



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

LIETUVOS SVEIKATOS MOKSLŲ UNIVERSITETO
GYVULININKYSTĖS TECHNOLOGIJA PROGRAMOS
(621D73001)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *ANIMAL HUSBANDRY* (621D73001)
STUDY PROGRAMME
AT LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Gyvulininkystės technologija
Valstybinis kodas	621D73001
Studijų sritis	Biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Žemės ūkio mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1.5 metų), iššęstinė (2.5 metų)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	105 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Žemės ūkio mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997 m. gegužės 19 d., Nr. 565

INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	Animal Husbandry
State code	621D73001
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Agricultural Sciences
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Level of studies	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (1.5 year), Continuous (2.5 year)
Scope of the study programme in credits	105 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master's degree in Agricultural sciences
Date of registration of the study programme	May 19 1997, No. 565

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study programme evaluated is the Master study programme in Animal Husbandry (state code - 621D73001) at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. The programme commenced in 1997 and a national evaluation was carried out in 2007.

The current evaluation report has been produced by an international expert team with the following members: Ulf Magnusson (team leader), Professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Science, Uppsala; Michael Pearson, Principal of Gurteen College, Ireland; Thomas Wittek, Professor at Veterinary University Vienna, Austria; Gediminas Vagonis, Senior specialist at the Ministry of Agriculture, Lithuania and Inga Kalpakovaitė, Bachelor student at Vilnius University, Lithuania.

The evaluation is based on a comprehensive self-evaluation report (and annexed material) produced by a team at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and on findings gathered during a site visit (26 March, 2014) which included a tour through the on-campus teaching facilities and meetings with university, faculty and department management, as well as with teachers, students, alumni and external stakeholders (social partners) invited by the Department of Animal Sciences.

The team acknowledges that external factors such as changes in the employment market, student funding, reorganisation of the academy and university, and other external factors may have had significant influence on the evaluated study programme. However, it is beyond the scope of the team to assess these factors.

Even though the current report deals with the Master programme in Animal Husbandry, the team evaluated two other programmes, a Bachelor in Animal Husbandry and a Master programme in Animal Resources Management. Also, during the site visit a new BSc programme in Animal Science at the university was briefly discussed. The elaborations in this report should be seen in this context.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims and objectives of the programme refer to the requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Science. The programme aims and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) have been described in the Self-evaluation report (SER) and are consistent with the MSc-level: they

comprise general science/research elements as well as applicable professional skills. In the description of the overarching objectives of the programme EU priorities on environmental, food safety and animal welfare are highlighted. It is suggested that these priorities should be more visible in the presentation of the programme and in its aims and ILOs in order to display the faculty's progressive ambitions and coherence with the EU. The consistent analyses of the former students' employment by the faculty is commendable and shows that about half of the students have got an employment within 6 months after graduation (according to the data in the SER) – this good employment rate is interpreted as the programme is adequate for the needs of the sector.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. However, the team had difficulties in finding the programme aims and learning outcomes on the university's website and required substantial assistance from the management staff during the site visit. When found on the Internet they were well defined and clear. The university should thus consider improving the website layout.

2. Curriculum design

The Master study programme has been prepared according to the requirements of the description of general requirements for Master study programmes provided by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science (2010) and is in accordance with the Bologna requirements; it has 105 credits for the 4 semesters. One minor concern is the fact that the ECTS (the required subjects/possible free and electives) are not evenly distributed over the semesters; semester 1: 27/48, Semester 2: 33/39, Semester 3: 15/6 and semester 4: 30/0. Obviously there is some repetition among the electives allowing the students a larger choice of courses. The programme can be studied either as a full-time track or as a continuous (part-time) track. In both tracks there are blocks of several (28) special elective subjects as well as several (10) free choice subjects. This is a very exclusive setup given the low number of students, and it can be questioned whether it is sustainable to maintain the teaching quality. One concern regarding the quality of the increasingly attractive part-time track is the lower number of accessible contact hours with teachers both regarding lectures (41%) and practical teaching (57%) compared to the full-time track. It must be assured that the complementary elements in the part-time track keep equally high quality compared to the lectures and practicals given to the full-time students. Given the high and increasing attractiveness of the part-time track, the faculty may consider further developing this track including a reassurance of the quality aspect.

Overall, the programme content is modern and current and the scope of the programme is judged by the team to be sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes.

The programme is encouraging students to participate in international exchange programs and the management should indeed be acknowledged for this position. However, during the discussions with the students, they claimed it is difficult, or almost impossible, for them to participate in such exchange programs as they have to catch up after they have returned. This is against the ideas behind student exchange programmes and must be changed.

3. Staff

The academic staff engaged in the second level study programme conforms to the general requirements for Master's study programmes (Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania On the Approval of the Description of General Requirements for Master Study Programmes, 3 June, 2010): 45 teachers are teaching in the programme, 22% are professors and 40% - associate professors. In total, 84% of the teachers have a doctor degree. The scientific qualification of the staff is thus impressive, the majority of the staff members are experienced in research and teaching. However, there is a limited international exposure and visibility in terms of international publications (31 articles in reviewed foreign international conference publication during the last five years) and participation in conferences abroad (22 during the last five years).

Given the low number of students the number of teaching staff is high which allows small group teaching and one to one teaching. The excellent staff–student relation is one of the strengths of the programme and according to the students how accessible the teachers are for the students. Further the team positively evaluated the training courses in teaching skills provided and demanded by the University and teachers to ensure high pedagogic quality of the teaching (approved by LUHS Senate decree No. 5-07; Jan 21, 2011).

The majority of teachers are involved in research related to the programme. The age of the teachers is evenly distributed and there is a low staff turnover according to the SER. This stable staffing situation ensures adequate provision of the programme. On the other hand, the limited mobility of staff, though with a few exceptions is an issue. The evaluation team was told by the management and teachers that possibilities for teachers to improve their language competence and international visibility had been put in place recently. More efforts should be put in encouraging teachers to use such possibilities. Further, the attendance of international conferences abroad should be encouraged which could lead to closer partnerships and staff exchanges with other European and international universities and research centers. Motivation

for increased language competences should be encouraged strongly as the language barrier is seen as the reason why the vast majority of the publications from the faculty are in Lithuanian and the programme would, again, benefit from a more international exposure.

Finally, during the discussion with the teachers the evaluation team found that there are different ideas about the specific quality and content of the programme. Some teachers emphasized the practical skills and others - the scientific skills, and they also emphasized their own discipline in front of the programme as such. Efforts are necessary to improve alignment and coherence among the teaching staff.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The self-evaluation report provided comprehensive information about the facilities (lecture hall, class rooms, library, laboratories, and computer rooms). It has been noticed as a positive fact that new facilities are under planning and the University consider it as important to update the current facilities regularly.

During the site visit the team were shown a number of facilities that are used for teaching and research and told that considerable efforts had been taken to improve the facilities during the recent years.

The branch library on the campus offers sufficient study space in the reading rooms. There is a decent number of computers installed and Wifi is available. There is a number of textbooks in Lithuanian and foreign language available (more than 30 000 titles according to the SER). Given the current small number of students the number of books was considered to be absolutely sufficient by the students; however, it might become necessary to increase the number of copies and titles when the number of students increases. We do not necessarily think that it is a disadvantage to have only a small number of Lithuanian textbooks available. This may even encourage students to improve their skills in English or in other foreign languages and thereby having access to a larger range of literature. The library subscribes to close to 30 databases like Science direct, Wiley Online library and Springer link, which enables researches, teachers and students to have access to the majority of the international literature of the field. It might be an option to install a few smaller rooms at the library where students can do independent group work.

The laboratories that were shown to the team (genetic, meat hygiene, poultry nutrition) were very well equipped. The conditions for teaching and research in these facilities are very positively evaluated.

The class-rooms (computer rooms, milking technology, and anatomy) were also very well equipped and can be considered to meet the demands for high quality teaching.

During the meetings with staff and students it was almost exclusively expressed that the facilities are well used and that the working environment is very stimulating.

Summarizing, the evaluation team acknowledges the efforts that has been made to provide state of the art facilities for research and teaching and encourages the University to continue doing so.

Unfortunately, the time period allowed for the evaluation of this course did not allow the expert team to visit the farm animal practical resource units. This makes it not possible for the expert team to make first-hand assessment of these arrangements for the students practices.

It is noted from the Self-Evaluation Report that whilst at present there is a significant farm of 750 ha available to provide the practical elements of the course the university is actively pursuing a strategy to further develop this. The building of an experimental farm for 500 cows with funding from an external company will certainly help at a time in Europe when milk quotas are coming to an end and dairy farming is seen as an area for expansion.

Other areas of the course, particularly pigs, sheep, beef and horses also need investment. However, care must be taken that practical resources to provide education in these commercial areas of farming meets the minimum standard required to ensure the quality of education in these areas of the course. It may be possible that the industry link developed can be replicated with other companies representing the industries of these other species.

Certain modules of the course also require the use of native Lithuanian breeds to use as examples in the preservation of Genetic material. This is adequately resourced by the Centre for the Preservation of Genetic Resources with their stock of ancient type cattle, Žemaitukai horses, Lithuanian white pigs, coarse wooled sheep and local geese.

It is essential that the agreements with farm enterprises being initiated to develop students' practical skills is brought to a successful and rapid conclusion, so that the valuable resource of local industries and farmers is fully utilized to educate students.

5. Study process and student assessment

The admission in LUHS is organized according to Education and Science Ministry, which approves general requirements for Master's study programmes. Admission rules are clear and easily understandable; it is carried out according to LUHS rules for students' admission approved by the Senate. No entrance examination is required. The competitive score is formed as

follows: arithmetic average of overall grade average of the diploma transcript of records and evaluation of bachelor's thesis + the evaluation sum of research activity (up to 2 scores).

Since all students have to fulfil the requirement to write a Master thesis, they have to participate in research activities. The team was informed that these topics are either allocated to the students by teachers or suggested by the students to the teachers. The team had the chance to evaluate the Master theses. The quality of the theses (summaries in English) that were presented to the team was of low quality in respect to structure (e.g. rational, hypothesis, objective, results, conclusion) and statistical analyses. This was in contrast to the high marks that had been given. Measures have to be set to ensure that the theses meet the Bologna levels.

The team assess that the overall organisation of the study process ensure adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes when the concerns expressed in the section on curriculum design (II:2) is taken into account.

Students told the evaluation team that they are asked for feedback on every course. The Faculty utilises the university study information system to obtain regular feedback about the organisation of studies. Students and alumni felt that the results of the surveys are taken into account in improvement of activities and told the evaluation team that they had noticed changes in the way that some teachers taught after the surveys.

In the period of year 2010–2013 only two programme's students travelled abroad for studies or practice. According to the SER, the main reason for this was that there is not sufficient knowledge of foreign languages among the students. At the discussion with the students it was also said that the curriculum did not allow longer stays abroad. This must be improved during the coming years and students should be encouraged to use international exchange programs like ERASMUS since international contacts are of vital importance in scientific world. The curriculum must allow students to go abroad to study for a certain time without having to repeat the study at the University after returning. In this context measures should be taken to ensure a general language competence of all students.

The assessment of the student's performance is adequate and well anchored in the overarching regulations by the Lithuanian University for Health Science Senate, which in turn is pursuant to the recommendations of the European Parliament and Council of 2008. The assessment criteria for subjects/modules are an examination or a passable independent project. The fact that more than half of the graduates are employed within 6 month after graduation in the agricultural sector (see section II:1) is a good indicator of the appreciation programmes performance.

All students are provided with academic or social support according to the Law on Higher Education and Research (30 April 2009 No XI-242). Students have the possibility to live in dormitories, get scholarships and can participate in Student Scientific Society activity or events. The State Studies Foundation is a state budgetary institution, which administers financial support for students. The main functions are administering State-supported loans to students, social grants to students of schools of higher education studying at the first, second or continuous study levels.

6. Programme management

The efficiency of marketing and promoting the programme has to be improved since there is a dramatic drop in the number of full-time students from 64 to 13 over the last five years. This is the responsibility of the management of the programme - without recruiting students the viability of the programme is questionable. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the programme management to make sure that the recommendations regarding the structures for stakeholder contacts, programme monitoring and quality assurance from the last evaluation seven years ago are formalized and in place as soon as possible.

Student and graduate feedback should be used more extensively in the future and should have major impact on the programme. During the on-site visit it became clear that the contact with the stakeholders is based on personal contact between the university teachers and representatives of industry or governmental bodies. There is room for a more formalized involvement of the stakeholders in the over-arching shaping and management of the programme. The stakeholders invited to meet the evaluation team all witnessed about the importance of the programme and expressed their strong support for the programme. This is valuable asset for the programme management.

In the SER extensive descriptions of the internal quality assurance processes and programme monitoring are given. However, following the discussions with the students and staff, these measures seemed not to be as structured and formalised as described. They were more informal and similar to the contacts with the stakeholders. This is interpreted by the team as the programme management is in a transition phase. This transition to implement the recommendations from the 2007 evaluation is supported by the expert team. The responsibility for monitoring and implementation of the programme is given to the study programme committee comprising teachers, students and a representative from the employers according to the SER. The evaluation team would suggest that the faculty consider assigning one teacher as programme director that has an executive role and acts under the Study programme committee.

For future evaluations the programme management is advised to prepare a more concisely and clearly written SER. Such an improvement should include an introductory overview and avoid lengthy repetitions.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure coherent views and ideas among all staff regarding the programme's balance between practical skills and scientific ditto as well as between disciplines.
2. Implement recommendations from last review.
3. Ensure the international mobility of students and teachers.
4. Formalize the influence of stakeholders (social partners) on the programme.
5. Improve the scientific quality of the theses.
6. Consider the possibility to change the programme to an entirely continuous (part-time) and internationally high quality programme or make substantial efforts to get the full-time students back.

IV. SUMMARY

The main positive quality aspects of the programme are the good facilities, the qualifications of the teachers and their accessibility for the students and the programme's strong support from stakeholders (social partners).

The weakest quality aspects observed is the slow pace of implementing the recommendations from the former review, a fragmented view and understanding among the teachers about the goal of the programme, the limited progression in scientific quality of the theses compared with from the BSc-level and the poor international exposure to and visibility in the international academic community.

Thorough analysis must be made regarding the apparent switch from full-time to part-time (continuous) students over the last year and ensure that the part-time studies meet "Bologna-academic" standards. Critical elements in ensuring this are the improved quality of theses and sufficient contact hours with teachers in practical. This switch is both a threat and a possibility and the future outcome is largely in the hands of the university.

Internationalization of the course for both staff and students need to develop further so that the courses, students and staff have greater international visibility and opportunities. This will entail

ensuring that the language skills of all concerned continue to develop, that visits abroad are encouraged for all concerned and that the visit is not to their detriment on return to Kaunas.

A more coherent and integrated structure of course management needs to be introduced so that in future the aims and objectives of the course are embraced by all staff and responsibility for overall management of the programme is clearly identified. Overall, this programme has a great potential for the future given the needs and demands for Lithuania in the agricultural sector.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Animal husbandry* (state code – 621D73001) at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.

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

Michael Pearson

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

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**LIETUVOS SVEIKATOS MOKSLŲ UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *GYVULININKYSTĖS TECHNOLOGIJA* (VALSTYBINIS
KODAS – 621D73001) 2014-05-02 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-209
IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Lietuvos sveikatos mokslų universiteto studijų programa *Gyvulininkystės technologija* (valstybinis kodas – 621D73001) vertinama **teigiamai**.

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

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Pagrindiniai teigiami programos kokybės aspektai yra geri materialieji ištekliai, dėstytojų kvalifikacija, jų prieinamumas studentams ir tvirta socialinių dalininkų (socialinių partnerių) parama programai.

Silpniausi programos kokybės aspektai yra lėtas ankstesnio vertinimo rekomendacijų įgyvendinimas, skirtingas dėstytojų požiūris ir programos tikslo suvokimas, nedidelė pažanga

siekiant mokslinės baigiamųjų darbų kokybės palyginti su bakalauro studijų programa, silpni tarptautiniai ryšiai ir nedidelis žinomumas tarptautinėje akademinėje bendruomenėje.

Būtina kruopščiai ištirti akivaizdų studentų perėjimą nuo nuolatinių prie iššestinių studijų praeitais metais ir užtikrinti, kad iššestinės studijos atitiktų Bolonijos akademinis standartus. Svarbiausi dalykai, kuriuos reikia tam užtikrinti, yra baigiamųjų darbų kokybė ir pakankamas kontaktinių valandų skaičius su praktikos dėstytojais. Šis perėjimas yra ir grėsmė, ir galimybė, o būsimi rezultatai daugiausia priklauso nuo paties universiteto.

Reikia ir toliau didinti šios programos dėstytojų ir studentų tarptautiškumą, nes taip didinamas programų, studentų ir dėstytojų tarptautinis matomumas ir galimybės. Tam tikslui reikės užtikrinti, kad būtų toliau gerinami visų susijusių asmenų užsienio kalbų įgūdžiai, kad visi susijusieji būtų skatinami vykti į vizitus užsienyje, ir kad studentų išvykimas nebūtų nuostolingas jiems grįžus į Kauną.

Būtina diegti darnesnę ir integralesnę programos valdymo struktūrą, kad ateityje visi dėstytojai stengtųsi įgyvendinti programos tikslus bei uždavinius ir būtų aiškiai nustatyta atsakomybė už bendrą programos vadybą. Apskritai ši programa yra labai perspektyvi, turint omenyje Lietuvos žemės ūkio sektoriaus poreikius.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Užtikrinti darnų visų darbuotojų požiūrį ir supratimą apie programos praktinių ir mokslinių įgūdžių santykį, taip pat disciplinų tarpusavio santykį.
2. Įgyvendinti paskutiniojo vertinimo rekomendacijas.
3. Užtikrinti studentų ir dėstytojų tarptautinį judumą.
4. Įforminti socialinių dalininkų (socialinių partnerių) dalyvavimą programos vadybos procese.
5. Gerinti baigiamųjų darbų mokslinę kokybę.
6. Apsvarstyti galimybę pakeisti programą, kad ji taptų visiškai iššestinė, aukštos kokybės tarptautinė programa, arba labai pasistengti susigrąžinti nuolatinių studijų studentus.

<...>

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

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)

¹ Žin., 2002, Nr.37-1341.