasti, ko iš jų reikalaujama akademinio ir profesinio aspektais. Vertinimo sistema išaiškinama studentams kiekvieno semestro pradžioje; ji taip pat aprašyta modulių aprašuose. Studentų judumo aspektą reikėtų tobulinti: geriau išnagrinėjus mokyklų partnerių studijų turinį išsisklaidytų baimė, kad judumo laikotarpis pavirs paprasčiausiu studijų turizmu.

Programos vadyba

Atsakomybė už programos vadybą aiškiai paskirstyta ir visos suinteresuotosios šalys (dėstytojai, studentai, socialiniai partneriai) žino savo teises ir pareigas – studijų programą ir jos socialinius partnerius sieja daugybė ryšių. Administracijos darbuotojai ir akademinis personalas yra atviri naujoms idėjoms ir atpažįsta tobulintinas sritis.