



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Šiaulių universiteto

STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *LITERATŪROLOGIJA (621Q20007)*

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *LITERARY SCIENCE (621Q20007)***

STUDY PROGRAMME

at Šiauliai University

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Literatūrologija
Valstybinis kodas	621Q20007
Studijų sritis	Humanitariniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Literatūrologija
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Literatūrologijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19, Nr. 565

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Literary science
State code	621Q20005
Study area	Humanities studies
Study field	Literary science
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (2)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Literary Science
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-19, No. 565

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

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

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative, such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

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

1.2. General

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	Marketing materials (booklets, leaflets)
2.	Guidelines for master thesis preparation

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

This programme is offered by the Department of Literature History and Theory, which itself is part of the Humanities Faculty of Šiauliai University. The University offers degrees in the three

cycles of university education: undergraduate, master, and doctoral. The Humanities Faculty is one of six Faculties at the University. The first admissions to this programme were in 1997, although the programme includes elements of literary study that stretch back to predecessor programmes from the Šiauliai Pedagogical Institute.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was formed according to the *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-55 of Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to the HEI was conducted by the team on 17/05/2016.

- 1. Dr. Irina Moore (team leader), University of Wolverhampton, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics, United Kingdom.**
- 2. Prof. Susana Onega Jaén, Professor of English Literature, University of Zaragoza, Spain.**
- 3. Prof. Elżbieta Skibińska-Cieńska, Professor of Translation Studies & Comparative Linguistics, University of Wrocław, Poland.**
- 4. Mr. Andrius Ledas, students' representative, Vilnius University, Lithuania.**

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

In the SER the aims and learning outcomes of the programme are clearly stated and defined. These objectives are quite general and there is no mention of the concrete competences required to achieve the aims of the programme (specific knowledge, practical skills, cognitive skills and transferrable skills). Furthermore, the Team found a discrepancy between what was written in the report and what was said by members of the programme staff and students during the meetings. For example, when members of staff were asked to describe the aims and learning outcomes in more detail, the following answer was provided: the aim is to achieve “deep knowledge and interdisciplinarity”. No attempt was made to illustrate and support this claim despite the Team’s requests to give examples of what competences were developed by the programme in order to achieve its learning outcomes. Evidence gathered by the Team from the written modules descriptions provided in the SER and on-line confirmed our impression that the aims and outcomes were too generally defined.

The ways in which the programme provides professional expertise according to the needs of the labour market remains unclear. In the SER there was no indication of the specific demands for jobs in Lithuania requiring the expertise provided by the programme. The response provided in point 17 about the “Spheres of professional activities” *doctoral studies in Literary Science, teaching literature in institutions of higher education, work in various research, cultural, artistic and educational institutions, demanding specialists with deep and universal*

knowledge in humanities and literature; teaching at school (as a teacher of Lithuanian or any other language depending on the Major subject in Bachelor studies), work in cultural media, artistic activities and work in cultural projects (SER, p. 9) for which the master students are trained is extremely general. The Team would have appreciated additional documentation on the demands of the labour market in the mentioned spheres at present and its evolution in the last five years, much more so since in point 24 it is stated that the changes that have already taken place were determined, among other factors, by “changes in the labour market” (SER, p. 12). During the meeting with Administration, it was mentioned that there exists a recently formed university wide Market Research Group, which collects data on labour market research. However, all data gathered so far is very general and approximate (country wide), not region specific. The department itself does not conduct any market research or collect data on their graduates’ destinations.

The meeting with social partners and former students indicated that there is a positive, though informal collaboration between the university and various representatives of the socio-cultural and political institutions. But the jobs available to the former students were not directly related to the expertise provided by the Master programme, with the only exception of the job of adapting narrative fictions for stage productions. Some of the jobs offered seemed more suitable for journalists. The question posed about possible professional conflict with journalism was not adequately answered. One of the employers stated that often the employees have both qualifications, the Master in Literary Science and a Degree in Journalism. Of the four former students present, two were out of job and another expecting to get one in the near future. Neither of them had any plans of writing a doctoral thesis. This reinforced the impression gathered from the SER that the MA Programme does not attract a significant number of students with a research profile. As stated in the SER, only 2 out of 25 of the graduates have continued to a PhD (three more graduates of the programme of the previous years are also studying on a doctoral course) (SER, p. 61). The rules of the transfer or admission into the 3rd cycle doctoral studies was neither described in the SER nor provided during the meetings.

The MA programme has been devised to meet the requirement of the Lithuanian Law on Science and Studies. It seems clear that the MA takes up where the Lithuanian BA in *Literary Science* ends. According to the SER, the learning outcomes are reviewed twice a year (SER, p. 7) by a Committee appointed for the purpose of monitoring the study programme (SER, p. 32). This Committee consists of staff members, Master students and social shareholders. Although it is stated that “The members of the Committee together with the staff of the department responsible for the study programme perform an internal assessment of the programme” (SER, p. 32), there is no concrete evidence of the role and weight of the staff and the form of collaboration with the Committee in the revision and improvement of the learning outcomes of the MA programme.

According to the SER, “the majority of the MA students consist of the ŠU HF Bachelor graduates in Philology” (SER, p. 24). But students from other areas can also register in the Programme, provided that they pass “exams in the following subjects during the studies: Introduction to the Literary Science, Theory of Literature, General History of Literature” (SER, p. 24). During the interview the staff mentioned these requirements as “proficiency” exams, but did not provide concrete information about the form, contents, depth, or assessment system used in them. In the section of the SER entitled “Principles of assessment of student achievements system” (SER, pp. 28-30), it is stated that the evaluation of the students combines the

“cumulative evaluation of knowledge and achievements” (SER, p. 28) carried out along the course with a final exam. But the assessment criteria are neither common to all subjects nor predetermined: “At the beginning of each semester the teacher determines the impact of each evaluation on the final assessment and informs the students about it. Assessment criteria are linked to the subject and study programme learning outcomes. Both assessment criteria and forms of accounting can be found on the data bases, while concrete evaluation criteria are described in each subject descriptor” (SER, p. 28). The Team expected the programme staff to provide concrete information about this, but the answers given were very general. There was no indication of clear outcomes, skills or depth. When asked about the strengths of the programme, a member of the staff said that it simply was the product of “a very old tradition”.

While the programme aims and learning outcomes are publicly accessible and contain elements of academic requirements consistent with the MA level, they are rather vague. In the SER, the aims are not set in a specific time frame, there is no indication either of the specific skills the students will acquire or what specific literary processes will be analysed. The Team hoped that programme staff would be able to clarify and specify these points during the meeting. However, the explanations given during the meeting were equally generalist. This general lack of concrete information and specificity was illustrated by the fact that the information about the actual contents of the programme is provided orally on the first day of lectures and that the students are not provided with written (or on-line) Module Guides specifying their weekly lecture plans and tasks. On the strength of this evidence, the Team concluded that there is a general lack of specificity as well as a discrepancy between what is stated in the SER in point 2.1. “Aims and learning outcomes of the programme” (SER, pp. 6-9) and the actual staff thoughts and practices on these issues. This point is particularly noteworthy as the requirement for specific aims and outcomes was a recommendation of the 2012 report. Another important recommendation of the former Committee that has remained unfulfilled was that the programme be revised and streamlined. The present Team wholly agrees with this view.

The impression given in the SER is that the title of the programme “Literary Science”, was some form of mistranslation from the Lithuanian. This was confirmed during the meeting when the staff were asked to explain the reasons for the choice of this title. The current title seems to be too general and barely reflects the contents of the programme, when compared with the descriptions of the modules. Also, it bears undesirable associations with the “scientific turn” in literary theory that took place in the 1960s, thus, enhancing the impression gathered from the titles of the modules that the Master does not reflect the latest achievements in literary criticism and theory. Given the characteristics of the MA, the Team would recommend the adoption of a title containing the words “comparative literatures” in it.

The duration of the programme is 2 years. The curriculum consists of compulsory subjects set by the Department of Literature History and Theory of ŠU HF (102 credits, 85% of the programme), alternative subjects set by the Department of Literature History and Theory of ŠU HF and chosen by the students (18 credits, 15% of the programme) and a Master’s Thesis. The first three semesters of the programme consist of 5 subjects each, which accounts for 30 credits (800 h). Four of the subjects are compulsory and one is elective. The fourth semester is exclusively allocated for writing the Master Thesis. The hours of the three semesters include classroom and independent studies. During the two years, the lectures account for 312 hours, which is 9.75%; practical workshops (seminars) – 312 h or 9.75%; consultancies are allocated 164 h or 5.125%, and independent study is 2,412 h or 75.375%. Thus, during the course of

studies the students work independently for more than 70% of the time. The rigidity of this structure shows that the possibility of specialising in different philologies (Lithuanian, French, German or English) is more theoretical than practical; and that the students are burdened with the maximum number of subjects allowed by the Lithuanian Law on Science and Studies. When the staff was asked why they had decided to have five courses in each semester (instead of three or four), the answer given was very general and inconcrete. No efforts were made to explain why the optionality is reduced to just one course out of five, or why the same credits are given for subjects with very different contents.

While the programme aims and learning outcomes are publicly accessible, they are rather vague and there seems to be discrepancy between the objectives of the programme, as stated in the section on “Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Programme”, and those listed in the section “Programme composition logic”.

For example, there are five objectives (“Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Programme”):

- 1) to acquire comprehensive and conceptual specialised knowledge and skills in the sphere of Literary Science [...]; 2) to develop professional aesthetic taste in literature, creative-critical thinking and a special need to be interested in Literary Science, literature verbal culture and other forms of art and culture, by conveying their interaction as a necessary precondition for further professional development and ability for life-long-learning; 3) to carry out research corresponding to master’s study level by implementing a scientific dialogue with other researchers, to acquaint academic community and society at large with the research outcomes; 4) to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills, enabling to carry out interdisciplinary research in Literary Science by showing the strengths and limitations of an interdisciplinary research; 5) to acquire a possibility to choose third level (doctoral) studies. (SER, p.6).

However, in the “Programme composition logic”, we find seven instead of five objectives:

- 1) to prepare much higher qualified specialists in Literary Science (in comparison with those trained on Bachelor degree level); 2) to develop abilities to analyse and critically evaluate in a professional way literary and verbal culture texts of different periods and value; 3) to deepen and expand the knowledge about the newest literary theories, important for the modern science and culture, to model a qualitatively higher application of these theories in the perception of literary and other cultural texts in the academic and professional environment; 4) to develop abilities for carrying out interdisciplinary research of literary and verbal culture discourses; 5) to shape social, philosophical, ethical, religious and other fields of knowledge of literature and culture; 6) to develop literary and aesthetic taste of professionals and the ability to involve it in the academic, research, educational, cultural and other activities; 7) to develop independent research and research ideas’ development skills and to make basis for possible doctoral studies in Literary Science (or some similar ones) (SER, p.13).

This discrepancy was enhanced by the vagueness of the answers given by the staff on this matter. For example, asked whether the programme developed out of a particular critical position, a member of staff responded that all the courses were based on “intertextuality”. Asked

to illustrate this answer, it became evident that the notion of intertextuality handled by the staff was perfunctory, thus confirming the general impression that the aims and learning outcomes of programme are excessively general.

The titles of the subjects suggest that the programme is arranged according to the principles of Literary History, with a main focus on canonical fiction and poetry. However, although all the subjects have the same number of credits, the contents of the subjects and/or modules are quite varied. Most of them are extremely general. For example: Cultural Semiotics; Textual Criticism; Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature; Narratology; Problems of Literary Theory, etc.; while others are potentially misleading. For example: Franz Kafka and the Process of the World Literature. On page 12 it is stated that this module “has denominators of both modern literature and interdisciplinary comparative studies (literature and cinema)”. The inclusion of cinema is not reflected in the title. It might be useful to explain the reasons for this inclusion and the rationale behind the course. Other titles that seem to suggest their delving into themes outside the stated aims of the programme are, for example: Literature and Communication; Interaction between Literature and Art: Intermedial Aspects. The variety of titles and contents suggests that they aspire to include themes belonging to such areas as Journalism, Fine Arts, or Film Studies. If this is so, it should be explained and added to the aims of the programme. This type of confusion could be avoided if each module included a descriptor listing the main topics within it and a brief comment on the items it covers not only by itself, but also in relation to the other modules. Indeed, it would be necessary to explain the logic behind the choice of authors and works and why the critical approaches taught in the MA do not include recent developments of classical approaches or new critical perspectives generated during the late twentieth- and twenty-first centuries.

In summary, the aims of the programme do contain elements of academic requirements consistent with the MA level. However, these aims are not set in a concrete timeframe, there is no clear indication of the specific skills to be acquired by the students, or of what specific literary processes will be analysed, and the logic behind the choice of the diverse literary subjects and critical approaches evinces a general lack of coordination. The evaluation team in 2012 recommended the programme aims and learning outcomes, and the programme in general to be narrowed down, however, the programme is still very general. The present evaluation Team must repeat this recommendation and suggest that the title, contents and theoretical outlook of the Master programme be reconsidered and updated with a view to ensuring that the name, learning outcomes, contents and qualification offered agree with each other.

Similarly, the contents of the programme is consistent with the level of studies required by the regulating Law. However, on the evidence gathered during the visit (including the resources of the library), it became apparent that the programme is rather outdated. For example, there is no explanation about the choice of authors and works, and the modules on critical approaches are limited in number (“Narratology”, “The History of Western Aesthetic Thought: the Tradition of Hermeneutics”), and focused from a historicist perspective. No attempt has been made to teach some of the main critical approaches developed in the last 40 years. Standard reference books, such as Patricia Waugh, ed. *Literary Theory and Criticism. An Oxford Guide* (Oxford UP. 2006), a book which includes seminal articles on every type of critical approach from Plato to Trauma Studies, could give students a more accurate idea of the range of relevant and recent critical approaches available for the scholarly analysis of literature.

2.2. Curriculum design

Since 1 September 2011, programme in Literary Science consists of 120 credits and has a duration of 2 years. The curriculum consists of compulsory subjects (102 credits, 85% of the programme), alternative subjects (18 credits, 15% of the programme), and a Master's Thesis. The modules, structured in four semesters, seem to be arranged according to the principles of literary history. The list of "main publications necessary for the implementation of the *Literary Science* study programme" included in the SER (p. 23) shows that most of the bibliographical resources are read in Lithuanian and that those in other languages theoretically employed in the MA (French, English, German) are few and outdated. This impression was confirmed by the visit to the library. On the whole, the programme does not reflect the latest achievements in the following respects:

1. The approach to the literary texts is provided in the form of survey courses arranged according to the principles of Literary History and taking for granted, for example, a clear-cut distinction of gender and mode. This means that the programme does not take into consideration recent research on, for example, hybrid, or limit-case narratives that set the traditional generic boundaries into question, such as (pseudo)autobiographical or testimonial narratives.
2. The chronology of the literary corpus does not seem to follow a logical pattern, moving from the more general to the more specific; giving the same importance to the various literatures under study; and reaching the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries.
3. Similarly, there is no explanation for the choice of the critical approaches taught. This choice seems excessively limited and outdated as it does not seem to include the findings of, for example, the various poststructuralisms, recent developments in postcolonial studies, or the critical approaches stemming out of the "ethical turn" in the 1980s, such as trauma studies, memory studies, the theory of resilience, or ecocriticism. And although the feminisms are mentioned, their presence in the programme seems merely testimonial.

As a general consideration, it might be necessary to ensure that the items covered by each module reach the present both in the choice of writers and works, and include more recent critical perspectives than those employed to analyse them. This should be reflected in a short list of compulsory and further readings to be included in the description of each module.

The SER states that (Section 2.2., pp. 20-23) the programme is compliant with the appropriate Orders of the Minister of Education and Science and the Law on Science and Studies. After detailed analysis of the SER, the Team of experts agrees with this statement. However, there are important elements of the curriculum which are missing, for example, the descriptors (student handbooks), weekly assignments and list of compulsory and additional readings of each module. Another aspect that would require improvement is the contents of the modules: although they all have the same number of credits, some seem to be significantly more intense than others. During the visit, the Team did not receive a concrete answer concerning the process and methods for calculating the workload of students as the only answer was that "it depends on the module".

The Team of the 2012 report recommended that the programme should focus in more depth on some of the subject contents so as to comply with the legal requirements of second

cycle studies. And they specified that this should be done avoiding the overlapping of different subjects, emphasising student research activities, and putting more emphasis on research methodology. These recommendations have not been fulfilled. The contents of the programme continues to require significant improvement: the subjects and critical approaches of the programme should be updated in order to reflect the state of the art in the various literary fields and in the field of literary criticism and theory. The bibliography should be updated with the inclusion of seminal books on the field and its teachings included in the curriculum of the programme, which should be streamlined and redesigned in order to avoid gaps and overlaps.

While the modules are distributed evenly throughout the programme, some modules seem to be significantly more intense than others. Although all the subjects have the same number of credits, they are strikingly heterogeneous in their specificity, width, period and approach. Compare, for example, “The History of Western Aesthetic Thought: the Tradition of Hermeneutics”, which is a survey course running all the spectrum from Plato to the present, with “Multicultural American Literature of 20th c.”, which is a course on a concrete literary movement in twentieth-century US literature. To the question posed to the staff during the interview: “How do you calculate the study load?” The answer given was: “It depends on the subject. There is more or less practice according to the subject”. Another problem that becomes apparent from the titles is the absence of an overall plan to coordinate the various subjects and topics sequentially and thematically, so as to avoid gaps and overlaps. For example, it might be necessary to explain how “Modernist Prose of the 20th c.: the Novel and the Novelette”, “Franz Kafka and the Process of the World Literature” and “The Theory of Modernist Trends in Western European Aesthetics” are coordinated with each other. Or also why there are three subjects on Modernist topics and no subjects on postmodernist literature or the literature of the twenty-first century.

During the meeting with staff a question was posed about how they coordinated the various subjects sequentially as well as thematically. The only answer provided was that “it depends on the module”. This would suggest that there is no general plan and overall aim behind the choice and number of subjects, but simply an addition of courses dealing with various aspects of different philologies selected according to the personal interests of the staff members. Further, on the evidence gathered during the visit (including the resources of the library), it seems that both the critical approaches and the literatures studied in the programme do not reach the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Overall, it seems that the contents of the programme require significant improvement in the form of coordination, streamlining and updating. The design of the programme would require a general rethinking to ensure that the various subjects that form it follow logical progression and increasing complexity of the contents, and that its scope is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. The evaluation team in 2012 recommended the programme aims and learning outcomes, and the programme in general to be narrowed down. However, these recommendations have not been taken into consideration to date. The current Team’s recommendation is that the items covered by each module reach the present both in the choice of writers and works and in the critical and theoretical approaches employed to analyse them and that the programme as a whole be streamlined accordingly.

2.3. Teaching staff

The composition of the staff of the programme and their level of qualifications meet the requirements of the Order of the Minister of Education and Science “the Approval of the Descriptor of General Requirements for Master Study Programmes” (3 June 2010, No. V-826) Article 19 of Section III “Requirements for Master’s Study Programmes”, as evidenced by the SER.

All faculty members are doctors and have research experience according to their age and status. The qualifications therefore are suitable. They form a solid multidisciplinary group that has managed to design a master programme in comparative literatures for students coming from different Philologies. This is an asset in itself. Still, the authors of the SER note the difficulty of attracting external long-term secondments to round off the programme (SER, p. 21).

The fact that most of their publications are written in Lithuanian, limits the potential impact of their research activity. Therefore, the Team would recommend the staff to publish in international peer-reviewed academic journals outside of Lithuania and publishers with world-wide distribution, to participate in national and international competitive research projects and international conferences.

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. In fact, given the rather low, and decreasing number of Master students (from 10 to 5 at present, according to the SER, p. 8), the number of staff members outweighs that of students as, according to the SER, the average of staff members delivering full-time studies is 9 (SER, p. 18).

According to the SER, between 2010/09/01 and 2015/01/30, the programme *Literary Science* was delivered by 14 staff members (including those delivering electives and visiting professors). In 2010–2011, 9 staff members were employed by the programme *Literary Science*: 2 professors, 6 associate professors, and 1 lecturer with a PhD. In 2014-2015, the programme was delivered by 9 staff members: 4 professors, 3 associate professors and 2 lecturers with a PhD (pp. 17-18). Of these, 44.4 % of the staff were professors, 33.3 % associate professors, and 22.2 % lecturers with a PhD (p. 16). The variations in the composition of the staff are attributed in the SER to “alternatives of the study programme (the same staff member can teach both compulsory and an elective subject in the same academic year)” and the fact that “some staff members can teach only an elective subject, which increases the number of staff” and that the programme also has “visiting lecturers from other institutions” (p. 18). Another factor that contributed to the change of staff members between 2010 and 2015 was the retirement of one staff member and the incorporation of new ones (p. 19). For all this stability, the SER considers as one of the “Weaknesses of the programme” that it “should have more visiting staff from abroad” (p. 16); and posits as one of the “Foreseen development actions in the area”, the possibility of inviting “visiting lecturers, who carry out interdisciplinary research, from abroad more actively and efficiently to deliver classes for Master students by using Erasmus and other programmes” (p. 16).

While the composition of the staff is stable enough to ensure an adequate provision for the programme, and while it is desirable to include visiting scholars in the programme, the mention of the Erasmus staff exchange programme as a possible source of incorporation to the programme suggests that it might be necessary to ensure that the changes brought about by these guest lecturers do not affect the contents of the programme: the teachers can change but the accredited structure, contents and general aims of the programme should remain unchanged in a fundamental way. This principle should be kept even in the case of the courses or lectures given by visiting scholars. In the 2012 report, the Team already saw the potential danger of this

foreseen development, when they recommended the inclusion of teachers from other faculties or researchers and scientists from other disciplines, but without interfering with the main aim of the programme.

During the meeting with the staff it became evident that conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff is a university wide problem. The teaching load of the staff members is too high, therefore, they are forced to carry out their research activities mostly during their free time. There is the possibility of applying for sabbatical leave, of up to a year, but it is not paid by the university. The most common form of staff mobility is that provided by the Erasmus programme. The most common source of financing is the Lithuanian Research Council. Nevertheless, the teaching staff do manage to produce research, and it would do better if they are given proper conditions. It seems that the system of allocating research time and resources to staff is rather haphazard and requires a university-wide change. On the evidence provided both by the SER and the staff interview, there appeared to be little or no provision for staff development internally, and no formal system of staff appraisals. Also, there seemed to be no formal process across the University for the sharing of good practice.

In section 32 of the SER, “Description of the staff activities”, it is stated that the staff produce monographs, collections of articles, teaching materials, research publications and reviews, deliver papers in international and national conferences, and participate in various other research activities (p. 17). And this assertion is illustrated with a list of publications. This evidence allowed the Team to conclude that relation between the research and the teaching carried out by the staff members is adequate on the whole. Still, the general impression is that there is a tendency to publish in Lithuanian, not only by experts in Lithuanian Philology but also by those specialised in other modern Philologies, and to limit their stays abroad to participation in conferences and Erasmus staff exchanges. The fact that most of their publications are written in Lithuanian, limits the potential impact of their research activity. Therefore, the Team would recommend the staff to publish in international peer-reviewed academic journals outside of Lithuania and publishers with world-wide distribution and to participate in national and international competitive research projects and international conferences. It might be useful to increase participation in international research activities and provide more information about participation in competitive research projects. Also, the staff would benefit from membership of international associations where they could get in contact with specialists in their fields on a world-wide basis.

Although in the SER, it is stated that “Teachers up-date their qualifications by carrying out research, by participating in projects (“National Program for Expanding Lithuanian Studies for Years 2009–2015)” (p. 39), in fact, in the interview, only a member of the staff said that he had participated in one. No staff member has ever participated in international projects.

The staff lack any form of institutional support from the university (help to secure research project funding, development funds, linguistic issues, etc.). The Team’s recommendation, therefore, is that the university helps staff members to develop their various research activities in a wider international context. It seems that the question of publishing in English, or in Lithuanian in international journals of comparative literature and other issues has not been addressed at university level. Even if the research is about Lithuanian Studies, it has an international potential that should be explored.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

As stated in the institutional Self Evaluation Report, the Department of Literary History and Theory has ample material resources for the implementation of the Master's Study Programme Literary Science. The Department is allocated a number of teaching rooms from the faculty's pool of 28 classrooms (capacity 842 seats). All classrooms were renovated in 2013 and satisfy the standards outlined in the University Safety Regulations. Thirteen of the classrooms have stationary multimedia equipment, and, in addition, there are three mobile multimedia sets (SER, p. 21). During the site visit the Team had an opportunity to see a number of teaching and seminar rooms, which were well furnished, sufficiently equipped in terms of IT resources and were adequate in size for the number of students enrolled on the MA course.

However, the Team did not have a chance to see a teaching session on the evaluated MA programme. In our discussions with staff and students it became apparent that the multimedia resources available in the classrooms are used only occasionally and are not effectively utilised. Although the students were very complimentary about the video conferencing facilities in the library and a number of video conferencing calls with an American professor, they noted that the majority of seminars are almost entirely based on oral discussions and presentations and lectures are conducted in a traditional manner. Our discussion with staff revealed that there are no formally organised and presented e-learning resources and tasks supporting lectures and seminars that could be conducive to a more effective use of available resources. For example, our requests to see detailed weekly lectures/seminars plans and tasks resulted in a demonstration of module descriptions given in the SER and on-line. These do not contain any evidence of recommended electronic interactive resources, tasks or sessions designed to use multimedia equipment. Integration of interactive tasks and resources into the weekly programmes and their availability on-line could be recommended as an important step towards modernisation of the programme and effective comprehensive use of available resources.

There seem to be no concerns in terms of the adequacy and suitability of the premises for the delivery of the programme. The building is in very good condition and its telecommunication systems are in good working order.

The SER also mentions that the Faculty hosts a number of cultural centres (e.g. The Balts Centre, American and British Studies Centre, French Cultural Centre, Russian Language and Culture Centre, etc.), which have reading rooms with a wide variety of literary sources in different languages (SER, p. 21). During our tour of the building the Team was shown the Russian Language and Culture Centre, which was well equipped and stocked with recent books and journals. During our discussion with students it was mentioned that they find such resources useful and helpful if particular linguistic and cultural sources are required.

It is evident from the SER that computer equipment and other facilities related to e-learning are adequate and accessible to staff and students. For example, the faculty has two rooms with twenty PC stations, which are available for students' self-study, when they are not used for teaching. E-mail and internet access is available throughout the university premises, including student accommodation, therefore, students and staff are able to use their own laptops and mobile devices in addition to the stationary computer equipment. All university computers are connected to the university library, and offer distance access to the library databases for staff

and students. Photocopying facilities are available on several floors of the library and are payable at source.

In terms of self-study time, there appears to be no problem with student access to various resources, such as library and computer equipped classrooms. There is also a Students' Corner specifically provided for self-study and relaxation.

It is evident from the SER that the ŠU Library has diverse services in terms of different necessary e-holdings and book collections. The additional information sheet provided in 2016 gives further evidence of recent changes and additions to the library and departmental holdings. For example, it states, that the ŠU Library has been supplemented by new funds, such as over 300 books and a unique collection of publications in Lithuanian studies from the Library of Kent University (USA) and 12 books in English and 4 in Lithuanian donated by professor Ginutis Procuta from the University of Ottawa, also by books presented by K.Almen, a writer (130 copies in English and Lithuanian) (Changes of Information document, p. 1). The Team had an opportunity to see the new acquisitions and donations during their tour of the department and library. However, there was no evidence provided on how these additions match the programme's curriculum and aims. The new books have not yet been incorporated into the programme's reading lists.

The University library has good access to various academic databases. As stated in the SER, it subscribes to over 30 scientific databases, 15 of these are dedicated to Humanities and Social Sciences, and 7 are highlighted as particularly useful for the programme (SER, p. 23). This is a very valuable resource, but the SER does not indicate whether students and staff make active use of these databases. During our meeting the students were able to name only two databases, namely EBSCO and the Lithuanian database, and were not aware of the 5 other particularly useful databases highlighted in the SER.

Our visit to the library indicated that most of the bibliographical resources available in the literature section were in Lithuanian and on subjects such as Lithuanian literature and culture, with few and fairly old resources on other literatures and cultures normally taught on this type the Master's programme. We tried to conduct a search in the library for particular books considered to be core texts for this study field, but were unsuccessful in locating either hard or soft copies in the library collection. For example, although the programme puts a strong emphasis on Gérard Genette, the only book mentioned in the general bibliography of the SER (p. 23) is *Figures III*, first published in 1972. This book is considered to be the founding source of the branch of French structuralisms known as "Narratology", but not the only one published in the field since. This suggests that the programme does not take into consideration the important developments of Narratology into various fields that have taken place in the last 40 years. Moreover, when the librarian was asked to look for Gérard Genette in the database of the library, only a copy of this book in English (*Narrative Discourse*) and another, less relevant book were found. During the meeting with staff, it seemed that they were not entirely aware of the leading world theoreticians of intertextuality, although a book by a prominent local scholar Irina Melnikova was mentioned. For all the alleged centrality of intertextuality as the all-encompassing theoretical framework of the Master's Programme, Genette's contribution to the debate on it, *Palimpsests* (1982), was not found and neither were any books by Julia Kristeva, who coined the very term "intertextuality".

The SER also emphasises the importance of e-books for Literary Science studies. These are available on Science Direct, Reference Library, SciVerse (Science Direct), Springer LINK,

Taylor & Francis data bases (SER, p. 22). Having inspected the reading lists for various modules, the Team found only a handful of e-books and e-articles among the recommended titles. Thus, the team had to conclude that the contents of the programme and the reading lists do not reflect the latest achievements in the field and the department does not make good use of the facilities granted by the library.

The additional Information Sheet indicates a positive development in promoting the use of databases via special seminars (as part of the module “Master Thesis Seminar”) on databases, electronic journals, bibliography management software RefWorks at ŠU Library. The Team did not see any evidence of whether the five seminars offered so far were effective and useful. There was no formal student feedback collected. In fact, the students commented on the need for such seminars and seemed to be unaware of their existence. It is the view of the Team that such training should be made a permanent part of the Master Thesis Seminar and training tasks on the use of various data bases are available on-line and accessible to students, who are unable to attend the on-premises sessions. The use of the databases should also be encouraged via specifically designed tasks during lectures and seminars (e.g. interactive use in group work outside classroom, during the lectures, seminars, etc.). This will also encourage a more effective use of the facilities mentioned earlier.

It is somewhat puzzling to read in the additional Information Sheet, that one of the actions to increase the use of the databases by students is the requirement to include at least two references from databases in “Bachelor and Master” theses. The Team did not get a clear answer as to why only two references are recommended, while seven databases were highlighted as the most valuable for the programme in the SER. Encouraging students and lecturers alike to have a more active use of the databases and to integrate them into their teaching and research work can be seen as an important step towards a more efficient and modern process of learning and teaching.

The SER states that one of the weaknesses in the teaching materials area is the lack of the newest books in the field of Literary Science in foreign languages and foreign e-journals (SER, p. 24).

The additional information sheet states that the Šiauliai University Library was presented with a “list of books necessary for the implementation of the study programme, some publications in Literary Science and other books have been acquired” (p. 1). However, during the library tour, the Team was able to see only a short list containing eight titles of recent purchases printed by the librarian. These titles were not included in any reading lists of recommended literature in various module descriptions. During our discussions with Administration it was discovered that there is an Information Resources Foundation system in the library, which is available for the faculty members, however, the faculty and the department do not have a formal system in place for ordering books and updating module resources. It became apparent from our discussion with staff and administration that there seems to be no general strategy across the Department/ University to ensure that reading lists for core modules are regularly updated and appropriate sources are purchased. This suggests that the bibliographical deficiencies found in the programme and in the library could easily be solved if such a system is established and followed regularly and consistently. Whilst the Team is satisfied that the Deans make decisions on funds allocations and there is also a chairperson responsible for the allocation of departmental funds, it was found that a clear formal system for collecting and collating data on necessary new purchases should be centrally developed. For example, a Department/Faculty wide platform for

communication on these matters and a clear time frame (e.g. a particular time once per semester or per academic year) might help to clarify and modernise the acquisition focus and the process itself.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

As stated in the Self Evaluation Report, student admission to the ŠU MA programme of Literary Science in the DLHT is conducted in accordance with the ŠU rules for admission to the studies of the second and third cycles. These are annually approved by the Rector's Office and advertised on the internet at <http://www.su.lt/stojantiesiems/2014-priemimo-taisykles>. (SER, p. 49).

Admissions are based mainly on a previously completed BA in Philology. Those who had completed first cycle studies in Humanities or Social Sciences are also admitted (these, during the studies, have to pass exams in the following subjects: Introduction to Literary Science, Theory of Literature, and General History of Literature). The competitive mark consists of an arithmetic mean of the mark for the Bachelor thesis or the final qualification exam and the marks in the supplement to the Diploma.

Although the main admission process seems quite transparent, there is no mention of any selective factors in the application process, e.g. Table 8 (SER p. 25) does not show any cut-off points. Answers given by staff during the visit gave an impression that as many applicants are admitted as there are "state-financed positions" for the programme, and those whose marks are in the lower range have the status of the fee-paying students. Some students can be partly or wholly exempt from tuition fees, due to financial difficulties (SER p. 28, confirmation during the visit). Data in Table 5, SER, p. 18. (7 in 2010, 9 in 2011, 5 in 2012, 5 in 2013, and 4 in 2014) show the decrease in the number of admissions into the first year of the MA study. It seems to be a national trend, therefore, a problem of the quality of enrolled students might arise.

Another issue is financial and organisational costs of the MA study programme, which is not raised in the SER. In the comments (see Table 5), there is a statement about the average number of students on the full-time study programme (6) and staff to students ratio (9:6). The ratio is considered as "adequate" by the SER. This opinion was confirmed during the visit by the members of the academic staff ("The number of students is normal for such a small university"). While asked what could be done to promote the programme and increase the number of students, the members of the administration and academic staff mentioned the "marketing work" done by the study programme committee which "advertises" the programme to bachelor students: a leaflet is distributed among prospective master's students (mostly those who have graduated from this faculty) which gives basic information about the content of the programme.

During the visit a mention was also made by the administrative staff about a special group at the university level making the programme known better and attract more applicants. But, at the same time, while talking about the labour market and the possible adjustments of the programme to its demands, a probability was mentioned that in the future, admissions might not be carried out every year.

The organisation of the study process (as outlined in SER, pp. 57-59), set by the ŠU Regulations of Studies and other legal acts, seems to ensure an adequate provision of the programme throughout each semester. However, in § 59, the SER states that the "study process is structured largely according to the demands of the students and their jobs"; the classes are held

three times a week after 2 p.m. (SER, p. 29). This statement can be confirmed after the site visit: a very small number of courses was held on the day of the visit and it was explained by a member of staff as a “normal“ situation. As stated in the previous Expert Evaluation Report, it is “considerate towards the students“, but we can only agree with its authors‘ doubt: “it is not entirely clear how this practice encourages full time studies“.

Another question is that of the amount of independent work which seems to be quite high, but is not adequately regulated or assessed. All subjects (modules) are evaluated as worth 5 ECTS credits, however, it seems unlikely that some courses (e.g., The History of Western Aesthetical Thought: The Tradition of Hermeneutics) fit into 5 credits, given their large scope. The students also commented that the workload is rather high, and, while the students do not object to a heavy workload, there must be a formal procedure (formal guidelines) for calculating and monitoring their workload; this would help to have factual measures of workload.

When asked how teachers cope with students who cannot come to lectures, academic staff talked about individual work schedules and consulting hours provided for students. In some cases, the lecturer seems to prepare materials of the lecture for those who were absent. However, according to students, the information is mostly passed down orally. This creates a potential for disorganisation and inadequate learning provision. Students who do not attend lectures receive information from a student representative, not from the teacher. The team has not been provided with any examples of written or on-line materials for absent students. Although the University has Moodle, a learning platform that allows teachers to provide students with a variety of different types of information and relevant materials in a user-friendly and efficient way, the Team found during the staff interview that only one member of staff used it. When asked why others do not use it, the answer was as follows: “we are moving towards it, but slowly”.

There are no study or module guides, apart from the general module descriptions available on-line. Tutors or academic advisors were not mentioned in the SER nor during the visit. According to the academic staff (answers given during the visit), students are generally informed about what they are to study by the lecturers during their first day of study, for example, information about requirements, assessments, deadlines, etc. During the visit the Team learnt that some subjects have a distance learning system (Moodle), but it seem to be used mostly by teachers from outside the department; students commented critically on the variability of Moodle provision on different modules. It is clear that the technical basis for organising the study process is there (ŠU Academic Information System, the Moodle system, anti-plagiarism system etc.), however it is not used systematically and sufficiently. It should be stressed also that the Team saw no evidence of a general university policy on the availability and use of e-learning platforms.

During the meeting with staff the Team did not receive a clear answer about a formal system of assessment (written criteria for examinations and coursework do not seem to exist). Considering the high number of interdisciplinary modules, such a system should be of the most concern, as it would ensure the objectivity of assessments within and across the departments delivering the modules on the MA programme.

The SER provides details on opportunities the MA students are given to engage with research. They can participate in conferences, publish, etc. (SER, pp. 26-27). Their artistic and applied research activities are also encouraged, both by teaching staff and social partners confirmed during the visit with the examples given by social partners (museum, gymnasium).

Altogether, the form of MA studies seems to support the development of research skills as well as other transferrable expertise.

The University also offers opportunities for the Literary Science students to participate in student mobility programmes, national and international: Erasmus student (only recently) and staff exchange; agreement with the State University of Kent, USA, signed in 2010 (SER §60). The mobility on the national level seems to be more attractive for the Literary Science students due to personal and financial considerations. The SER gives examples of their different activities (participation in national conferences, seminars, educational trips – SER p. 30, 34).

As for the international mobility, according to SER, during the analysed period, student mobility is not exploited to its full potential. This statement has been confirmed during the visit, both by the teaching staff and students. The main reasons pointed out are family, employment and financial reasons (cost of studies abroad). The SER (p. 30) mentions one Master student who went to Chicago Lithuanian Research and Study Centre, and another who studied in Leibniz University Hannover (with a DAAD grant), “in the previous years”, that is before 2010. However, it was six years ago and is hardly illustrative of current situation.

The passivity of the students in this area is named as a weakness of the programmes in the SER (§64). To make international Master students’ mobility more active, the SER mentions searching for sponsors for the studies abroad and developing social partnerships with (potential) employers. But in the §56 of the SER, there is no mention of any form of support offered by the International Programmes Service nor the Dean of HF. The SER does not mention any incoming international exchange students. During the meeting with academic staff very vague plans for a joint programme with Daugavpils University in Latvia were mentioned.

It is evident from the SER that the academic support offered to students at ŠU is a “unified system of student support” (SER, p. 27), including website information, offices that can be consulted, weekly consultation hours with staff (during the contact hours, one or two a week, or via e-mail) (SER, §56); there is no mention of tutors or academic advisors. This general description does not provide any information how these means are used, nor if students find them adequate and/or sufficient. Another form mentioned is academic *grants* (allocated in accordance with ŠU regulations) depending on the study programme and the year of studies with regard to the average mark for academic achievement at the HF.

According to the SER, there are several forms of social grants for students, implemented either by the State, the University, or by other bodies. However, the level of social support cannot be determined on the basis of the SER; it does not specify their accessibility and adequacy nor whether students find them satisfactory. During the visit students confirmed that some of them received academic *grants* in the past, but no one applied for the social grant (according to the answers to the question asked about this form of support, “they do not need them”).

Various services are offered in the ŠU Medical Centre, a recently opened University Health and Consultancy Services Centre, also providing free services. In accordance with the regulations of provision of halls of residence of ŠU, HF students are provided accommodation in ŠU halls of residence. A strong psychological and other support can be found from the very environment of studies. The students can participate in various activities of ŠU Sports Club. The team was satisfied to see that these services are offered.

According to the SER the organization of the study process is satisfactory and ensures the achievement of the relevant learning outcomes. Achievements of the students of the study

programme Literary Science are evaluated on the basis of several legal texts detailed in the SER (SER, §57). The system of assessment is appropriate for measuring the achievement of the learning outcomes. The publicity of assessments is ensured by introducing the students to the structure of programme at the beginning of the course. Criteria for cumulative assessment of knowledge and achievements, deadlines and methods of assessment of skills and knowledge and assessment criteria are linked to the subject and study programme learning outcomes. Each subject has its evaluation criteria, described in the syllabi. Both assessment criteria and forms of accounting are also available “on the data bases” (SER, p. 28) but it is not clear what these refer to.

However, as stated earlier, during the visit the Team was not able to make up a concrete picture of the assessment system, e.g., the type of an exam (essay, test), and was left with an impression that a formal system of written assessment is absent, therefore, such a system (including transparent assessment criteria) should be written and available for students (online and in other forms). Formal written feedback ensuring objectivity, should be also provided for students.

Thus, the Team suggests that a unified transparent system of assessment feedback should be discussed and implemented. It could be modelled on the moderation and double marking system used in many European Universities, which aims to provide transparent and objective feedback by ensuring that all written and oral assignments awarded top and fail grades are marked by a second tutor. A further 10% sample of other grades is also marked by a second tutor. In the case of significant discrepancies between the marks by different tutors, the results are moderated. Assessment criteria should be clearly stated not only in course descriptions, but also on feedback sheets for all assignments. These should be comparable across all departments involved in the delivery of the programme. The whole process should be formally documented. The form of the moderation sheets and procedures could be established internally. The Team suggests that the Institute could run a pilot moderation project and then forward it to Senior Management for faculty and university-wide discussion.

The only written criteria that seem to exist are those related to the MA thesis and its defence (introduced or revised after the last evaluation of the programme, carried out in 2015, by an international group of experts, as stated in the Additional Information). The outlined procedure seems to be of satisfactory standard. However, the team was not convinced of the benefits of allowing supervisors to suggest an advisory mark for a student’s final thesis and had serious doubts whether such a practice does not hamper the objectivity of the final mark. A related problem that arose after perusing some of the MA Dissertations provided by the staff during the visit, was that, though there was a striking difference in the quality of some of them, they received the same (top) marks. There were no feedback forms provided for the theses and no clear descriptors for each assessment criterion. The Team would, therefore, recommend a thorough rethinking of the assessment criteria and provision of feedback forms for each thesis, which should include details of the composition of the board.

According to the SER, master theses can be reviewed not only by staff of the DLHT and other related departments (associate professors and professors and those with a PhD); there is a possibility to invite external evaluators, too. Another aspect that remains unclear is the role of negative evaluation of the theses. Three theses received negative evaluation during the analysed period — two of which were later passed. The question of plagiarism is also unclear. Actions to enhance research ethics are specifically mentioned in the SER (§62). Therefore, the Team was at

a loss to gauge the reason why the staff insisted so strongly on students' honesty: there is an anti-plagiarism system in SU, but it is not obligatory and, according to the academic staff, there is no need to use it because problems of students' ethics do not arise.

According to the SER, the majority of the graduates seem to be employed at present (§61, p. 30). They work full- or part-time in various cultural centres, cinemas, on TV and in newspapers' editorial offices, in public information departments of various cultural and social institutions, schools, etc. These data do not indicate the forms of employment itself nor whether what the graduates do reflects their expertise, however, the character or nature of employer (cultural centres, television, gymnasiums etc.) seem to be generally compatible with the field of study. This seemingly satisfactory employment situation could suggest that the graduates fulfil the requirements of the local labour market as well as the programme social partners' expectations for the level of their competence. However, the reality seems to be somewhat different, as there were two graduates of the programme present during the social partners' meeting, who were still seeking employment, and some were employed in areas not directly connected to the outcomes of the programme. It should also be added that during the meeting with the administrative and academic staff the team was told that the university has a market research group which analyses the demand of the labour market, however, the results for the recent years have not been received yet. There is only general country wide data, but not specifically for the region.

It is evident from the SER that the study programme Literary Science does not include a practical placement in its curriculum, although there are instances when students volunteer to work in various departments of the university (SER, p. 23). It is also stated that students have an opportunity for practice placements abroad via the ERASMUS programme, however, there was no supporting evidence provided for this claim during our meetings. For example, the team learned during the meeting with staff that the rules for ERASMUS placements for MA students have only recently been changed. In the past, if a student had a placement during his/her undergraduate study, they could not apply for an ERASMUS placement during their MA study. It was noted that such an opportunity is now available, but the department finds it difficult to motivate the students to participate due to students' personal and financial circumstances. It might be useful to explore the connections with the International department of the University in order to benefit from the ERASMUS exchange opportunities in terms of placements.

The meetings with students and social partners revealed that although they often collaborate during various festivals and other cultural events, there are no formal arrangements reflecting programme aims and ensuring practical application of students' knowledge and skills. It might be beneficial to incorporate a practice placement/assessment task element into the programme to increase student numbers by emphasising the employability skills acquired during placements. Particularly, in the light of the comments made during the meeting with Administration, where it was stated that one of the weaknesses of this programme is low numbers of students and its cost-effectiveness.

After the meeting with social partners and alumni the Team is of the opinion that the programme does not fully answer the needs of the labour market. Only one graduate was working in an area directly related to the programme, and the rest were working in other fields, mostly of practical application. Social partners indicated only some competences that are useful in the jobs they offer, while graduates stressed the theoretical contents of the programme and the lack of professional preparation, therefore some decided to obtain additional teaching

qualifications. In the opinion of the Team, a good combination of a strong theoretical basis and special professional skills (that reflect the demands of the labour market) would help to introduce more congruence between the content of the programme and the employment tendencies of the programme's graduates.

While reviewing the learning outcomes, the SER (§19, p. 9) gives as a weakness the weak participation of external social shareholders in the programme and states that new forms and ways of communication and participation are going to be sought. During the meeting with social partners it was stated that they were aware of the possibility to participate in the reviewing of the programme, but were never invited to do so, nor to participate in the final exams. The Team recommends stronger ties with social partners and their wider involvement in the delivery of the programme to fulfil labour market needs.

2.6. Programme management

The University regulations stipulate that study programmes must be renewed periodically and that their quality must be monitored regularly. The body responsible for ensuring and monitoring the quality of the programme MA Literary Science is the HF Study Programmes Evaluation Committee, which reports to the Faculty Council (which includes student representatives). The current Study Programme Evaluation Committee consists of 8 persons: 7 academic representatives (including one from another faculty), and 1 representative from the library (SER, p. 31). The SER states that the meetings of the Committee are organised depending on need, programme curricula are revised, compliance of the study subjects with other HF bachelor programmes, subject descriptors are checked (SER, p. 31). However, the Team did not receive clear answers as to how often the programme is revised and what is the frequency of the Study Programme Evaluation Committee meetings.

Practical administration of the programme is monitored by the LS Master's Programme Committee, which currently consists of 5 people: two academic representatives, 1 student representative, and 2 social stakeholders (SER, p. 32). Once again, in our discussions with staff and administration, we were neither able to clarify the frequency and regularity of the meetings of this Committee nor to establish how the two Committees coordinate their work.

Overall, the responsibilities for the monitoring and implementation of the programme are clearly defined, however, it seems that the coordination between the Committees and the regularity of the meetings should be more clearly defined and regulated. There should be a formal internal time frame work during which the quality of the programme is monitored and assessed.

The method of data collection mainly consists of anonymous surveys via questionnaires, although verbal non-anonymous student feedback also takes place. The SER states that "the assessment of the quality of studies is done on a regular basis" (SER, p. 33), but it does not specify whether the frequency of the process is centrally regulated: "The frequency of the assessment of the quality of studies depends both on the internal factors and external circumstances" (SER, p. 33). It also mentions that "some teachers make written or oral surveys already at the beginning of the course in order to find out their expectations" (SER, p. 33). The overall impression of an *ad hoc* process, which requires centralisation and streamlining, was confirmed during our meeting with students. The students stated that for most modules (with some exceptions of interdisciplinary modules) they were not required to provide any formal feedback. The Team formed an impression from the meetings that feedback is primarily given

informally, through personal communication between teachers and students. The small student groups make this possible, and the close contact between teachers and students is generally a positive trait, but it should be emphasised that this does not eliminate the need for formalised evaluation channels. The technical systems, which are available at the University for data collection, are not used routinely for conducting student surveys (e.g. mid module evaluation, end of module evaluation).

It is evident from the SER that data from module evaluation surveys are discussed during various meetings: “departmental meetings, those of the mentioned committees” and is made “publicly available in the faculty activities reports and ŠU website” (SER, p. 33). However, the absence of the formal compulsory system of data collection makes it difficult for staff and students to communicate feedback. It might be useful to introduce staff-student liaison meetings, where student representatives from the various levels meet with staff and discuss the results of surveys and proposed changes to the modules or programmes.

Overall, there is a range of evidence of data collection and analysis, but the process seems to be somewhat chaotic and requires more coordination department and university-wide.

The actions taken on the basis of the outcomes of internal evaluations of the programme for the improvement of the programme are described in detail in section 67 (SER, p. 35). There is a long list of actions, which evidence the increased interdisciplinarity of the programme, the improved range of compulsory modules, the increased number of hours for the development of students’ research skills, and the revision of the range of elective modules, etc.

In terms of the outcomes of the external evaluations, the Additional Information Sheet (2016) contains clear evidence of some changes made following the recommendations of the last external evaluation (2015). For example, “Guidelines for Written Assignments in Literary Science for Students” (2015) were revised to implement the increase of the final thesis volume, to introduce a new “Descriptor of Evaluating Final Works” with criteria for marks; to offer a seminar on databases, electronic journals, bibliography management software RefWorks at ŠU Library, etc. (p.1). However, some areas highlighted during the 2012 evaluation visit, such as to make aims and learning outcomes of the programme more specific and aligned with the second cycle study programme standards and to focus on some subjects content to make them less general, to increase international mobility of staff and students, etc. seem to be either not addressed or only partially addressed. Other examples of “unchanging” matters are the introduction of English classes, a module in creative writing, a more efficient use of available IT and library resources (evaluation visit 2015).

Although the Team is satisfied that internal discussions and actions do take place, the channels and parameters of improvement measures should be formalised and more visible. For example, we did not receive a clear answer as to what are the formal processes and the timeframe for minor and major module modifications, introduction of new modules to the programme, etc.

It is evident from the SER that the evaluation and improvement processes involve internal and external stakeholders. However, the “links with external stakeholders could be stronger” (SER, p. 35). The connections seem to be generally informal and irregular. They tend to be centred around various events organised by stakeholders (e.g. festivals, contests, presentations). This offers a viable avenue for stakeholders’ involvement, but could be developed further to make it more regular and organised. It became evident during our meeting with stakeholders that they are not directly involved in professional orientation of the students, that

students do not have placements in the various organisations mentioned, that employability skills are not explicitly incorporated into the programme, and that none of the students based their thesis on a project, which involves a stakeholder.

Developing closer and more structured connections with external stakeholders in terms of developing students' employability skills would enable the DLHT to improve the profile and attractiveness of the programme and might increase student numbers.

Students are important internal stakeholders. According to the SER, they “have an opportunity to participate in the administration of the programme (students' representatives are on the programme committee, in the self-assessment group, they are represented on HF Council and ŠU Senate)” (SER, p. 35).

During the last evaluation process in 2015 and during our meeting with them, students indicated that they would welcome a more practical orientation of the programme and more direct involvement in its implementation.

According to the SER, ŠU has an extensive internal institutional system for quality assurance, which involves mentors and quality supervision groups of the programmes. The body responsible for its implementation is the Strategic and Quality Management Service. The work of the Service is described at length in section 66 of the SER (p. 32). It was created to enhance the development of studies. Quality assessment is carried out regularly, depending on internal factors and external circumstances, however, the regularity of such procedures is not clear from the Report. During our meetings with staff and students very general answers were given to questions concerning the frequency and regularity of such assessments.

The additional Information Sheet (2016) contains clear evidence on dissemination of the changes made as a result of the last evaluation process: “social shareholders, students and Study Programme Committee have been acquainted with the results of the expert evaluation. The last event of Quality Days was a round table discussion organized on 19th February 2016 (p. 2). However, neither students nor stakeholders gave any indications of their familiarity with the results of the last evaluation visit.

Overall, the management of the MA Literary Science programme should be considered satisfactory, but there are some areas where there is a clear potential for improvement.

2.7. Examples of excellence *

* if there are any to be shared as a good practice

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The title of the MA programme “Literary Science” should be reconsidered to reflect the content of the modules more precisely. Inclusion of the words “comparative literatures” might be helpful.
2. The aims and learning outcomes of the MA programme should be clarified and made more specific. More emphasis should be placed on subject specific and professional skills, and the aims should indicate what specific competences will be developed in order to achieve learning outcomes.
3. The discrepancies between the objectives of the programme, as stated in the section on “Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Programme”, and those listed in the section “Programme composition logic” should be eliminated.
4. The content of the programme should be revised and streamlined in order to avoid gaps and overlaps. The subjects and critical approaches of the programme should be updated in order to reflect the latest research in this field of study. The bibliography should be updated with the inclusion of seminal books in the field.
5. A formal sabbatical system should be considered by the department and discussed with the university management in order to enable DLHT staff to produce more publications in foreign languages in peer reviewed international journals. Wider participation in national and international competitive research projects and international conferences should also be considered.
6. It is unclear how reliably the institution can depend upon foreign lecturers. Although there are certainly occasional opportunities to obtain modular or guest lecturers, a better strategy might be considered to form institutional or departmental agreements with specific institutions or individuals to guarantee continuity of interaction and foreign engagement.
7. Integration of interactive tasks and resources into the weekly programmes and their availability on-line could be recommended as an important step towards modernisation of the programme and effective comprehensive use of available resources.
8. It is suggested that an e-learning strategy should be implemented to ensure a transparent and uniform use of an e-learning platform (e.g. MOODLE) by all members of staff on various courses, particularly in the light of the increasing inter-disciplinarity of the programme.
9. In order to encourage a more effective use of facilities, the use of databases via special seminars on databases, electronic journals, bibliography management software RefWorks at ŠU Library should be made a permanent part of the Master Thesis Seminar and training tasks on the use of various data bases should also be available on-line. The use of the databases should also be encouraged via specifically designed tasks during lectures and seminars.
10. To ensure a formal follow-up process on students’ feedback, an implementation of a Staff/Student Liaison Committee, which would meet once per semester to discuss any matters arising from student feedback, is recommended.

11. Transparency and standardisation of assessment tasks and feedback should be discussed and implemented.
12. Module Guides with clear weekly programmes, deadlines for assignments, assignment tasks descriptions, and anti-plagiarism regulations should be considered for each module.
13. In order to improve the profile and attractiveness of the programme and to develop students' employability skills, it is recommended that a more formally structured connections with external stakeholders are developed.
14. Promotion strategies at the university, in Lithuania and abroad, should be discussed and implemented.

IV. SUMMARY

The visit to Siauliai University took place on 17.05.2016. It was well organised and thoroughly prepared. All meetings with relevant representatives of the programme took place on time and were highly professional.

The Team's consensual view is that the MA Programme is adequately delivered. The staff, teaching on the programme, should be commended for ensuring continuity from the BA Programme and excellent staff-student relations. Other strengths of the Programme are enthusiastic, well-qualified and motivated staff, and close contact between the department and external stakeholders.

However, there are several elements of the programme that could be strengthened to make a more effective academic offering. The design of the programme should ensure logical progression and increasing complexity of the modules content; the credit allocation should be rethought – it is not logical to make all courses carry the same number of credits; a unified and transparent system of assessment feedback should be introduced; inclusion of up-to-date sources would also strengthen the programme. The library holdings of works appropriate to this programme should be expanded, and the teaching staff should ensure regular revision of key texts and assist their library colleagues in making acquisition decisions. Tighter co-operation between various departments involved in the delivery of the programme and a more active use of up-to-date library data bases would strengthen the programme even further.

Mobility exchanges should be further developed and undertaken for both staff and students. Although the employability of the graduates is generally good, an introduction of practical study placement or practically oriented tasks/skills into the curriculum would make graduates even more valuable in the current labour market and would strengthen the position of the programme. This would also ensure a more distinct outline of the Programme's aims and outcomes, which are currently very general. The Department promotes the programme via its website and various events, however, taking into account low numbers of students on the programme, it might be beneficial to change promotion strategies by including external and international marketing.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Literary Science* (state code – 621Q20007) at Šiauliai 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	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	14

*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:

Dr. Irina Moore

Grupės nariai:

Team members:

Prof. Dr. Elzbieta Skibińska-Cieńska

Prof. Dr. Susana Onega Jaen

Mr. Andrius Ledas

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Šiaulių universiteto studijų programa *Literatūrologija* (valstybinis kodas – 621Q20007) 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	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	2
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	14

* 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

Ekspertų grupė Šiaulių universitete lankėsi 2016 m. gegužės 17 d. Šis vizitas buvo gerai organizuotas ir kruopščiai parengtas. Visi susitikimai su atitinkamais programos atstovais įvyko laiku ir buvo profesionalūs.

Konsensuso pagrindu priimta grupės nuomone, magistrantūros studijų programa *Literatūrologija* vykdoma tinkamai. Šios programos dėstytojus reikėtų pagirti už tai, kad jie užtikrina bakalauro studijų programos tęstinumą ir puikius dėstytojų bei studentų santykius. Kitos šios programos stiprybės yra entuziastingi, aukštos kvalifikacijos ir motyvuoti dėstytojai, glaudūs katedros ir išorės socialinių dalininkų ryšiai.

Tačiau keletas šios programos elementų galėtų būti stipresni, kad šis akademinis pasiūlymas būtų veiksmingesnis. Šios studijų programos sandara turėtų užtikrinti modulių turinio loginę progresiją ir didėjančią sudėtingumą; reikėtų permąstyti kreditų paskirstymą – nelogiška visiems dalykams skirti vienodą kreditų skaičių; reikėtų įdiegti vienodą ir skaidrią grįžtamojo ryšio vertinimo sistemą; be to, programa būtų stipresnė įtraukus į ją naujausius šaltinius. Reikėtų išplėsti šiai programai reikalingus bibliotekos fondus, o dėstytojais turėtų užtikrinti, kad būtų nuolat tikrinami pagrindiniai tekstai, ir padėti savo kolegoms bibliotekininkams priimti sprendimus dėl įsigijimo. Programa dar labiau sustiprėtų, jei įvairios su šios programos įgyvendinimu susijusios katedros glaudžiau bendradarbiautų ir būtų daugiau naudojamos naujausia bibliotekos turima informacija.

Reikėtų toliau skatinti ir dėstytojų, ir studentų judumą pagal mainų programas. Nors absolventų įsidarbinamumas iš esmės yra geras, į šią studijų programą įtraukus praktinį mokymą arba praktines užduotis / įgūdžių ugdymą, absolventai būtų dar paklausesni dabartinėje darbo rinkoje, be to, padidėtų programos vertė. Tai užtikrintų ir programos tikslų bei studijų rezultatų aiškumą – kol kas jie labai bendri. Katedra šią studijų programą reklamuoja savo interneto svetainėje ir per įvairius renginius, tačiau, atsižvelgiant į mažą šios programos studentų skaičių, galėtų būti naudinga pakeisti reklamavimo strategiją įtraukiant išorės ir tarptautinę rinkodarą.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Magistrantūros studijų programos Literatūrologija pavadinimą reikėtų persvarstyti, kad jame tiksliau atsispindėtų modulių turinys. Galėtų būti naudinga įtraukti žodžius „lyginamoji literatūra“.
2. Reikėtų paaiškinti ir sukonkretinti šios magistrantūros programos tikslus bei numatomus studijų rezultatus. Daugiau dėmesio reikėtų skirti dalykiniams ir profesiniams gebėjimams, o tiksluose turėtų būti nurodyta, kokie konkretūs gebėjimai bus tobulinami, kad būtų pasiekti numatomi studijų rezultatai.
3. Reikėtų pašalinti neatitikimus tarp skyriuje „Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai“ ir skyriuje „Programos sandara“ nurodytų programos tikslų.
4. Siekiant išvengti spragų ir pasikartojimo, reikėtų persvarstyti ir supaprastinti programos turinį. Programos dalykus ir kritinius metodus reikėtų atnaujinti, kad juose atsispindėtų naujausi šios studijų krypties tyrimai. Bibliografiją reikėtų atnaujinti į ją įtraukiant svarbias šios srities knygas.
5. Kad Literatūros istorijos ir teorijos katedros darbuotojai galėtų skelbti daugiau publikacijų užsienio kalbomis tarptautiniuose recenzuojamuose žurnaluose, Katedra kartu su Universiteto vadovybe turėtų apsvarstyti oficialią mokslinių atostogų sistemą. Be to, reikėtų apsvarstyti platesnio dalyvavimo nacionaliniuose ir tarptautiniuose konkursiniuose mokslinių tyrimų projektuose ir tarptautinėse konferencijose klausimą.
6. Neaišku, kaip patikimai universitetas gali remtis užsienio dėstytojais. Nors galimybių gauti modulius dėstančių arba kviestinių dėstytojų, be abejo, pasitaiko, galbūt geresnė strategija būtų universitetui arba katedrai sudaryti susitarimus su konkrečiomis institucijomis ar asmenimis, kad būtų užtikrintas bendravimo su užsieniu tęstinumas.
7. Interaktyvių užduočių ir išteklių įtraukimas į savaitines programas ir jų prieinamumas internete būtų rekomenduotina kaip svarbus žingsnis šios studijų programos modernizavimo ir veiksmingo bei plataus turimų išteklių panaudojimo link.
8. Siekiant užtikrinti, kad visų dalykų dėstytojai naudotų skaidrią ir vienodą e-mokymosi aplinką (pvz., MOODLE), ypač atsižvelgiant į didėjančią šios programos tarpdalykiškumą, rekomenduojama įgyvendinti e–mokymosi strategiją.
9. Norint paskatinti veiksmingiau naudotis priemonėmis (įranga), naudojimasis duomenų bazėmis per specialius seminarus, skirtus mokyti naudotis duomenų bazėmis, elektroniniais žurnalais, bibliografinių įrašų tvarkymo programomis RefWorks universiteto bibliotekoje, turėtų tapti nuolatine Magistrinio darbo seminaro (modulis) dalimi (žr. tekste), be to, internete turėtų būti pateiktos mokymo užduotys, susijusios su įvairių duomenų bazių

naudojimu. Naudotis duomenų bazėmis turėtų būti skatinama ir skiriant specialiai parengtas užduotis per paskaitas ir seminarus.

10. Siekiant užtikrinti oficialią reagavimo į studentų grįžtamąjį ryšį procedūrą, rekomenduojama steigti dėstytojų ir studentų ryšių palaikymo komitetą, kuris kartą per semestrą rinktųsi į posėdį, kad aptartų visus su studentų grįžtamojo ryšiu susijusius klausimus.
11. Reikėtų aptarti ir įgyvendinti vertinimo užduočių ir grįžtamojo ryšio skaidrumo bei standartizacijos klausimą.
12. Reikėtų apsvarstyti kiekvienam moduliui skirtas modulių gaires, kuriose būtų aiškiai nurodytos savaitinės programos, užduočių įvykdymo terminai, užduočių aprašai ir kovos su plagijavimu taisyklės.
13. Siekiant tobulinti programą, didinti jos patrauklumą ir ugdyti studentų gebėjimus, padidinsiančius jų įsidarbinimo galimybes, rekomenduojama kurti formaliai struktūruotus ryšius su išorės socialiniais dalininkais.
14. Reikėtų apsvarstyti ir įgyvendinti (programos) reklamavimo universitete, Lietuvoje ir užsienyje strategiją.

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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)