



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINIO VERSLO
EKONOMIKA IR VADYBA* (valstybinis kodas - 621N20007)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT* (state code - 621N20007)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Tarptautinio verslo ekonomika ir vadyba</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621N20007
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Vadyba
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės (1,5 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Vadybos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2006-02-19

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>International Business Economics and Management</i>
State code	621N20007
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Management
Type of the study programme	University Studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time studies; 1,5 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Management
Date of registration of the study programme	19 February, 2006

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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 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 the 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.	Action Plan 2016-2018 of the Faculty of Economics, Vilnius University

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

Vilnius University (VU) is a public higher school founded in 1579. It is the oldest and the largest higher educational institution in Lithuania in terms of staff, students, divisions and programmes. It provides 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle studies in the fields of humanities, social, natural,

biomedical and technological sciences. Currently the university offers over 70 undergraduate (including integrated) and 110 graduate programmes as well as 30 areas of doctoral studies.

The Faculty of Economics (FE) was established in 1940 and currently consists of 9 departments (*Accounting and Auditing; Economic Informatics; Economic Policy; Finance; Qualitative Methods and Modelling; Marketing; Theoretical Economics; Management; and Business*) and a Centre of Economic Expertise. The FE publishes two scientific journals (*Ekonomika* and *Organizations and Markets in Emerging Economies*) and collaborates with Kaunas Faculty of Humanities in publishing an international scientific journal (*Transformations of Business Economics*). The principal research fields of the FE academic staff are in several areas of Economics, Management and Finance.

The management and administrative structure of the faculty follows the standard international pattern (Dean, Vice-Deans, Faculty Council, Heads of Departments, etc.). Currently it is staffed with 120 members, including 2 professors, 70 associate professors and doctors of social sciences. The nine departments of the Faculty of Economics currently deliver three 1st cycle and fifteen 2nd cycle study programmes. It also implements doctoral studies in the fields of Economics and Management. Study Programme Committees (SPC) are responsible for the monitoring of the study programmes. Around 3000 students pursue their studies in undergraduate and graduate programmes offered by the faculty. The total number of doctoral students exceeds 40.

Five graduate study programmes are taught in English (including the one under present evaluation – *International Business Economics and Management*) and three of them (including the present one) are implemented jointly with foreign universities.

The MA study programme of *International Business Economics and Management* (IBEM) was first evaluated in 2006 as required by the official registration procedure. It is the first programme in the Faculty of Economics taught entirely in English. Apart from its international focus, it also features a number of international faculty members. It was designed not only for Lithuanian students who wish to study a MA programme in English but also for foreign students willing to pursue an MA in Lithuania. Since 2006 it has been attracting applicants from all over the world. Starting from 2012, the programme has been offering an opportunity for its students to obtain a double-degree diploma by studying an additional semester at the University of Parma (Italy), or (since 2016) at the Wroclaw University of Economics (Poland) and the Ural Federal University (Russia).

1.4. The Review Team

The composition of the review team was based on the *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 12/04/2017.

Review team:

- 1. Prof. Dr. Georgi Apostolov (team leader)**, *Vice Rector of South West University "Neofit Rilski", Associate Professor in Organisation and Management of Education and Science (Bulgarija);*
- 2. Prof. Dr. John Sae**, *Professor of International Business (IBWL), Management and Corporate Leadership at ESB Business School, Reutlingen University (Vokietija);*
- 3. Dr. Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro**, *Course Leader/Lecturer - Strategic Management/ Innovation and Change at Leeds Metropolitan University (Jungtinė Karalystė);*
- 4. Mr. Gintautas Kučas**, *Managing Director at Lithuanian Marketing Association, Marketing and Business Development Consultant (Lietuva);*
- 5. Mr. Linas Misevičius**, *Student of Master Programme "International Marketing and Management" at ISM University (Lietuva);*

Evaluation coordinator: *Ms Gabriele Bajorinaitė*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The MA study programme of *International Business Economics and Management (IBEM)* was launched in 2006. It is the first programme in the Faculty of Economics taught entirely in English. Apart from its international focus, it also features a number of international faculty members. Since 2006 it has been attracting applicants from all over the world.

As such, the programme development has been an initiative of an individual academic member who has haphazardly developed and launched it based on available competencies of staff within the Faculty of Economics without reference to concrete needs of targeted market segments. Such needs were only anticipated by the programme promoters as it became evident during the interview with the SER team (it was explained: "*we thought there was a need for such a programme*"). This has been also corroborated by an absence of a sound and well-documented market analysis system (p. 10, SER – "*no monitoring systems to assess the labour market demand for university graduates*") and again confirmed during the interviews with the management. Nevertheless, the students expressed appreciation of the program with respect to the possibility of obtaining a double-degree from an international program taught in English.

It is stated that the overall aim of the programme is in line with the mission of Vilnius University and corresponds to present Lithuanian and international socio-economic developments as well as labour market demands. However, its definition is rather brief and abstract („to prepare highly qualified international business management specialist with broad competence and knowledge” – p. 2, SER) and could refer to any other programme of the kind. It doesn't communicate sufficiently the specific character of this programme having „two focuses: international business economics and international business management” (ibid). Similarly, its specific goals, although more concrete, do not make a clear distinction between the two different fields of specialization but rather put a primary focus on management. Furthermore, they do not provide a sufficiently clear conceptual framework for an intended professional profile of its graduates.

The same weaknesses refer to the programme Learning Outcomes (LOs). One might suggest that during the 2nd semester, when the students are split into two different study groups (in Economics and Management), they acquire different kinds of LOs but this is not explained in SER. The eight programme LOs are unsorted and they neither follow the established structure of the five different groups of LO descriptors for the 2nd cycle studies nor make a distinction between generic and professional ones. Some of them are relatively well defined (e.g. 3 “will be able to analyse the international business environment by applying the microeconomic and macroeconomic insights”; 4. “will be able to analyse, interpret, plan, and evaluate business processes, based on scientific knowledge with an explicitly international perspective”; 5. “will be able to manage the risks and challenges of doing business in an international environment and provide solutions for dealing with them”; 6. “will be able to develop, evaluate, and implement international business strategies in the changing business environment”) while others are rather generally formulated (e.g. 1. “will be able to plan, conduct, assess, and communicate a scientifically-grounded research project with an international mind-set”; 2. “will be able to plan and implement the process of lifelong learning and professional activity by using systemic and strategic thinking”; 8. “will be able to work on a project basis in a multidisciplinary and international team”), and one of them is not a LO (i.e. 7. “will have an insight into the relations between various disciplines necessary for coming up with scientifically justified innovative solutions” – p. 3, SER). The LOs of the individual subjects (provided in the course descriptions) are of similarly mixed quality. The competencies (Generic and Professional) and the LOs definitions of the courses *Globalization*, *Economics of European Integration*, *Risk Management*, etc., though with some exceptions, are clear and well defined. The course descriptions of *Cross-Culture Management*, *International HR Management*, *Comparative Economics*, etc. present no competencies, while the course *EU Economic Law* has neither competencies nor LOs, etc.

From the interviews of the panel with the SER team and teachers, it appeared that when writing the LOs they usually start from personal intentions and expectations instead of searching for real industry-based skills, abilities and competencies and/or further discussing these with social partners. Furthermore, from a closer look through the module descriptions it becomes evident that the academic staff still experience difficulties with understanding, defining and applying the LO concept. Many examples can be found of inappropriate definitions of LOs as a “*systematic understanding*”, “*knowing and better understanding*”, “*becoming familiar with*”, etc. Most often, teachers do not perceive the essential distinctions between “*competencies*”, “*learning outcomes*”, “*learning objectives*”, “*skills*”, “*abilities*” or define them very broadly. However, such generic definitions add to the difficulty of comprehensively and accurately assessing the achievement of, for example, certain LOs, especially with regard to the two specific areas of specialization in this programme. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the teachers be encouraged to review the subject descriptions and revise them accordingly so as to make the LOs more concrete, relevant to the course themes and adequately measurable. This would provide better guidance for their delivery as well as offer more focused direction for the assessment and provision of feedback to students. Teaching strategies and especially assessment methods should be also made appropriate for the achievement and measurement of well-defined LOs.

Also, critical in the present structure of the programme is the very high number of lectures as compared to seminars and practical classes in most of the disciplines (e.g. *International Trade and Foreign Direct Investment* – 19/5; *Cross-Culture Management* – 18/6; *International Business Strategy* – 15/9; etc.). This approach threatens as well the achievement of the intended LOs especially when lecturing becomes “*a great challenge*” (as admitted by teachers during the interview with them) because of the heterogeneity of the student body which is due to their different backgrounds and educational levels (sometimes because of “*poor English or a poor background in management and economics*” of the international students coming from many different countries – p. 10, SER).

The SER states that the LOs are discussed with representatives of stakeholders, and that they are regularly “*invited to express their opinion ... on the issues of the study process, its updating, the intended LOs, and etc.*” (p. 8, SER). This was not confirmed by the social partners present at the meeting with the review team. On the contrary, they said they were not very familiar with the content of the programme and its development over the years. In their opinion, a similar programme in another university is more popular given that it is more focused on “*leadership*” and practical skills while the present one aims to create a “*broad mind-set*”. They also expressed their readiness to participate in the programme development if invited.

As a matter of fact, the management of the programme is aware of all these weaknesses and the need for improvement. However, the “*Actions for improvements*” on p. 10 (SER) present much more abstract intentions than concrete actions (e.g. “*to strengthen the feedback from students, to improve the monitoring of LOs*”; etc.).

Overall, the programme aims and LOs are broadly consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualification offered. They are publicly accessible via the websites of the Faculty of Economics (www.ef.vu.lt) and Vilnius University (www.vu.lt), as well as through the virtual database of the Ministry of Education and Science – AIKOS (Register of Study Programmes and Qualifications – www.aikos.smm.lt). Additionally, diverse advertising materials are widely disseminated and different promotional events are organized for prospective applicants on a regular basis (e.g. Open Door Days, Fairs, etc.).

In general, the name of the programme, its LOs, content and the qualification offered are compatible with each other although a number of critical issues still need to be revised and improved.

2.2. Curriculum design

The MA study programme of International Business Economics and Management was registered in February 2006 as required by the national legislation of Lithuania and regularly revised since then in response to provisions of legal acts and norms. The programme complies with all the official minimum requirements. Its volume amounts to 90 ECTS within a duration of 1.5 years; the study field courses account for 60 ECTS; 12 ECTS credits are allotted for elective modules; and no more than 5 subjects are taught per semester. The amount of self-study in the programme (even within the norm of “no less than 30%”) seems to be very high (91%) and there is no reasonable justification in the SER about how the students’ independent work is practically supported. It is said only that learning materials are provided in advance but during the interview of the evaluation team with students it appeared that they had some difficulties, which they tried to solve individually. Therefore, a more structured support that goes beyond providing ad hoc advice/instruction at the request of individual students, is strongly recommended.

The study subjects are spread evenly over the period of studies and their themes are not repetitive although some doubts yet exist regarding the disciplines – *Research Methods*, *Research Project* and the *Seminar*. On the opposite side is the *EU Economic Law* course which students find very difficult to navigate without prerequisites.

The profile of the programme is very broad. Lacking a clear focus on any kind of specialization, the students are nonetheless required to choose between two “specialization areas” in their second semester (*International Business Economics* and *International Business*

Management). The programme is said to have “a universal character” and to “provide comprehensive academic education, i.e. it is not intended for the training in a narrow field” (p. 14, SER). Another key feature of the IBEM is its rather theoretical and research focus, as opposed to a more practical orientation (e.g. *Research Methods* – 1st semester; *Research Project* – 2nd; *Training Seminar on Research* and *Master’s Thesis* – 3rd – all of them compulsory; a number of other theoretical disciplines; etc.). The LO definitions are also quite explicit about the existing imbalance of the study programme – four out of eight (i.e. 1 “will be able to plan, conduct, assess, and communicate a scientifically-grounded research project with an international mind-set”; 3. “will be able to analyse the international business environment by applying the microeconomic and macroeconomic insights”; 4. “will be able to analyse, interpret, plan, and evaluate business processes, based on scientific knowledge with an explicitly international perspective”; and 7. “will have an insight into the relations between various disciplines necessary for coming up with scientifically justified innovative solutions”) have direct relation to research while only two of them (i.e. 5. “will be able to manage the risks and challenges of doing business in an international environment and provide solutions for dealing with them”; and 6. “will be able to develop, evaluate, and implement international business strategies in the changing business environment”) refer mostly to the practice of business management. An additional proof of that is spelled out on p. 14 of SER: “Content of some theoretical courses ... does not fully meet student expectations because of the insufficient practical context”. These as well as other disproportions and weaknesses of the curriculum design are very clearly seen in Table 1 (pp. 8-9) where the LOs are linked with the taught subjects.

Observations from students, alumni and social partners strongly stress the need to develop a more focused programme of studies. Furthermore, it should be updated and aligned with contemporary issues of management as well as oriented to practice more.. Key subjects on contemporary management trends should be also considered to be included in the study programme (e.g. Leadership, Entrepreneurship, etc.).

There are a number of disputable features regarding the overall arrangement of the programme as well as its individual modules. Taking into account its “universal character”, “two focuses”, the main aim and the intended LOs, it seems that the sequence and place of some disciplines is not sufficiently justified. For example, the course *International Project Management* is almost the only addressing LO 8 but it is elective and students might not choose it. *International Business Strategy* seems to be better positioned in the 2nd semester (IBM section), while the compulsory *International HR Management* module would fit better if offered as an elective. The course *Total Quality Management* would be more appropriate as a

compulsory than elective course considering the overall profile of the programme. Moreover, the names of some disciplines could be misleading. For instance, the “international” aspect of the disciplines *International Project Management* and *International HR Management* is either insignificant or entirely missing. In addition, the course descriptions of most disciplines provide only very general information about their content (i.e. themes) so as to allow an adequate assessment. The two elective courses for the “split” 2nd semester are identical even though the two groups have different focuses (i.e. Economics and Management).

Much of the content of modules that have been developed is not rigorously updated to reflect latest knowledge and contemporary thinking based on latest research available within the literature. This observation was further echoed by the student population. A closer look through the module descriptions reveals also that the required readings of some disciplines are either missing or relatively outdated (e.g. the compulsory disciplines: *International Trade and Foreign Direct Investments* provides only 2 links to the UN and EU portals; *Cross-Cultural Marketing* recommends only one book from 2009; the *Total Quality Management* course suggests readings published between 2002-2004 and only one in 2007; etc.). All these call for a careful review and update of the programme documentation (including the course descriptions), and especially taking into account that some students “only read descriptions of courses” (as one of them disclosed) when choosing electives.

The IBEM programme is organized in an intensive modular method of studies, which means that only one course is taught at a time and this is appreciated by students. At the same time, lecturing seems to be the main method for tutoring (there are lectures even in the module *Seminar* in the last semester). In an MA programme more seminars, team work, and case-study discussions would be much more appropriate. It is worth mentioning again that lectures account for a larger proportion of contact hours than seminars (e.g. *International Trade and Foreign Direct Investment* – 19/5; *Cross-culture Management* – 18/6; etc.). Due to the fact that the students have a lot of self-studies, it is advised that the proportion of seminars be increased so as to ensure opportunities for the students to discuss and apply what they have been acquiring at home.

Social partners expressed their concerns about their involvement in the design and quality assessment of the programme content which implies that these key stakeholders were not regularly invited. They also expressed their disposition to take a more active role in the development of a high-quality student experience through their contribution to the provision of topic specific lectures, seminars and opportunities for practical application and development of knowledge and skills. Students have also expressed the desire for inclusion of industry internships in order to provide them with an opportunity to apply theory learnt to real business

context, thereby developing practical skills necessary for their professional development.

Evidence collected during the interviews with students, alumni and the visit to the library and the analysis of an MA thesis suggest that it is urgent to update the content and study materials for the subjects of the IBEM study programme.

Overall, the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure the intended LOs but only to a certain extent. As they have been very broadly defined, not very well structured and insufficiently supported with content reflecting the latest achievements in science and practice, their efficient acquisition is somewhat problematic.

2.3. Teaching staff

There is a good composition of academic staff delivering the IBEM programme. These include 17 teachers of which 9 are professors, 4 associate professors, 1 lecturer holding a PhD, 2 doctoral students serving as assistants and 1 professional consultant from Germany. There is also a practice to invite professors who do not teach in the programme to supervise students in writing their Master's Final Theses. The overall ratio of students per teacher (2.4) is adequate to ensure LOs. The academic staff meets the legal requirements - 82% of them and all who teach theoretical courses have a doctoral degree in Economics and Management. Their field of expertise complies with their disciplines in the curriculum. Over 70% of the programme courses are taught by Vilnius University professors. The recruitment and assessment of staff follows a standard procedure established by the university. Professors from other higher education institutions in Lithuania and abroad are also regularly invited to deliver specific modules.

The qualifications of the staff, as well as their research output are adequate to ensure achievement of the LOs. Most of their publications are in English and directly relate to the disciplines taught. Faculty have also participated in various national and international scientific conferences, events, editorial boards, consultancy bodies and expert committees, etc. However, SER states that "*the opportunity of a sabbatical year granted by the VU has not been used by any of the IBEM programme teachers*" (p. 21). This fact is considered by management as a weakness (and it surely is) because the staff fail to benefit from the institutional schemes and incentives designed to increase research productivity and its scientific value. The main reason for this failure might be that the initiative to make use of the paid research leave has been left to the individual staff member's ambition which appears to be very low. Specifically, beyond indicating a vague intention ("*to encourage research leaves of the staff*"), no concrete actions have been planned thus far. Therefore, the review team recommends that adequate measures be undertaken for development and performance of individual staff members within a reasonable timeframe, pointed at achieving tangible results and thus uplifting the scientific quality of the

research capacities available. This also refers to professors' professional development through internships in companies mentioned in SER (ibid.).

Involvement of visiting professors is said to be significant (10 annually). Meanwhile, it should be acknowledged that students showed great appreciation of international guest professors for their contribution to the enhancement of their knowledge as well as to the programme. While outgoing mobility of staff is considerable, its distribution amongst them is dominated by 4 staff members. Faculty need to pay attention to involve more staff in outgoing international mobility.

There exist strong connections and very good cooperation with a number of universities from Italy, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, Denmark, etc. including opportunities for provision of double-degree study programmes. Teachers in the study programme are actively taking part in international projects. They have acquired appropriate skills to work effectively in a multicultural environment. An additional asset of this activity is that having international teaching and research experiences helps to provide appropriate contribution to the classes of the IBEM.

The turnover has been very low for the last five years and the core teaching staff (around 70% of all teachers on the programme) is over 45. It makes evident that inbreeding and aging is occurring in the programme. This process should be seriously considered and acted upon as it has potential to reduce the variety and intellectual quality of the programme. The management is aware of that threat but no concrete actions for improvement have been proposed (p. 21, SER). Therefore, it is recommended that the Faculty of Economics make a reasonable plan for turnover in the coming years in order to increase the diversity while decreasing the average age of teachers and involving fresh intellectual resources thus ensuring adequate provision of the IBEM study programme.

Teaching is generally well received by students while for the teachers lecturing turns to be "*a great challenge*" (as one of the staff members characterized it during the interview with the panel). The reason is that the student body is very heterogeneous, consisting of students coming from many different countries (Germany, Vietnam, Belarus, Turkey, Ukraine, Lithuania, etc.). The students usually are with very different backgrounds and cultures, diverse motivation and low levels of English language proficiency. Considering the very high amount of lecturing in the programme, the "challenged teaching" issue raises serious concerns about the quality of preparation of students and needs to be given serious attention not only by teachers but by programme management, as well. Moreover, it's disputable how effective the classical teaching and assessment methods could be with such a heterogeneous group of learners and their different level of motivation.

It is stated that „*most of the teachers of the programme have attended a large variety of training courses in Lithuania and abroad*” (p. 20, SER). However, there is no concrete data concerning these. In fact, in contradiction with the above statement, a perceived need of an improvement in this direction is emphasized (e.g. “*Staff should undergo more training to improve the didactic, communication and other skills*” – p. 21). It seems to be an indication of a problem which the management is insufficiently aware of. The interview with the academic staff provided evidence of the existence of initiatives to ensure relevant training aiming to enhance the current teaching practice (e.g. use of VLE). Similarly, there is evidence about the provision of institutional support to participate in activities related to further professional development (e.g. participation in conferences, academic mobility, research leaves, etc.). However, it appeared that no concrete data is kept on the take-up of these professional activities and staff participation is very much seen as a voluntary activity. Having all these in mind, it is recommended that a process where all staff members draw up their own professional development plan with specific targets, acts, time frame, indicators of the level of achievement, reporting, etc. be established. An appropriate system for assessing the teaching competences should be also established.

The review team’s discussion with the teachers revealed one more issue related to teachers’ inclusive participation in the overall maintenance of studies. When asked about aspects of the programme, aside from their own subjects, they were highly uncertain or disengaged and suggested addressing some of the questions to management (e.g. about programme’s statistics, organizational details, consequences following students’ feedback, etc.). Therefore, appropriate actions are recommended in order to make them more involved and to create a sense of team spirit and programme ownership.

Meanwhile, it should be acknowledged that students showed great appreciation of international guest professors for their contributions to the enhancement of their knowledge as well as to the programme in general.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality. There are 9 classrooms and 9 computer labs most frequently used for lectures, seminars and practical work in this study programme. All the classrooms are equipped with multimedia, seven of them have Smart Boards installed with video screens and voting systems, and there is one with modern videoconferencing facilities. Specialized equipment and wireless Internet is available to all staff and students. The hardware and software is regularly up-dated so as to comply with the contemporary requirements for these types of studies. Study materials have been uploaded to the university’s Moodle platform and some useful methodological materials have also been placed

on the Faculty of Economics website. The Faculty possesses a number of special professional and training software which is used during lectures, seminars and the preparation of Final Theses or assignments.

Library facilities are excellent and accessible 24 hours a day. Reading places in the library are matched by excellent group work spaces and even a kindergarten for students' kids. More than 40 000 publications from the fields of Economic and Management are available in the open funds area of the Library. Access to an extensive variety of scholarly databases like EBSCO, Cambridge Books and Journals Online, EMERALD, Econlit, JSTOR, Oxford Journals and others is ensured in addition to very well stocked shelves in the physical library spaces. The study and research support given by library staff is noteworthy and very much appreciated by teachers and students. The Faculty of Economics claims to have sufficient funds for the acquisition of books, journals, and other study materials annually. E-learning and Examination Centre was established in 2010 based on Moodle. It aims to improve the quality and modernize the learning process through the use of information and communication technologies. An Electronic Plagiarism Control System has been also established and all Master's Final Theses are checked as well as students' written assignments.

All the descriptions of facilities given in SER were substantiated during the review team's visit. The experts were pleasantly surprised by the availability of good infrastructural support for academic endeavours, including library facilities and materials, computers, IT rooms, general and specialized equipment, etc. The visit to the facilities where the content of the programme is delivered provided evidence confirming that their quality is up to standard. The investments made in the library are commendable. The teaching materials (including textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases, etc.) are adequate and accessible to students of this study programme. The Faculty of Economics has sufficient facilities and equipment for in-house students' practice, but needs also appropriate arrangements with social partners in order to ensure industry-based or real-life practical work.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The admission to the IBEM study programme follows an established institutional procedure laid out in detail in a document titled "*Rules of Admission to the Study Programmes of VU*" which is publicly available on the university website. Admission of national and international candidates is organized separately but similar selection criteria apply. According to the rules "*All applicants have to prove their proficiency of English*" (p. 25, SER) although no information is provided about the minimum acceptable level. Pre-master courses are offered to those without background in Business and Economics. International applicants can present the

required documents, as well as confirm their English language proficiency on line. All necessary information is readily accessible on the Vilnius University website (<http://www.ef.vu.lt/en/studies>).

There are no entrance exams to the IBEM study programme. The SER states that the Study Programme Committee (SPC) “*studies the motives of the applicants, the competition and employment of both Lithuanian and international students to monitor their reaction to changing labour market*” (p. 25, SER). However, these were not completely confirmed during the site visit. It appeared, during the interview with the management, that there were no real steps in place to measure the motivation of applicants. As a matter of fact, admission appears to be a very problematic issue and those who wrote the SER were well aware of this critical weakness and the negative consequences it had been creating (e.g. “*As students come from different backgrounds and their education level is very unequal, it is rather difficult for researchers to determine an optimal difficulty of the material to be presented during lectures or classes. Studies sometimes are aggravated by poor English or poor background in management or economics.*” – p. 10). Furthermore, teachers confirmed this in the interview when describing the teaching as “*challenging*” (already mentioned above). In fact, these were the teachers who recommended that an appropriate threshold level of English language proficiency is needed and the review team fully agrees with that and conveys the message to the management strongly insisting on actions to be taken.

The IBEM is organized around an intensive modular method of teaching, meaning that only one course is taught at a time. Most students liked that the course is quite intensive, for some of them it is still challenging but yet overall valued. The intensive teaching character of the programme means also that “*students have fewer contact hours and more homework assignments*” (p. 14, SER). The individual work assignments are said to be: analysis of scientific articles, books and other kinds of literature, case studies, individual and group projects, etc. The team that prepared the pre-visit documentation was concerned by the perceived over-emphasis on individual student work (e.g. “*a rather large portion of self-study*”, “*a big load of self-study*” – p. 12, SER). Comparing this with the low motivation and the fact that “*the majority of the programme graduates start working as early as during the studies*” (p. 30, SER) raises the question about coping with this high intensity of studies. Accounting all these, the evaluation board was searching for an existent and reasonable student support system designed to tackle the challenges being caused by the heterogeneity of the student body, the big amount of independent work and high intensity of studies. Despite the casual efforts of some staff members, no evidence has been found of a systematic individual study support arrangement. International students noted that they had experienced lots of difficulties and an absence of sufficient support even

during the period of on-boarding to the programme. Therefore, there is an urgent need to establish an institutionalized support scheme, especially for foreign students. The intention to “*to allocate obligatory professor’s contact hours for students...*” (p. 31, SER) is only an abstract and palliative solution.

Through the interview with students and alumni, the existence of a standard academic practice in terms of provision of guidance and clear instructions to students about the aim, objectives, LOs and assessment of modules, including academic misconduct, became evident. However, the fact that the format for the feedback provision is not standardized – given the critical importance and urgency to review the practice of individual private meetings in the offices (as mentioned by one of the staff members) – is disconcerting. Such practice has the potential to affect negatively and unnecessarily the perception of transparency, and ultimately the liability associated to the delivery of the programme.

Rules and procedures of student achievement assessment, inclusive feedback provision and coping with academic debts, are clearly defined in the regulations approved by the VU Senate Committee and publicly accessible through the university website. Additionally, the SER states that “*feedback in the IBEM programme courses aims at ensuring the achievement of the LOs and the building student abilities*” (p. 31). Despite all these, the review team established that no systematic feedback has been provided to the students during the operation of the module. However, feedback is given to students following the exam which is not helpful to their optimal learning outcome acquisition. Additionally, concerns were voiced about professors mostly using tests with closed and open questions which is questionable for MA level studies and such practices could be reconsidered.

Strict norms, rules and procedures for academic misconduct prevention is in place to guarantee the quality of the study process. The Master’s Final theses and the written assignments are checked by means of a plagiarism checking system installed at the VU server and operated by the university’s Computer Centre. The PMC reports that there have been several cases of plagiarism since the start of the IBEM programme and the students were not permitted to defend their theses (p. 30, SER). Teachers also mentioned during the interview that they had been very much concerned with this problem and didn’t accept papers if there was an evidence of plagiarism. They mentioned a case where the whole paper featured only citations and that this usually happens with students from countries where plagiarism is culturally tolerated.

Examples of articles in conference proceedings and scientific journals (p. 27, SER) evidenced that the students of the IBEM programme have been actively involved in academic and research activities. Furthermore, the FE regularly organises international scientific

conferences where students can give presentations. In order to promote the participation in conferences, the conference fee is waived for students and staff.

Strong evidence was found related to the provision of information and support to students aimed at encouraging their participation in mobility programs. There is a well elaborated institutional support system with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and functions. The FE has 78 Erasmus+ agreements with foreign universities and opportunities for the best IBEM graduates to get a double-degree diploma from universities in Italy, Poland and Russia. For the period of 2011-2015 school years 33 mobilities were recorded: 24 double-degree (20 incoming/4 outgoing), 7 Erasmus intensive programmes (for two weeks), 3 Erasmus internships (under bilateral agreements with universities from Italy, France, Poland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, South Korea).

VU provides its students with a wide range of academic, social, and financial support services. Students can consult the coordinator of studies or the programme coordinator and easily obtain information about the academic calendar, elective courses, assessment procedures, exam retaking, etc. All students are provided with personal e-mail addresses since most of the studies related communication are carried out via e-mail. Great variety of counselling services related to career opportunities, psychological support on the issues of personal life, family, studies or social integration are available. Students also have access to health and sports facilities, which are conveniently located on campus. In terms of financial support, VU provides grants and loans. The 2nd cycle students from EU can apply for social, target and nominal grants, while non-EU students can apply for one-semester grants for excellent academic record.

Although the University provides a convenient environment for life and studies, there is a demonstrable need for preparatory courses on Lithuanian culture and language for international students in order to facilitate their integration and effective learning within the programme. Further, students expressed the need for establishing career counselling services whereby staff could assist students with regard to finding internship and employment opportunities in Lithuania. The interviewed international students would also appreciate stronger support in professional orientation and finding job, soft skills training, guidance on how to prepare a CV, etc. as well as to be presented with success stories. This means that such support is either not offered to them or that they are unfamiliar on where/how to get it. Whatever the case might be, it needs attention by management of the study programme.

2.6. Programme management

The programme management arrangements are streamlined and a detailed description of policies, strategies and operations in relation to Quality Assurance (QA) of studies at the

university and faculty level are provided in the SER. The roles and responsibilities of the different bodies, committees and positions are very well-presented. The roles of the VU Administration of Studies and the Quality Management Centre as well as the guidance and support they provide are also made clear enough.

At the programme level the responsibility for the QA and maintenance of the academic standard lies primarily with the Study Programme Committee (SPC) but the Faculty Council also plays an important role. The main function of the SPC is to plan and develop a study programme and its subjects. The formal allocation of responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the study programme is very clear. Twice a year, at the end of each semester centralized student surveys are carried out by means of the VU e-survey system. Since it can be used only by Lithuanian students, an adopted English version of the questionnaire has been prepared by the Faculty of Economics. Teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners are said to be actively involved in the development of the programme.

Despite the very detailed descriptions in the SER (pp. 31-35) about different aspects of the study programme management, they refer only to formal roles, responsibilities and procedures whereas the information related to specific IBEM programme aspects is very limited. Here, as well as in the whole report, the SPC claims to follow the established rules and procedures.

However, during the site visit the evaluation team discovered a great number of programme management shortcomings. For instance, as already mentioned in Section 2.3, the participation of teaching staff in the overall maintenance of the study programme appears to be very low. There was limited evidence, demonstrated to the review panel, of a well consolidated teaching team with a feeling of a shared vision, joint purpose and ideas for programme improvement and sustainability. Furthermore, although students surveyed on occasions showed the need for academic staff to update teaching methods and content, academic staff who might have then been encouraged by management to update teaching methods and/or content of the modules have subsequently not been asked to develop and present an action plan within a specific timeline. Thus far no staff appraisal system exist in place that could direct academic staff to update course contents as well as teaching methods to reflect contemporary needs of the student population.

The SER states that “*Next important tool for getting feedback from students is a survey of the alumni opinions*” (p. 34). However, the feedback is collected only after the defence of the Master’s Final Theses and interviewed graduates told the review panel that they had not been contacted since their studies ended. Similarly, most of the social partners admitted that they didn’t know a lot about recent changes to the programme and its development over the years.

The review team's interviews with social partners also captured doubts on the nature of their real involvement in the review and evaluation of the programme. Some comments suggested that up to this point their participation had been nominal rather than influential and transformative in the design, delivery, monitoring and promotion of the programme.

Therefore, the review team firmly recommends that an effective feedback system be established in practice and not only on paper, involving teachers, students, graduates of the course as well as social partners in a structured and well-documented manner, in order to ensure an improvement perspective over time. The review panel also emphasizes the need for a fuller active involvement of the delivery team, students and social partners in the steering and decision-making process including assessment of the content, LOs definitions and overall performance of the IBEM study programme.

Another problematic issue that has become evident during the visit is the programme marketing and its sustainability. The IBEM targets both Lithuanian and foreign students and aims to create an international and intercultural study atmosphere which is a very positive asset. However, over the years 2011-2015 the number of applicants dropped down from 101 to 41, and this trend refers especially to Lithuanian candidates (from 95 to 37). It is easily explained by the "*demographic trends in the country*" (p. 25, SER) but this cause is not so much applicable to Master's studies. Another reason mentioned is that some other Master's programmes had been launched by the Faculty of Economics thus creating competition however this should be regarded as an opportunity rather than a threat for the improvement of the IBEM.

From the interview with social partners emerged also the observation on the need to better promote the programme. In its current form, it is recognized in the market based on the reputation of the university, not by the programme-specific characteristics, attributes and skills developed during the studies cycle or the specialized areas that respond to current needs of the labour market. One of the major critical points might be that, the programme management has a "feeling" that it's needed instead of a targeted marketing strategy ("*we feel that when the graduates are satisfied and find jobs, the programme is needed*").

Similarly, there is no a systematic benchmarking process. As already mentioned in Section 2.1, the programme development has been an initiative of an individual academic member who has haphazardly created and launched it based on available competencies of staff within the Faculty of Economics without an analysis of needs evidence based. Claims like "*No university of Lithuania provides a similar programme*" (p. 6, SER) and also that similar EU programmes "*are not very close competitors because of a higher tuition fee and/or more expensive living costs*" (p. 10, SER) are used to obviously dismiss the need for a benchmarking

exercise. An assumptive comparison with other corresponding study offerings is necessary to see the broader picture of the field.

Following all these, the review team finds that the IBEM study programme should apply a market-oriented approach to its design and management as soon as possible. A formal benchmarking against similar top programmes in this area, nationally and internationally, is also strongly recommended (e.g. the double-degree programmes offered jointly with foreign universities).

The critical issues already mentioned in the other sections related to entrance criteria, challenged teaching, weak organization of the student individual work, etc. also indicate issues related to management of the IBEM programme.

There is no strong evidence of the existence of a well-documented and systematic process aimed to assess and inform the design, quality and evaluation of performance of the multiple components of the programme. Given the size and complexity of the University, Faculty and the program, it would be strongly recommended to adopt standard practices in the academia to cope with such level of complexity such as the creation of a task-force (to be later a specialized permanent group) dedicated exclusively to the design, implementation, monitoring and constant improvement of quality procedures and practices, independent to the academic staff. This will provide consistency, credibility and evidence-based material to guide the management of the programme. It also has the potential to free the academic staff of administrative duties, a valuable time that can be redirected to the enhancement of the content of the teaching modules and the student experience in general.

2.7. Examples of excellence

The library and the quality of the service provided by the staff is second-to-none in the country. The investment made is commendable due to the positive impact it has on the student experience.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **To develop a clear overall vision of the programme and revise its nomenclature.** It clearly requires a more focused rather than general approach with more real industry application based on a sound market needs analysis. Furthermore, it should be updated and aligned with contemporary management trends as well as oriented to practice rather than theory. Key subjects on contemporary management trends should be also considered to be included in the study programme (e.g. Leadership, Entrepreneurship, etc.).

2. **The main aim and LOs should reflect more the distinct characteristics of the IBEM study programme.** Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that the teachers be encouraged to review the subject descriptions and revise them so as to make the LOs more concrete, coherent with the taught themes and adequately measurable. Teaching strategies and especially assessment methods should also be made appropriate for the achievement and measurement of well-defined LOs. Due to the fact that the students have a lot of self-studies, it is advised that the proportion of seminars be increased so as to ensure opportunities for the students to discuss and apply what they have been acquiring at home. Rather than relying on ad hoc advice provided on an as-needed/as-requested basis by students, a more structured support is also strongly recommended.

3. **It is recommended that the Faculty of Economics make a reasonable plan for staff turnover in the coming years in order to increase the diversity** while decreasing the average age of teachers by involving fresh intellectual resources and thus ensuring adequate provision of the IBEM study programme. It is also advised that a process where all staff members draw up their own professional development plans with specific targets, acts, time frame, indicators of the level of achievement, reporting, etc. be established. An appropriate system for assessing the teaching competences should be also established. In addition, the Faculty needs to pay attention to involve more staff in outgoing international mobility.

4. **The quality assurance system needs to be rigorously and systematically developed and implemented faculty-wide as well as periodically reviewed** in conjunction with all its stakeholders with a comprehensive action plan to be followed and documented. There is also an urgent need to raise the programme profile through an effective marketing strategy in order to increase its visibility within Lithuania and internationally. Continuous benchmarking (national and international) against appropriately defined criteria is also recommended in view of its sustainability.

5. **To rigorously involve social partners and alumni within its quality assurance system** that could provide input from the respective industries in order to enrich the programme as well as support its further development of the programme with the latest knowledge and

emerging trends. There is also a need for a more active involvement of the delivery team, students and social partners in the steering and decision-making process, including assessment of the content, LO definitions and overall performance. In that concern, an effective feedback system should be established in practice and not only on paper, involving teachers, students, graduates of the course as well as social partners in a structured and well-documented way in order to ensure an improvement perspective over time.

IV. SUMMARY

The MA study programme of *International Business Economics and Management* (IBEM) was launched in 2006. It was the first programme in the Faculty of Economics taught entirely in English and featuring international faculty members as well. Since 2006 it has been attracting applicants from all over the world and aims to create an international and intercultural study atmosphere which is a very positive asset.

The overall aim of the programme is in line with the mission of Vilnius University and corresponds to present Lithuanian and international socio-economic developments. However, its definition is rather abstract. The eight programme LOs are unsorted and they neither follow the established structure nor make a distinction between generic and professional ones. Some of them are relatively well defined while others are rather generally formulated, and one of them is not a LO. The LOs of the individual subjects are of similarly mixed quality. Another critical issue in the present setting of the programme is the very high number of lectures as compared to seminars and practical classes. The programme aims and LOs are broadly consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualification offered.

The study programme was registered in February 2006 as required by the national legislation of Lithuania and regularly revised since then. It complies with all the official requirements. The profile of the programme is very broad. Lacking a clear focus on any kind of specialization, the students are nonetheless required to choose between two “specialization areas” in the second semester. The amount of the self-study in the programme seems to be very high and there is no reasonable justification in the SER about how the students’ independent work is practically supported. Another key feature of the IBEM is its rather theoretical and research focus, as opposed to a more practical orientation. Much of the contents of modules that have been developed are not rigorously updated to reflect latest knowledge and contemporary thinking based on latest research available within the literature.

There is a good composition of academic staff delivering the programme. Their field of expertise complies with their disciplines in the curriculum. Professors from other higher education institutions in Lithuania and abroad are also regularly invited to deliver specific modules. The qualifications of the staff, as well as their research output are adequate to ensure achievement of the LOs. While outgoing mobility of staff is considerable, its distribution amongst them is dominated by 4 staff members. Teachers are strong in taking part in international projects. An additional asset of this activity is that having international teaching and research experiences helps to provide appropriate contribution to the classes. There is evidence about the provision of institutional support related to further professional development. However, staff participation is very much seen as a voluntary activity.

The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality. Library facilities are excellent and are accessible 24 hours a day. Specialized equipment and wireless Internet is available to all staff and students. Access to an extensive variety of scholarly databases is ensured in addition to very well stocked shelves in the physical library spaces. The study and research support given by library staff is noteworthy.

The admission to the IBEM study programme follows an established institutional procedure. However, creating a highly heterogeneous student body in terms of their background, English language proficiency, and motivation appears to be a very problematic issue. As a consequence, the teaching in the programme has been described by staff as “challenging”. There exists a standard academic practice of provision of guidance and clear instructions to students about the aim, objectives, LOs and assessment of modules, including academic misconduct.

Rules and procedures of student achievement assessment are clearly defined in the VU regulations. However, no systematic feedback is provided during the operation of modules. Feedback is given to students following the exam which is not helpful to their optimal learning outcome acquisition. Additionally, some professors mostly use tests with closed and open questions which is not that appropriate for the Master level studies.

Strict norms, rules and procedures for academic misconduct prevention is in place to guarantee the quality of the study process and there is enough evidence that they are effective. There is a well elaborated mobility support system. For the period of 2011-2015 33 mobilities were recorded. VU provides its students also with a wide range of academic, social, and financial support services. But nonetheless, there is a demonstrable need for additional support for international student in order to facilitate their integration and effective learning within the programme.

The programme management and quality assurance arrangements are streamlined and a detailed description of policies, strategies and operations in relation to Quality Assurance (QA) of studies at the university and faculty level. However, during the site visit the review team discovered a great number of programme management shortcomings, including most notably a very low level of staff and social partners involvement in the overall maintaining of the study programme. Other problematic issues are the programme marketing and sustainability. Furthermore, there is no strong evidence of existence of a well-documented and systematic process aimed to assess and improve the design, quality and evaluation of performance of the multiple components of the programme.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT* (state code – 621N20007) at VILNIUS 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	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	16

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. Dr. Georgi Apostolov
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. Dr. John Sae
	Dr. Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro
	Gintautas Kučas
	Linas Misevičius

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
TARPTAUTINIO VERSLO EKONOMIKA IR VADYBA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS –
621N20007) 2017-08-22 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-185 IŠRAŠAS**

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO studijų programa *TARPTAUTINIO VERSLO EKONOMIKA IR VADYBA* (valstybinis kodas – 621N20007) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	2
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	16

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

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

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

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

2.7. Išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdžiai

Biblioteka ir personalo teikiamų paslaugų kokybė yra neprilygstami šalyje. Šios investicijos pagirtinos dėl teigiamo poveikio studentų patirčiai.

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Tarptautinio verslo ekonomikos ir vadybos magistrantūros studijų programa pradėta vykdyti 2006 m. Tai buvo pirmoji Ekonomikos fakulteto studijų programa, dėstoma tik anglų kalba ir samdanti tarptautinius darbuotojus. Nuo 2006 m. ji traukia stojančiuosius iš viso pasaulio ir siekia sukurti tarptautinę ir tarpkultūrinę studijų aplinką, o tai yra labai didelė vertybė.

Bendras studijų programos tikslas atitinka Vilniaus universiteto misiją ir dabartinius socialinius ekonominius pokyčius Lietuvoje ir pasaulyje. Vis dėlto, jo apibrėžimas gana abstraktus. Aštuoni studijų programos studijų rezultatai yra nesuklasifikuoti, nesiremia nustatyta struktūra, taip pat neatskirti bendrieji ir specialieji studijų rezultatai. Kai kurie jų palyginti neblogai apibrėžti, tačiau kitų formuluotės yra bendro pobūdžio, o vienas iš jų negali būti

priskirtas studijų rezultatui. Atskirų dalykų studijų rezultatai taip pat nevienodos kokybės. Dar vienas probleminis klausimas, susijęs su programos struktūra, yra itin didelis paskaitų skaičius, palyginti su seminarais ir praktiniais užsiėmimais. Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai apskritai atitinka studijų rūšį bei pakopą ir teikiamos kvalifikacijos lygį.

Studijų programa užregistruota 2006 m. vasario mėn., vadovaujantis Lietuvos nacionaliniais teisės aktais, ir nuo to laiko yra reguliariai peržiūrima. Ji atitinka visus oficialius reikalavimus. Studijų programos profilis labai platus. Nors trūksta aiškios informacijos apie specializacijas, studentų reikalaujama antrame semestre pasirinkti vieną iš dviejų „specializacijos sričių“. Savarankiškų studijų krūvis atrodo labai didelis, tačiau savianalizės suvestinėje nėra jokie svaraus pagrindimo, kaip praktiškai remiamas savarankiškas studentų darbas. Dar viena svarbi studijų programos savybė yra jos ganėtinai teorinė ir tiriama orientacija, o praktinis aspektas nežymus. Didžioji dalis modulių turinio nėra griežtai atnaujinama, kad atspindėtų naujausias žinias ir šiuolaikinį mąstymą, pagrįstą naujausiais literatūroje aprašytais tyrimais.

Studijų programą dėstančio akademinio personalo sudėtis gera. Dėstytojų kompetencijos sritis atitinka dėstomus programos dalykus. Konkretiems moduliams dėstyti taip pat reguliariai kviečiami dėstytojai iš kitų aukštojo mokslo įstaigų Lietuvoje ir užsienyje. Dėstytojų kvalifikacijos ir jų tiriamosios veiklos rezultatai yra tinkami, siekiant užtikrinti, kad numatomi studijų rezultatai būtų pasiekti. Nors išvykstamasis darbuotojų judumas yra nemažas, daugiausia šiomis programomis naudojasi 4 darbuotojai. Dėstytojai aktyviai dalyvauja tarptautiniuose projektuose. Papildoma šios veiklos vertybė yra tai, kad tarptautinė dėstytojų ir tyrimų patirtis atitinkamai praturtina paskaitas. Yra įrodymų, kad teikiama institucinė parama, susijusi su tolesniu profesiniu tobulinimusi. Tačiau darbuotojų dalyvavimas jame labiau traktuojamas kaip savanoriška veikla.

Studijoms skirtos patalpos yra tinkamo dydžio ir kokybės. Bibliotekos ištekliai yra puikūs ir prieinami visą parą. Darbuotojai ir studentai gali naudotis specializuota įranga ir bevieliniu internetu ryšiu. Užtikrinama prieiga prie didelės įvairovės mokslinių duomenų bazių, o fizinės bibliotekos išteklių saugyklos taip pat puikiai aprūpintos. Verta paminėti bibliotekos darbuotojų teikiamą studijų ir tyrimų paramą.

Priėmimas į Tarptautinio verslo ekonomikos ir vadybos studijų programą remiasi nustatytomis institucinėmis procedūromis. Vis dėlto, daug problemų kelia didelis studentų skirtingumas dėl nevienodo išsilavinimo, anglų kalbos žinių ir motyvacijos. Netgi darbuotojai šios studijų programos vykdymą pavadino „keliančiu iššūkiu“. Egzistuoja standartinė akademinė praktika, kaip konsultuoti ir aiškiai informuoti studentus apie studijų programos tikslą, uždavinius, numatomus studijų rezultatus ir modulių vertinimą, įskaitant netinkamą akademinį elgesį.

Studentų pasiekimų vertinimo taisyklės ir procedūros aiškiai apibrėžtos VU nuostatuose. Tačiau vykdant modulius sistemingas grįžtamasis ryšys neteikiamas. Jis teikiamas studentams po egzaminų, o tai nepadaeda jiems pasiekti optimalių studijų rezultatų. Be to, kai kurie dėstytojai daugiausia naudoja uždarųjų ir atvirųjų klausimų testus, o tai nėra tinkama magistrantūros studijų pakopai.

Nustatytos netinkamo akademinio elgesio prevencijos griežtos normos, taisyklės ir procedūros garantuoja studijų eigos kokybę ir yra pakankamai įrodymų, kad jos veiksmingos. Puikiai parengta judumo paramos sistema. 2011–2015 m. judumo galimybėmis pasinaudota 33 kartus. VU taip pat suteikia studentams daug įvairių akademinės, socialinės ir finansinės paramos paslaugų. Vis dėlto, akivaizdus papildomos tarptautinių studentų paramos poreikis, siekiant palengvinti jų integraciją ir veiksmingas studijas.

Programos vadybos ir kokybės užtikrinimo priemonės gerai organizuotos, taip pat yra išsamus su studijų kokybės užtikrinimu susijusių politikos dokumentų, strategijų ir veiksmų universiteto ir fakulteto lygiu aprašas. Vis dėlto, vizito metu ekspertų grupė nustatė daug programos vadybos trūkumų, įskaitant itin žemą darbuotojų ir socialinių partnerių įsitraukimą į bendrą studijų programos vykdymą. Kiti probleminiai aspektai yra programos rinkodara ir tvarumas. Be to, nėra pakankamai svarių įrodymų, kad egzistuočių dokumentuotas ir sistemingas procesas, skirtas įvertinti ir tobulinti programos sandarą, kokybę ir įvairių studijų programos elementų rezultatų vertinimą.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Parengti aiškią bendrą studijų programos viziją ir peržiūrėti jos terminologiją. Ji aiškiai reikalauja konkretesnio, o ne bendro požiūrio, labiau pritaikant tikrąją sektoriaus patirtį, remiantis išsamia rinkos poreikių analize. Be to, ją reikia atnaujinti, kad atitiktų šiuolaikines vadybos tendencijas, taip pat labiau orientuoti į praktiką, o ne teoriją. Be to, reikėtų apsvarstyti, kaip į studijų programą įtraukti pagrindinius dalykus, susijusius su šiuolaikinės vadybos tendencijomis (pvz., Lyderystė, Verslumas ir pan.).

2. Pagrindinis tikslas ir numatomi studijų rezultatai turėtų labiau atspindėti Tarptautinio verslo ekonomikos ir vadybos studijų programos išskirtinumą. Taip pat labai rekomenduojama skatinti dėstytojus peržiūrėti dalykų aprašus ir juos pakoreguoti, kad studijų rezultatai taptų konkretesni, nuosekliai atitiktų dėstomas temas ir būtų tinkamai išmatuojami. Dėstymo strategijos ir ypač vertinimo metodai taip pat turėtų būti tinkami puikiai suformuluotiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti ir išmatuoti. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad studentų savarankiško darbo krūvis didelis, rekomenduojama didinti seminarų dalį, siekiant užtikrinti

studentams galimybes aptarti ir pritaikyti tai, ko jie išmoko namuose. Taip pat labai rekomenduojama sistemingesnė parama vietoj konsultacijų, teikiamų tik tam tikrais atvejais paprašius studentams.

3. Ekonomikos fakultetui rekomenduojama parengti pagrįstą darbuotojų kaitos artimiausiais metais planą, siekiant didesnės įvairovės, mažinant dėstytojų amžiaus vidurkį pasitelkus naujus intelektualius išteklius, taip užtikrinant tinkamą Tarptautinio verslo ekonomikos ir vadybos studijų programos vykdymą. Taip pat reikėtų sukurti procesą, pagal kurį visi darbuotojai turėtų parengti savo profesinio tobulinimosi planą su konkrečiais tikslais, veiksmais, terminais, pasiekimo lygmens rodikliais, atskaitomybe ir pan. Be to, reikėtų įdiegti tinkamą dėstytojų kompetencijų vertinimo sistemą. Fakultetas taip pat turėtų atkreipti dėmesį į tai, kaip įtraukti daugiau darbuotojų į išvykstantį tarptautinį judumą.

4. Reikėtų parengti ir fakulteto lygiu įdiegti griežtą ir sistemingą kokybės užtikrinimo sistemą, taip pat ją periodiškai peržiūrėti kartu su visais socialiniais dalininkais, nustatyti išsamų veiksmų planą, kuriuo reikėtų vadovautis, ir dokumentuoti šį procesą. Taip pat reikia skubiai kelti studijų programos profilį vykdant veiksmingą rinkodaros strategiją, kad programa taptų labiau žinoma Lietuvoje ir užsienyje. Kalbant apie studijų programos tvarumą, rekomenduojamas nuolatinis kokybės palyginimas (šalies ir tarptautiniu mastu), remiantis tinkamai apibrėžtais kriterijais.

5. Į kokybės užtikrinimo sistemą reikėtų griežtai įtraukti socialinius partnerius ir absolventus, kurie galėtų papildyti studijų programą patirtimi iš atitinkamų sektorių bei paremti jos tolesnį vystymąsi naujausiomis žiniomis ir tendencijomis. Taip pat reikia aktyviau įtraukti studijų programos vykdytojus, studentus ir socialinius partnerius į programos valdymo ir sprendimų priėmimo procesą, įskaitant turinio, numatomų studijų rezultatų formuluočių ir bendrų rezultatų vertinimą. Šiuo atžvilgiu reikėtų praktikoje, o ne tik popieriuje, įdiegti veiksmingą grįžtamojo ryšio teikimo sistemą, sistemingai ir dokumentuotai įtraukiant programos dėstytojus, studentus ir absolventus bei socialinius partnerius, siekiant užtikrinti programos tobulinimo perspektyvą.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)