



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Utenos kolegijos

BURNOS HIGIENOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
(65308B111, 653A51002)

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *DENTAL HYGIENE* (65308B111, 653A51002)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Utena College

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Burnos higiena</i>
Valstybiniai kodai	65308B111, 653A51002
Studijų sritis	biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	burnos priežiūra
Studijų programos rūšis	koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (3)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	burnos higienistas, odontologijos profesinis bakalauras, burnos higienos profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2007-11-10

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Dental Hygiene</i>
State code	65308B111, 653A51002
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Oral Care
Kind of the study programme	College Studies
Study Cycle	first
Study mode (length in years)	full-time (3)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Dental Hygiene, Dental Hygienist, Professional Bachelor of Dentistry
Date of registration of the study programme	2007-11-10

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I. INTRODUCTION

Utena College (UC) was established in 2000 (after the law of the Higher education came into force in Lithuania) and had first accreditation process in 2005. Since 2006 – professional bachelor's degrees are awarded to the graduates. In 2009 the College was registered as a public institution with two faculties. In one of them – the Faculty of Health Care and Social Care at the Department of Odontological Care - dental hygiene specialists are educated since 2008. The study programme offers a first level university study programme.

The Dental Hygiene (DH) programme at the UC was evaluated by an external expert team – Dr. Michael Emery (UK), as the team leader, Assoc.prof. Egita Senakola (LV), Dr.Odont. Erminija Guzaitiene (LT), Dr. Jonas Bartlingas and Mr.Tadas Juknius (LT), as the members.

The following report is based on the structured self- evaluation documents provided to the team by the UC for individual review and on the expert team's experiences and observations gathered during the site visit on 19 September, 2012.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims of the study programme correspond overall to the regulations of the higher education in Lithuania, by approved professional standard (2008), recommendations from the professional dental hygienists organizations (International Federation of Dental Hygienists and European Dental Hygienists Association¹), also by Lithuanian norms in Medicine (2004). The aims and outcomes are clearly defined and structured, showing relationship to the study subjects, they correspond to the professional competences defined by the norms of medicine in Lithuania.

After 3 years full-time studies (180 credits) graduates are awarded the professional bachelor degree. After qualification they can be registered-licensed in the Lithuanian Dental Chamber and then can be employed. Learning outcomes are harmonized and obtain specific competences that correspond to the learning outcomes. General abilities are developed and integrated into all subjects of the studies and teaching methods, in such way developing not only specific, but also general competences. Corrections were done in the programme in 2009 in accordance with the approved Standard of Preparation of Dental Hygienists and in 2011 the

¹International Federation of Dental Hygienists (FDH). <http://www.ifdh.org/>; European Association of Registered Dental Hygienists (EARDH), <http://www.eardh.com/>.

study programme was renewed in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and research in Lithuania (2009).

Learning outcomes of the DH programme include all skills related to the activities of a dental hygienist and comply with the content of the studies` aims and programme level. Teachers and students have understanding of the learning outcomes and they together seek them. The teachers` good support during the learning process gives more motivation to the students to acquire better skills and competences. However in spite of this, staff needs to design more specific learning outcomes directly related to the dental hygienist if the programme is to be sustainable as a distinctly individual programme and separate from Odontological care. Currently, many are somewhat general and not directly related to the DH profession. This also applies to the aims.

The programme (aims, content of the subjects and learning outcomes) are assessed annually with respect to the changes in labour market and needs of students and teachers. Intended learning outcomes are announced on AIKOS database, in College Internet website and informational publications. The expert team finds generally good relationships between faculty-department administration and teachers with employers.

2. Curriculum design

The volume and structure of the study programme correspond to the requirements and regulation of the higher education in Lithuania. The DH study programme consists of 180 credits (4800 hours). It is a full-time form of studies, duration of studies is 3 years, and the annual volume is 60 credits.

The programme of the College studies consists of: general subjects- 15 credits, (8.3% of the amount of the programme); subjects of study area - 93 credits (51,7 % of the amount of the programme): optional subjects set by the College and chosen by students` 18 credits, elective - 9 credits.

In total 27 credits are given to subjects and 3 credits for practices thus, for students` choice in the whole study programme there are intended 30 credits (16,7%). Professional activity practices are given 36 credits, including 33 credits to professional activity practices. This makes up 18.3 % of the total amount of the study programme. The final paper and qualification examination are given 9 credits (5% of the total amount of the study programme). The structure of the study programme: for lectures –11,6 %; practice –18,5 %, tutorials – 10,3 %, self-study – 59,6 %. In total - 4800 academic hours (180 credits).The self study process is 60 %, it is so high comparing to other learning activities; however, it also includes professional activities placement (19.7%) as indicated in Utena`s response to the report.

The distribution of the load of studies throughout academic years during the 3-year entire duration of the programme is equal, with not more than 7 subjects in a semester. The number of weekly hours is no more than 26 hours of contact time per week. At the end of each semester students take exams or the subjects studied are completed by a student's projects.

For practice one third of the programme time is given (about 38%), for professional activity practices - 36 credits. Professional activity practices are carried out in five stages. In the second semester - DH training (6 ECTS); in the fourth semester - Nursing practice (6 ECTS) and Oral Disease Prevention and Epidemiology (6 ECTS); in the fifth semester - Procedures performed by a dental hygienist, sixth semester - Work with patient and supervision (final practice) (9 ECTS).

Histology and Microbiology themes were mentioned in some study subject contents, in the future it is recommended that they should be introduced as separate as advised by the expert team and also by the International Federation of Dental Hygienists "Towards international curriculum" (2002). If Microbiology should continue as part of the subject Infection Control, then more study hours are needed.

There is a lack of some themes like Oral Health and General Health Promotion, Common Risk Factors Approach of Non-communicable Diseases, Prevention in Different Age Groups, Prevention of Oral Diseases and Dental Traumas, and Oral Care of the Elderly. The mentioned themes are more directly related to the profession and maybe in future can be included in a subject, for example, Dental Public Health.

The DH study programme and the content of its subjects formally correspond overall to the Requirements and Regulation. The subjects like Personal Health Education, Prevention of Oral and Dental Diseases, and Geriatric Patients Oral Care for the Disabled should not be optional but mandatory as these are more related with the profession than Basics of management and economy of health, Genetics, Fundamentals of Oral Education, which could be considered optional.

3. Staff

From the plan of the DH studies it appears obviously that in total 30 lecturers are working in the study programme and there were 78 students in the academic year 2011-2012. Thus, the ratio students to teachers is good - 2,3:1. Four lecturers are with a scientific degree (one of them lectures general study subjects and three of them area subjects - 13 ECTS-10% of the volume study subjects). Scientists from other universities are invited in order to ensure the quality of

students scientific work. From those 30 lecturers - 22 are permanent (73.3%) and 8 part time (26.7%) lecturers. All lecturers have more than three years working experience. The age of the lecturers working in the DH study programme varies from 30 to 50.

The programme is coordinated by the Committee of the Study Programme. 12 lecturers working in the programme have medical/odontological education and experience in practical work; other 18 lecturers graduated (though during the site visit just 8 were counted by the expert team but there was much activity at the time) from the pedagogical universities and have good experience in pedagogical work (more than 5 years). Pedagogical experience is also demonstrated by their prepared and published textbooks, methodical materials, etc. In a project, a college textbook for dental hygienists was prepared 'Activities of a Dental Hygienist: Theory and Practice'. Lecturers of the programme take an active part in expert, educational activities, organize local and international conferences-seminars and participate at them (e.g., Nordplus meeting in Kaunas with representatives from dental hygienist schools from Scandinavia and Latvia). The Department of Odontological Care (OC) has implemented two projects financed by the European Union (EU) in order to increase the quality of the study programme, the third project is underway, which aims to increase the internationality of the study programme. Lecturers go to scientific, practical internships, participate in exchange between European schools, but these activities are very limited. More international exchange between the teaching staff and comparable colleges in Europe is strongly recommended. In the future the Department of International Relationships is planning to be more active – this may help.

The expert team's communication with the teaching staff went well, but with the help of the translator, so skills in the foreign languages (particularly English, the dominant international language in the EU and at educational conferences) should be considerably improved. It will also help in the future to participate in different staff international exchange programmes (Erasmus, Nordplus) and also influence research activities by the teachers of the programme. This would enhance teachers' capabilities and help them to keep the programme current in the 21st century.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The theoretical training, practical workshops take place not only in the UC, but also in a public institution - Utena Hospital. For theoretical training there are three auditoriums equipped for 60 -120 students. Well equipped computer classroom with the newest technologies with 14 workplaces are available.

Students have opportunities to use services provided by the distance learning centre - having 16 work places. Odontological care specialist training centre is used for theoretical and practical training of the DH students with three units of dental equipment, reception, X-ray room and a room for sterilization. The clinic creates conditions to learn oral care procedures and to work as dental team members. There is well organized clinical practice with the patients starting from the 3rd study year, but to have more practical skills practice it should start one semester earlier with patients and there is need for some more units of dental equipment in order to have more working places. More phantom heads should be made available to the DH students and these might be in other places.

The library of UC consists of general reading room and 36 working places, an internet reading room with 20 places. The books and serial publications of the library are included in the catalogue of Lithuanian colleges. Since 2004 the library has EBSCO global data base. Full text data bases are used - Academic Search Premier, MEDLINE, Health SOURCE, etc.

Students are fully provided with methodological materials necessary for studies by textbooks, upgrading library funds, creating e-materials for studies of subjects, and accumulating necessary literature at the training centre. In order to strengthen the scientific potential of the study programme it is necessary to organize applied studies in connection with the students' final paper themes.

Great attention is given to the practical training of the students (36 ECTS) - students do that in personal health care institutions and at the clinic of OC. There are 22 signed bilateral agreements with partner organizations. The main places of practice for oral hygienists are public institutions in Utena and Vilnius, also private practices and schools, and kindergartens. With the leaders of the institutions the content of the practice, terms of practice performance are discussed, agreements are concluded and a practice supervisor is appointed. Practice supervisors are specialists with no less than three years of working practice in the area. After the practice students prepare practice reports, analyse how they succeeded in realizing theoretical knowledge in practice and compile the portfolio of competences. Practice reports are presented and defended. During the expert team's communication with the students and also graduates, it was stated out that the practice organization in the training centre and outside the College is really well organized.

5. Study process and student assessment

Admission of students is organized in accordance with the regulations. Out of 30 admitted first year students to the DH study programme 21 received state funding. Competition to the

study programme during the last years was from 1,4 - 3,9. In the year 2011 it was 3,1. There is a possibility to study according to individual study programme for those who have already completed studies in this study area or proceed to studies after transferring from other higher schools. Students are provided with all necessary information regarding studies and examinations. Students' classroom working day lasts 6 hours on average, which ensures efficiency of students' independent work.

Studies of every subject (module) are completed with an exam or an assessment of the student's independent work (project). The results of studies are analyzed and discussed, students' achievements are evaluated, problems of poor progress are discussed and ways of solution to problems are planned. An academic group consists of 22 students on average. The programme was started in 2008 with 17 students, slowly increasing till 78 in the programme in 2011-2012 academic years. The dropout during the period under assessment is 5,1% . Some students left the study programme: on personal request –3%; because of under-achievement –1%; not returned after academic holiday – 0.5%. Most student dropout was of insufficient motivation to study on the programme.

Students' mobility is not sufficient because of different systems of educating and training of similar programmes in Europe. Inadequate funding is also identified as serious restriction to students' mobility. But two students did their professional practice abroad – London, UK. There have not been exchange students from abroad to the programme. The Department of International relations is looking for the cooperation with DH programmes in Europe.

The applied science activities and research are conducted according to the strategic plan. One of the strategic goals of the UC activities in 2008–2013 is to develop science applied activities with Sweden and Finland. The study programme coordinator has made contacts with the participants from Nordplus Baltic Network, expecting that the situation related to mobility issues will change. Overall, more research activity is needed by the students on this programme. Every year the staff of the College presents the programme to school students in the Open Day events, in the higher education fairs, in the publications of 'Where to Study' and the Internet portal.

Students are admitted to the programme of DH in accordance with the general procedures for joint admission. Admission requirements to the study programme are clearly defined. Students are encouraged to take part in the activities of College public society of students of UC– Dental Care Society. Detailed information about the aims and objectives of a subject studied is provided in the study programme plan published on the website of College and in the course descriptions which are constantly updated. The timetable, intensity of the study subjects,

the distribution of study workload in a week is designed properly and according national Regulations and the General Requirements for the College Studies of Lithuania. On a student's request an individual study programme or part of it (for a semester, two semesters, etc.) can be made for them. Students are consistently provided with social support. Advanced students are awarded incentive grants. Social scholarships can be granted to students who correspond to the criteria set by the Government. The need for hostel accommodation is satisfied 100%. In the hostels there is wireless Internet, which facilitates students' independent work and access to learning materials.

Studies achievement in all study subjects are assessed on the principle of cumulative score whose composition is calculated according to proportions set in the description of the subject. The cumulative assessment conforms with the results of the study programme and enables a lecturer to collect more information about progress made by students during the study process, and measure it by applying various assessment methods. Assessment methods are chosen according to Bloom's taxonomy of educational aims of cognitive area. In order to properly evaluate the efficiency of learning classes, three main criteria are used: a lecturer's assessment; student's self-assessment; assessment of the group. Information about the assessment criteria of achievements is acceptable for students; it is clear and easily accessible on the College's website.

6. Programme management

The DH programme is assigned to the Department of OC and led by the programme coordinator (DH, Msc. Public Health Management), who coordinates the activities of the Study Programme Committee, is responsible for the staff and material recourses, and also for assurance of internal quality studies. The Study Programme Committee is in the structure of the Department of OC, so decisions about the administration and quality assurance of the programme are made at the department meetings. There is a system of internal assurance of quality of the studies worked out at UC – the internal quality management system 2011-2013 (Funded by the European Social Fund Agency (ESF)). The management of the programme, decision making and responsibility for the implementation, supervision and improvement of the programme are assigned at several management levels: department, faculty and administration of the College. The deputy director for academic activities is in charge of the quality of the study process and has the right to make proposals of improvement of the study processes.

For assurance of quality of implementation of the programme – the procedures set in the Quality Guide of the College are applied: monitoring the study programme, data collection, means of analyses and procedures such as - surveys and analyses of students, graduates,

employers are carried out regularly. All the results are analyzed in the meetings of the department and directorate. Systematized and generalized information covering all management and quality aspects of the studies once a year are presented in the Annual Accounts of the College and submitted for consideration in the Academic Board of the College.

In order to comprehensively and efficiently assess and improve the quality of implementation of the study programme social partners of various levels are involved into this process: graduates (members of Alumni Club), employers (leaders of institutions of health and odontological care, representatives from Lithuanian Dental Chamber and Dental Hygienists Association, representatives from the district municipalities). Social partners in various discussion meetings together with lectures make proposals how to improve the study programme. The Department of OC together with the board of the Faculty of Health Care and Social Care, administration, student representatives and employers systematically carry out various self-assessment studies. The results are presented and discussed not only at the faculty, but also at the local Public Health community meetings. There is a systemic and regular analysis of the study programme, but it is recommended by the expert team that this is also on an international level. It would be wise therefore to benchmark this programme, if it is to continue, against best international examples in Europe and America and become more distinctive and individual and more sustainable.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The expert team recommends that if this programme is to be more sustainable and more distinctly individual then staff needs to design more specific learning outcomes directly related to the dental hygienist. Currently, many are somewhat general and not directly related to the profession. This directly relevant approach needs to be included more specifically also in the aims.

3.2 Histology and Microbiology need to be separate subjects in the curriculum of the dental hygienist. If Microbiology continues as part of the subject Infection Control then more study hours are needed.

3.3 There should be more international exchanges between the teaching staff and comparable colleges abroad. By this means, the College can gain valuable details about other programmes and possibly benchmark these. More internationalization is recommended overall if this programme is to continue.

3.4 Teaching staff need to undertake more research activities to support their teaching and the curriculum. This would help to keep the programme current for the 21st century. Improved foreign language abilities, particularly English, the dominant international language of the EU, would be directly beneficial to support research (many key publications are in English) and international exchanges.

3.5 The expert team recommends that there are more phantom heads available to the dental hygiene students and these might be located in other places. Additionally, more student practice places would be beneficial with a greater range of patients to provide more effective training and experience.

3.6 The students need more research activity. They also need to undertake more international exchanges on a regular basis. An overall improvement in foreign language abilities, particularly English, the dominant international language, would help support research (many key publications are in English) and the international exchanges.

3.7 The Department continues to manage two similar programmes in close harmony, DH and OC. If the Department is to maintain this close management then the expert team recommends greater differences between them. As already noted, it would therefore be wise to benchmark this specific programme against the best specific international examples if it is to continue independently and more distinctly.

IV. SUMMARY

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims and objectives of the programme correspond overall to the regulations of the higher education in Lithuania and approved professional standard. They are following also recommendations overall of the International Dental Hygienists organizations in Europe. Learning outcomes are harmonized and obtain specific competences that correspond to study results; however, these are often general and need to be reviewed and made more specific to this profession if this programme is to continue independently and be sustainable in future. This point also applies to the aims.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets the legal requirements and regulations of the higher education in Lithuania. The programme consists of general subjects, subjects of study area and optional subjects. The content of the subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies. In the structure of the study programme 60 % are given to the self study, which is too high but this includes professional activities placements (19.7%). Some of the optional subjects which are more related to the dental hygienists profession could be mandatory. New subjects – Histology and Microbiology should be introduced in the DH curriculum as separate subjects otherwise Histology should be introduced and if Microbiology continues as part of the subject Infection Control more study hours would be needed.

3. Teaching staff

The programme is run by dedicated and enthusiastic staff, the number of which is adequate to ensure the learning outcomes. Teachers' qualification correspond to their subjects, especially in practical training. More dental professionals could be involved in the teaching process in the future. All lecturers have more than three years working experience. Pedagogical experience is also demonstrated by their prepared and published textbooks, methodical materials, etc. The Department of OC has implemented two projects financed by the EU, in order to increase the quality of the study programme, the third project is underway, which aims to increase the internationality of the study programme. Lecturers go to scientific, practical internships, participate in exchange between European schools, but these activities are very limited. More international exchange between the teaching staff and comparable colleges in Europe and America should be undertaken. The skills of foreign languages (particularly English, the dominant international language in the EU and at educational conferences) should be improved and this also influence the amount and level of international research activities directly related to the study programme that is also much needed as key books and journals are primarily published in English today.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Students have good access to theoretical and practical working places not only at the UC, but also at the public institutions, private practices and also at the OC training centre. However, more practice placements would be beneficial and should provide a wider range of patients for the students. The premises for students are adequate both in size and quality. Regarding the

teaching and learning equipment, it is modern and sufficient for the present number of students, but in future for the clinical work more dental units and phantom heads will be in need and this is recommended by the expert team. The experts confirm that the equipment and materials used for implementing the programme general supports the development of practical skills and the achievements of the learning outcomes. Learning materials are of sufficient quality and periodically renewed, some are placed in the virtual environment and students have access to them. Teachers have prepared and published methodological publications used in theoretical and practical classes. Students have a good access to the materials in paper and online.

5. Study process and students` performance assessment

Admission of the students is organized in accordance with the regulations and are clearly defined. The organization of the study process ensures the appropriate implementation of the programme and achievements of the learning outcomes. During the final practical and theoretical examination the student demonstrates the competences acquired from the areas compulsory to the dental hygienist activity. Students need more participation in research activities and this is recommended by the expert team. Students' mobility is not sufficient because of different systems of education and training of dental hygienists in Europe. Students are counselled regularly by the programme administration on various matters like assessment, schedule, carrier opportunities etc. There are good relationships, sharing experiences between the staff and the students; ultimate academic and social support is provided to the students in their professional matters by the Faculty. Information concerning the studies and also changes in the programme are clearly published on the website of UC.

6. Programme management

Responsibilities for the decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. There is internal quality management system for the programme worked out at UC 2011-2013 (funded by the ESF). In order to comprehensively and efficiently assess and improve the quality of implementation of the study programme social partners of various levels (graduates and employers) are involved into this process. In various discussion meetings stakeholders together with lecturers make proposals how to improve the study programme. The Department of OC together with the board of the Faculty of Health Care and Social Care, administration, student representatives and employers systematically carry out various self-assessment studies. The results are presented and discussed not only at the Faculty, but also at

the local public health community meetings. There is a systemic and regular analysis of the study programme, but it is recommended that this is also undertaken on an international level. Benchmarking this programme against the best international examples in Europe and America is required and recommended by the expert team. Although two programmes are not 100% identical, this programme and the OC programme are indeed similar and this needs to be reviewed and separated if the DH programme is to continue independently.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Dental Hygiene* (state codes – 65308B111, 653A51002) at Utena College is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	2
4.	Material resources	3
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process, student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	17

*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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