



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos
DIZAINO PROGRAMOS (621W20001, 62402M102)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *DESIGN* (621W20001, 62402M102)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius Academy of Arts

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof dr. Kieran Corcoran

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. dr. Bernhard E. Bürdek

Doc. dr. Virginija Daukantiene

Prof. dr. Arvids Endzins

Prof. dr. Pirjo Hirvonen

Rasa Povilaitienė

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2012

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Dizainas
Valstybinis kodas	621W20001, 62402M102
Studijų sritis	menai
Studijų kryptis	dizainas
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinės (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	dizaino magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19 Nr. 565

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Design
State code	621W20001, 62402M102
Study area	arts
Study field	design
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Cycle of studies	second
Study mode (length in years)	full-time (2)
Scope of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	master of design
Date of registration of the study programme	19.05.1997 No. 565

© Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras
The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	4
1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	4
2. Curriculum design	5
3. Teaching staff	6
4. Facilities and learning resources	7
5. Study process and students' performance assessment.....	7
6. Programme management	8
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	8
IV. SUMMARY	10
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	11

I. INTRODUCTION

The external evaluation of the study programme was initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania nominating the external assessment expert group formed by Professor Kieran Corcoran (DIT School Of Art, Ireland - team leader), Professor Bernhard E. Bürdek (Offenbach Art and Design University, Germany), Assoc. prof. dr. Virginija Daukantienė (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania), Professor Arvidz Endzins (Art Academy of Latvia, Latvia), Professor Pirjo Hirvonen (Aalto University School of Arts, Finland) and student representative Ms. Rasa Povilaitienė (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania).

The evaluation of the study programme made use of the following documents: Law on Higher Education and Research; Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes; Order on External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes; Description of General Requirements for Master Study Programmes.

The basis for the evaluation of the study programme is the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), written in 2012, its annexes and the site visit of the expert group to Vilnius Academy of Arts (hereafter, VVA) on 30 April – 4 May, 2012. The visit incorporated all required meetings with different groups: the administrative staff, staff responsible for preparing the self-evaluation documents, teaching staff, students of all years of study, graduates, and employers. The expert group inspected various support services, examined students' final works and various other materials.

The previous evaluation of the programme MA in Design took place in 2008. At that time the programme allowed for specialization in a number of areas including product, graphic and jewellery design. The programme also recruited from a wide range of disciplines and included a number of subjects which were at a lower level. The panel felt that achieving the depth of knowledge on the field as required in a MA programme was very difficult. In response the programme team has made a number of important changes. The most important has been to focus much more closely on the main specialisation of Product Design. Graphic Design has now been reorganised into a separate department and a number of subjects which were not at the required MA level have been removed from the curriculum much more time is now spent on the core activity of the actual study of design and the SER has clarified the situation in relation to the research methods and the theoretical part of the final project has been clearly identified. In addition a number of initiatives have been taken in relation to providing sufficient digital resources and courses on professional practice have been introduced while links with the Lithuanian Design industry have greatly strengthened.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aim of the MA in Design as defined in the SER is provide students with a set of competencies in Industrial Design that will allow graduates of programmes in humanitarian sciences at university level to become professional industrial designers. Graduates of the programme will be able to operate as professional industrial designers either as sole traders or as part of a team in national or international contexts. The decision to focus on Industrial Design was taken in response to the main recommendation of the previous panel to restructure the MA to facilitate the level of specialisation appropriate to a programme at this level.

Graduates will have abroad overview of the cultural significance of design and will understand how design operates in the context of the strategic development of an organisation. Graduates will also have a deep knowledge of the theoretical discourse in contemporary design and understand how design functions in contemporary society. Specifically, graduates of this programme will be able design a range of complex objects and systems and plan and manage

complex design projects in the professional world. They will be able to apply their knowledge of design methodology and creative techniques in a wide range of professional contexts and will have an advanced knowledge of the latest technological developments in their field. Graduates will be able not only to develop complex design solutions but will also be able to present these solutions to clients in a professional setting and understand how these solutions relate to the wider issues of ecology and sustainability. They will also acquire a wide range of generic competences and transferable skills such as teamwork, collaboration and holistic reasoning.

The SER describes the General and Specific Learning Outcomes in some detail and it provides a grid on which correlates the aims of the programme, the learning outcomes and course units. This is a very welcome innovation and indicates that the Programme Team have a clear understanding of how aims, learning outcomes and academic requirements relate to each other.

There are 2 specific observations about the Aims and Learning Outcomes:

- The Learning outcomes should include a greater emphasis on the theory and history of design.
- Key themes like design management, service design and strategic design should be added to the Aims and Learning Outcomes.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design of the second cycle programme in the MA in Design meets the main legal requirements listed in the legal acts regulating the higher education in the Republic of Lithuania: The Law of Studies and Science of the Republic of Lithuania' of 30 April 2009 No. XI-242; 'The Description of the General Requirements for Master's Degree Study Programmes' of 3 June 2010, No. V-826. It reflects the mission and development strategy of VAA and it is also aligned with the Statute of VAA and the Study Regulations. The programme is constructed according to the general principles of Bologna Declaration and the ECTS credit system has been implemented. The volume of the programme is 120 ECTS. The subjects of the study field involve 60 ECTS and 24 ECTS are given for elective subjects. The number of subjects studied during one semester within a programme is 5 and in the last semester – 3. Study subjects are spread evenly and their themes are not repetitive. The content of study field and research study subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies.

The programme is built around 2 years of study with three Creative /Experimental Projects and two Experimental /Laboratories Modules and a choice of Optional modules in Year 1. In Year 2 the first semester has 4 Practice led Research Projects and the final semester concentrates on the MA Graduation project. The MA Graduation project must conform to strict requirements and is composed of two parts. The practical part must have a major graphic presentation and a relative model to scale and must be accompanied by detailed research drawings, a clear description of the main stages of the design process chosen by the student. The theoretical section of the project must adhere to, the standards set by the VAA for scientific papers and must state the aims and objectives of the study and be clearly linked to the solution proposed by the student in the practical project.

The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. After the remarks of the previous evaluation of the programme in 2008 more courses were added for forming of the students' skills related to the basics of entrepreneurship which will make graduates more adaptable to changing market conditions.

There are four specific observations about the curriculum:

- There is too much emphasis on Architecture and the History of Art with many lectures coming from the traditional scientific field. There needs to be more emphasis on the cultural, social, ethnological and technological topics and how they relate to the design of

complex objects. This is important if the programme is to reflect the latest advances and achievements in technology and science as well as art. The transfer from these theories to the design objects was not obvious, students are still concentrating too much on the so called "practical functions" of the products.

- There needs to be more emphasis in the curriculum on product identity and brand identity which is essential if the programme is to achieve its aim of educating designers to function in an international or global context. Problems of product identity and brand identity are becoming more and more important for design. Design education has to concentrate to the needs of local enterprises (in Lithuania and the other baltic countries) but also to an international and global market. The panel could see, that the first is on a good level, but from international point of views it is not sufficient. It was said, that the teachers do not present in international conferences, this must also be changed.
- The department concentrates very much to creativity, but what we saw is lack of innovative concepts from the students. It is not so important for design students to "invent" new products but much more to become "interpreters" of new technologies, new materials etc. The department is well equipped but there is a lack in more experimental ways of finding new design concepts.
- MA programmes must also be orientated to research, but the panel could not see this. In a MA program more theoretical aspects must be discussed. It was also said, that design projects are mostly done individual, but it is necessary to do this in groups to reach a more complex level and also to integrate the knowledge of other disciplines. It was shown, that the department wants to offer in the future also courses for:
 - design management;
 - service design;
 - strategic design.These are good steps which they should quickly realize.

3. Teaching staff

The study programme is provided by the staff meeting the legal requirements. The teaching staff is formed by an open competition, as required by the Law of Science and Studies of LR [No. XI -242., 30 -04-2009], the order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania 'On the Approval of the Description of General Requirements of Master Studies Programmes' (No V-826, dated June 3rd, 2010), and the 'Description of the Qualification Requirements for Scholar/Artist Teaching Staff Positions of VAA, the Procedure of Certification, Organization of Competitive Hiring and Granting of Academic Ranks', the document approved by the Senate of VAA [dated 26 May, 2010). The sufficient number of the major study field subjects' is taught by teachers holding a professors academic degree. Every five years teachers have to go through a certification process. Usually the work of organizing and delivery of education in the department makes up to 60 %, scientific (or methodological), or artistic (methodological) - 30 %, and public services – 10 %, of the work load.

The teaching staff include three professors, six associate professors and one lecturer with a PhD.

The modules in theoretical subjects are delivered by lecturers from the departments of Art History, Theory and criticism and the UNESCO Cultural Management and Cultural Policy. The requirement that all MA students have two supervisors one of which has a PhD has been met by using lecturers from other higher education schools.

There is clear evidence in the SER that all lecturers are engaged in applied scientific research and that as with all programmes in the VAA all lecturers have a very good mix of professional design experience and practice and a solid grounding in educational theory and

practice. In addition the VAA provides support for all lecturers to pursue staff development and there is support for lecturers to participate in international lectures and conferences.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The programme is based in the Centre for Design Innovation and has access to excellent facilities. There is dedicated studio space, workshops, exhibition areas and digital design facilities. Facilities include two dedicated classrooms, methodological study room and office accommodation for the staff. Students have access to all facilities in the Centre for Design Innovation on a bookable basis. There are 2 digital design laboratories with 16 Mac computers, a number of scanners and the full range Adobe CS 5 software. The Centre for Design Innovation houses the Design Laboratory which houses new 3D laboratories and workshops with very sophisticated equipment including a five spindle milling CNC centre. The Photographic studio screen printing, sculpture, textile and jewellery workshops are open to all students on the MA on a bookable basis.

In addition students have access to the facilities of the NIDA Art colony when they are working on their research-projecting project. The panel was informed of plans to develop the use of the NIDA Art colony by inviting foreign design lecturers and students to work with the students on the research projecting exercises. There is a specific plan to hold a major workshop in the summer of 2012 in the NIDA colony which will involve students and lecturers working with a major social partner on a live project. This is a very positive innovation which will give the programme a competitive advantage and must be highly commended.

The visit confirmed that students and graduates were satisfied with how the facilities were managed and used. The students also have access to the superb library of the VAA. The visit confirmed that the library resources – books, journals and magazines – were adequate to the needs of a BA in Graphic Design. The investment by the VAA in these new facilities is to be highly commended.

5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Since the last evaluation in 2008 the Admission process has been updated and become more targeted and selective. The new policy is to recruit graduates of from BA Design programmes if possible and if there are graduates from other programmes they must complete a programme of supplementary studies. The entrance examination is an interview with a panel where the applicant presents their outline proposal for their MA project. The grade on which the decision to make an offer is made is composed of the grade achieved at BA level, a weighted average of the grades over the 4 years of study and evaluation of a creative work presented to the panel and an evaluation based on the interview.

The number of students admitted to the programme varies 11 to 15 while graduation rates have been somewhat variable. The SER does not provide any specific explanations for the variation in the rates of graduation over the period 2006-2011.

The SER provides a fairly comprehensive list of student participation in artistic and applied research. In the past number of years students have participated in a range of international creative workshops including Design for the City, Wayfinding and The experience of Sustainable Architecture in Italy. Students have taken a active part in Lithuania design week, LITEXPO, ICOGRADA and each year students exhibit in the end of year graduate exhibitions.

The SER provides some detail about student support but is not very specific.

The SER provides a detailed breakdown of how students are assessed but the panel felt that more information about the composition of the Final Project committee. It was also felt that more detail was needed on the how the practical and theoretical sections of the final project were related and how the final grade was determined.

Some data was provided about graduate employment in the SER which reported that nearly 80% per cent of graduates were on employment. The visit confirmed in its meeting with the employers that graduates of the programme were employable but that they were lacking experience in certain very practical aspects related to working in the design and manufacturing industry. However, a number of employers were very complimentary about the calibre of the graduates of the MA in Design programme.

6. Programme management

The management of the programme is organised through the Programme Committee which has the following members. The chair of the committee is the Head of the Department and includes two lecturers, one student, one graduate and one social partner. The head of the Department reports to the Faculty of Postgraduate studies. The committee is responsible for discussing and analysing the results of student surveys, the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, formulating proposals for the improvement of the programme, the composition of study plans, the revision of programme module descriptions and makes proposals about improving all aspects of the programme to the department, the faculty and the VAA.

The newly formed Faculty of Postgraduate Studies plays an active role in establishing and approving the responsibilities of the programme deliverers and the internal QA is based on a number of documents provided by the Faculty.

Data about all aspects of the programme is collected in the department database. This data includes among other things information about student and staff mobility, professional and research activity of staff, student retention rates, details of involvement of social partners, graduate place statistics etc.

The Department and Programme responded to the 2008 external evaluation in great detail and implemented the panel's recommendations where possible. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedures outlined in the SER are extensive and robust and the visit confirmed that there is an extensive internal critical feedback procedure which is actually working. Students and staff confirmed that suggestions, criticisms etc are all taken on board by the relevant committees and have resulted in genuine changes to various aspects of the programme.

The SER outlines in detail the involvement of the various stakeholders – students, graduates and employers – in the Quality Assurance process. These arrangements were confirmed by the various stakeholder groups during the visit and all groups reported a high level of satisfaction with their involvement in the programme. There were regular meetings with the student representatives, graduates were involved in leading workshops and employers reported a good level of satisfaction with the programme. One employer was organising a workshop in the Nida art colony for summer 2012 which is an excellent initiative. The panel agrees with the SER that the internal and external QA measures are effective and efficient.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The programme should concentrate on developing more challenging and innovative briefs for the final graduation project.
2. There should be a greater emphasis on the theory and history of design.
3. Key themes such as design management, service design and strategic design should be integrated into the programme as proposed by the Programme Team.
4. There is too much emphasis on Architecture and the History of Art with many lectures coming from the traditional scientific field. There needs to be more emphasis on cultural, social, ethnological and technological topics and how they relate to the design of

complex objects. This is important if the programme is to reflect the latest advances and achievements in technology and science as well as art.

5. There needs to be more emphasis in the curriculum on product identity and brand identity which is essential if the programme is to achieve its aim of educating designers to function in an international or global context.
6. Develop a number of projects that will help students become familiar with the challenges of working on a design project in the context of manufacturing.
7. Greater familiarity and knowledge about new materials required.
8. More emphasis on presentation and communication skills in the context of client briefing for students.

IV. SUMMARY

The briefs for the final graduation projects need to become more innovative, complex and challenging.

The emphasis on Art and Architecture needs to be reviewed and subjects dealing with current social, ethnological and technological topics need to be introduced.

There is not enough emphasis on product identity and brand identity.

Greater familiarity and knowledge about new materials required.

More emphasis on presentation and communication skills in the context of client briefing for students.

The facilities provided by the Design Innovation Centre are very good.

The response of the Programme Committee to the 2008 evaluation has been exemplary and all of the key recommendations have been implemented.

There is clear evidence that the Programme Committee and Department are committed to a process of change and improvement and that the procedures and mechanisms for the development of the quality of the MA in Design are functioning properly.

The improvement to assessment procedures is a welcome development.

The competition for admission is very good with a high ratio of applicants for each place on the programme.

There is good relationship between students and lecturers.

The involvement of graduates and alumni on the programme is commendable and should be further developed.

There is good relationship with the social partners, employers and the Lithuanian design industry.

The provision of creative workshops for staff and students by one of the employers is a very positive development and should be developed.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Design* (state code – 621W20001, 62402M102) of Vilnius academy of arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	17

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

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

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

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

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof dr. Kieran Corcoran

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. dr. Bernhard E. Bürdek

Doc. dr. Virginija Daukantienė

Prof. dr. Arvids Endzins

Prof. dr. Pirjo Hirvonen

Rasa Povilaitienė