



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos  
***KOSTIUMO DIZAINO PROGRAMOS (621W20002,  
62402M105)***  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
***OF FASHION DESIGN (621W20002, 62402M105)***  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Vilnius Academy of Arts

Grupės vadovas:  
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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Kostiumo dizainas
Valstybinis kodas	621W20002, 62402M105
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	Fashion design
State code	621W20002, 62402M105
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

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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## 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 MA degree programme in Fashion Design took place in 2008. At that time the programme was titled Costume Design.

The changes in the MA degree programme in Fashion Design has responded comprehensively to the recommendations of the 2008 evaluation in its approach to Aims and Learning Outcome, Curriculum Design etc and its new emphasis on entrepreneurship. The major recommendation of the evaluation team was that the SER must more clearly explain how master degree study programme contributes to the deepening of knowledge of fashion design as these skills and abilities were fairly general. The developing of study programme was based on this recommendation and it was clearly reflected in the SER.

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### *1. Programme aims and learning outcomes*

The aim of the MA in Fashion Design as defined in the SER is to graduate a professional in fashion design capable of designing and of innovative realization of complex objects of fashion, furnished with skills and experience of scientific and artistic research and having developed a potential to create original concepts of fashion, to constantly broaden one's horizons and engage in self-guided professional accomplishment; to organize work and take leadership, and to collaborate nationally and internationally. The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. It was also clear from the visit that the employers had been consulted about the development of the MA because they stated that they were involved in the discussion about programme development as well as they participated in the discussions after the defence of final master projects.

The SER describes the Learning Outcomes of the programme in detail and they were constantly developed implementing the results of Tuning Project and adopting the aims listed in the Dublin Descriptors by the SER team. The SER clearly identifies the difference between the BA level and the MA level in terms of Learning Outcomes and it is clear that the programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of

qualifications offered. The master degree study programme contributes to the deepening of knowledge of fashion design as the design of new product is based on the theory research. The studies in MA level are devoted to the costume design starting from deeper theory analysis of art trends, through the psychological and philosophical as well as ecological aspects and finishing with the product technical development.

The demand of the programme is motivated on the need of high qualification designers in Lithuania and the European Union (hereinafter – EU) reflected in the Cultural Society Education Programme by the Lithuanian Parliament (the decree of the Lithuanian Parliament on the Approval of the Guidelines for the Transformation of Lithuanian Cultural Policy, of 30 06 2010. Nr. XI-977), highlighted by the survey of the stakeholders and determined based on the collected information by the Study Committee of the Department of Fashion Design and other teachers as well as on the high rate of employment of specialists graduated by the VVA proven by the Labour Exchange written report (90%, others 10% select the doctoral studies in either art or design).

In conclusion, it is clear that the academic content, learning outcomes and the type and level of qualification offered are broadly compatible with each other although the panel believed that the projects and briefs undertaken by students needed to be more based on the international fashion context.

There are some observations about the Aims and Learning Outcomes:

- The programme aims and learning outcomes are clear but are not distributed clearly among the different categories, i.e. general and specific as well as the learning outcomes concerned with the research part partially cover each other.
- The programme aims and learning outcomes are not accessible publicly and for students.
- The programme does not present the links of the learning outcomes of the programme with the ones of each study module.
- The name of the programme is not adequate in both English (Fashion design) and Lithuanian (Kostiumo dizainas, i.e. Costume design) languages.

## ***2. Curriculum design***

The curriculum design of the second cycle programme in Fashion 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 it is also lined up 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 is implemented. Volume of the programme is 120 ECTS. Subjects of study field involve 60 ECTS. 24 ECTS are given for elective subjects. But it must be noted that the volume of the final master project is insufficient, where only 4 ECTS and 20 ECTS are separately given for the preparation and final master thesis while the total volume must be 30 ECTS. The number of subjects studied during one semester within a programme is 5 and in the last semester – 3. Independent work is no less than 30% of the volume of every study subject (In the Programme it varies from 30% to 60%). Study subjects are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive.

The larger part of the content of study field and research study subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies. The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The content of the programme is based on the latest achievements in science, art and technologies, in exception "Forward fashion", "Innovation and Technology of Fashion Design" as well as of optional courses. The cooperation

with the textile programme could be stronger to order to increase the complexity of technical solutions in the student works. The subjects may be more covering the global context of the contemporary fashion. After the remarks of the previous evaluation of the programme in 2008 there were added more courses for forming of the students' skills related to the basics of entrepreneurship which will make graduates more adaptable to changing market conditions.

The committee for the final project evaluation and defence includes 7-9 specialists/experts of authority: teachers of VAA and other higher educational institutions established well known fashion designers, artists or scholars, and representatives of stakeholders. This committee is chaired either by a representative of other specialty of VAA, of another institution of higher education, or stakeholders.

There are some specific observations about the Curriculum Design of the programme:

- The content of not all study field subjects is of higher qualitative problem-solving or scientific innovation level as regards the study content in comparison with the first level studies.
- The content of study module "Innovation and Technology of Fashion Design" could be developed covering more types of clothing materials and technologies. During the visit the expectation of the teaching staff was seen to invite the lectures from the other universities to improve this area of the programme.
- It must be noted that the amount of the credits for final master thesis is not correspondent to the one of the requirements defined in the "The Description of the General Requirements for Master's Degree Study Programmes" where it is stated that final master degree project must be one study subject having the volume of no less than 30 ECTS.

### ***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 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.

VAA creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. The teaching staff of the programme is involved in academic mobility as well as in art activity that directly related to the study programme being reviewed.

The qualifications and the number of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. But the teaching staff could more to inspire the students and give a fresh view and good impact both to the content of the study programme and to students' studies. In addition, visiting teachers from abroad should broaden the fashion attitude and increase understanding of international fashion design and business among the students. Use of professionals working as entrepreneurs as part time or visiting teachers could encourage students' to choose entrepreneurial career after their graduation.

There are some specific observations about the teaching staff:

- Notwithstanding that it stated that the sufficient number of the major study field subjects' is taught by teachers holding a professors academic degree, but the volume of their hours of the every study module taught by them is not evenly distributed.
- It is recommended to increase the research activity directly concerned with the fashion design area of the teaching staff providing theory subjects, to invite the visiting lecturers from abroad and professional from industry as well as to increase the mobility of VAA lecturers.

#### ***4. Facilities and learning resources***

Evidence is provided to indicate that the premises are very good as the new premises were suggested in the Design Innovation Centre. But the teaching and learning equipment: laboratory (sewing and knitting machines) and computer equipment as well as software (CAD/CAM systems: Gerber Technology, AccuMark PDS V-Stitcher, ADPS, Comtense, and other consumables for studies are middling adequate both in their size and quality to the level of the programme. Thus, to have more different kinds of machines used in fashion industry in the VAA laboratories would benefit students' studies and the preparation of the prototypes.

Students also have access to the facilities of the NIDA art colony. The Creative Studio of VAA in Paris offers to teachers (and students) a very good possibility for updating their knowledge of the latest international fashion. This great opportunity should be used more actively.

The higher education institution has adequate arrangements for students' practice as well as students' practice and familiarization-creative workshops are organized in the different fashion enterprises or in other industrial companies.

Teaching material is middling adequate and accessible. The students have access to a well provisioned library and reading room, gallery as well as online access to databases through the library website, students have the possibility to use the inter-library subscription services as well as periodical fashion publications on the internet. Students also use other the libraries of Vilnius. There are also methodological material stored in hard copy and digital formats available to students in the Department of Fashion Design. Coursework material produced by teaching staff is also available. But there is a need to have main up-to-date fashion magazines and fashion books in the library and the access to the web site of WGSN should be restarted.

The observation for improvement of learning resources:

- The department plan for updating of coursework material and reading lists is missing.
- The access to the web site of WGSN should be restarted as soon as possible as it represents the newest trends of the global fashion.

#### ***5. Study process and students' performance assessment***

The admission requirements to VAA study programme in Fashion Design are well-founded in the SER. The SER considers that candidates to enter the master study programme must have BA degree in fashion/costume design or in a similar programme or individuals having another education equal to such a qualification degree. Candidates compete on the basis of the sum of their grade points from the BA studies and other criteria: Bd1 – grade point for the BA graduation project; Dv2 – weighted median of grade points for four years of study of BA programme (without graduation project); Kd – grade point for the candidates creative work presented for the panel (candidates below five grade points in ten-point system are not invited to participate in the competition); Etp – point grade for the thesis of MA theme and interview with

the examination panel. Over the past five years the biggest examination grade point was 59.0 (from 60), and the smallest – 44.

The VAA provides an adequate organization of the study process that ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Owing to the small number of MA students in Fashion Design “tailor made” studies and research are possible and therefore variation of individual competences is strength for the graduates in the labor market. Student workload is distributed rationally for the achievement of intended learning outcomes. Classes are scheduled in a consistent manner. The time-tables are developed with the aim of allowing students sufficient time for practice and self-dependent work alongside with classroom hours. The schedule of examinations is coordinated with the representatives of MA students. Examinations and submissions of work are distributed evenly over two years of study. Students have the opportunity to repeat courses and retake examinations. The procedure for repeating and retaking is established by the VAA Study Regulations. The drop-out rate of students was changing over the analyzed years and varied from 33% (2007/2008) to 17 % (2010/2011).

The students are encouraged to participate in research, artistic and applied research activities. The students show their final, yearly and creative collections in other fashion projects, international exhibitions, festivals and competitions outside the Academy. Students are involved in theoretical research work and creative design throughout the entire period of MA studies reaching culmination and summing up in the graduation project, its theoretical and creative/practical parts.

The relationship between teachers and students seem to be good and intimate. The maintenance of good spirit in teachers’ team work as well as a positive and open minded attitude between teachers and tutors will increase students’ motivation in achieving high results in their studies and should strengthen also trust of their future in work life and fashion business.

Students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes, but the activity is low. Over the period of evaluation, two MA programme students participated in student exchange in the frame of Erasmus/Socrates programme (duration - 1-3 months).

The higher education institution ensures an adequate level of academic and social support. Academic information on the study programmes is provided on VAA web site, at the Department of Fashion Design, and at the Dean’s Office. There are a variety of means by which students can seek advice and request individual consultations, practical classes and exhibitions/assessments.

Career guidance is available from programme lecturers’ contacts with the employees.

Students can participate in sports or healthy life style activities, have free access to information on upcoming cultural events and projects, have preferential access to museums and exhibitions and reduced price for public transportation, can use free of charge, the spaces of the Academy to organize exhibitions and presentations. The school has specialized lifts and entrance for wheelchairs. There are also state financed motivation scholarships for both state financed and self-financed students.

Dormitory accommodation is available to students who are not resident in Vilnius city.

The assessment system of students’ performance is clear and adequate, in exception the elective theoretical courses. A ten point grading scale is used for all assessments. The assessment criteria applied to assess Graduation Projects are discussed at the meetings of the Assessment Commission and are based on the system applied in course subjects of the Department of Fashion Design.

Professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers’ expectations. According Labour Exchange report, the rate of employment of specialists graduated by the VAA is 90% (others 10% select the doctoral studies in either art or design).

There are some observations about the study process and students’ performance:



- The schedule of tasks and their influence on final evaluation for elective theoretical and practical subjects are not discussed.
- The activity of the students' mobility programmes is low.

## **6. Programme management**

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. An appropriate responsibility chain exists for the approval, administration and quality assurance of the programme. The Committee of the Study Programmes in Fashion Design prepares and deliberates proposals regarding programme quality and presents evaluation conclusions. Decisions regarding quality improvements of the study programme are made on a collegial basis. Individual teachers coordinating a particular subject programme and other specialists implement these decisions. At the beginning and at the end of each academic year teachers discuss recommendations regarding programme enhancement with their students and stakeholders. These recommendations are in turn discussed by the Committee. The changes in the study programme are approved by the Faculty Board; the study plans for the coming year are approved by the Senate. The current VAA Study Regulations detail the process of the study programme administration.

The information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analyzed. A survey of students' opinion is conducted two times per year, initiated by the leadership of the Academy, the Student Representation and the Methodological Committee of the Department. But the results of students survey are not fully discussed with the students.

The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. Quality of the study programme on the level of the Academy is performed by the Study Commission of the Senate of VAA according to the Study Regulations of VAA. The effectiveness of study programme is ensured by adequate and regular quality assessment, participation of stakeholders in the work of the Study Programme Committee, in discussions at student work exhibitions/assessments, at the defence of Graduation Projects. Attempts are put to introduce a methodology of the programme evaluation proposed by the Tuning Project, supported by the European Commission and the Directorate General for Education and Culture. Quality monitoring, study quality compliance with the ECTS system, relevance of the content of studies, study quality control through participation of stakeholders, a well-balanced ratio of generic and subject related competencies in the Master's Degree study programme are the main means of quality assurance.

Decisions regarding quality improvements of the study programme are made on a collegial basis, which is an advantage for the programme due to the common commitment.

Social partners are involved in the evaluation and improvement processes of study programme. This secures the competitiveness of the programme in the changing work environment. The students should be more intensively involved in the quality improvement of programme as the active cooperation with students and their feedback is needed when developing and improving the quality of programme. So, the internal quality assurance measures may be more effective and efficient.

This is an observation about the programme management:

- The visit lead to state, that the students were not involved in the preparation of SER except in chapter of students' performance assessment.
- The students should be more intensively involved in the quality improvement of programme.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The name of the programme is not adequate in both English (Fashion design) and Lithuanian (Kostiumo dizainas, i.e. Costume design) languages.
2. The programme learning outcomes should be more clearly distributed among the different categories: where they are the general and where – the specific, as well as they should not cover each other and be accessible publicly and for students.
3. The links of the learning outcomes of the programme with the ones of each study module should be defined in the programme.
4. The content of some of study field subjects should be discussed so that all of them would be of higher qualitative problem-solving or scientific innovation level.
5. The list of optional subjects should be reviewed and the choice of these subjects should be discussed in more detail in the programme.
6. The final master degree project must be one study subject having the volume of no less than 30 ECTS.
7. The list of supplementary Subjects should be presented and their choice should be discussed in the programme.
8. The annual pedagogical workloads of lecturers in hours, the volume of their hours of the every study module taught by them as well as the research activity directly concerned with the fashion design area of the teaching staff providing theory subjects should be discussed.
9. The department plan for updating of coursework material and reading lists should be discussed in the programme and the access to the web site of WGSN should be restarted as soon as possible.
10. The students should be more intensively involved in the quality improvement of programme.

#### IV. SUMMARY

The name of the programme is not fully in line with the curriculum and outcomes. If the name of the programme is Fashion Design there should be more emphasis on contemporary fashion design.

The cooperation with textile programme could be stronger in order to create added value to both programmes.

The importance and meaning of exchange studies and internship should be more emphasized in the curriculum.

Currently there are cooperation and projects with stakeholders but teaching/course in cooperation with Kaunas University of Technology and foreign design schools/universities would be beneficial. Entrepreneurship aspect should be included in as many courses as possible and improvement of connections to potential employers is needed.

The Creative Studio of VAA in Paris should be used more actively.

It is positive that so many of teaching staff seems to be very committed to developing the content of studies, but the visiting of teachers from abroad as well as of professionals working as entrepreneurs should be more intensively initiated.

The relationship between teachers and students seem to be good and intimate. The maintenance of good spirit in teachers' team work as well as a positive and open minded attitude between teachers and tutors will increase students' motivation in achieving high results in their studies and should strengthen also trust of their future in work life and fashion business.

Facilities seem to be fairly good. To have more different kinds of machines used in fashion industry would benefit students' studies and the preparation of the prototypes. There is a need to have main up-to-date fashion magazines and fashion books in the library and the access to the web site of WGSN should be restarted.

Owing to the small number of MA students in Fashion Design "tailor made" studies and research are possible and therefore variation of individual competences is strength for the graduates in the labor market.

Decisions regarding quality improvements of the study programme are made on a collegial basis, which is an advantage for the programme due to the common commitment.

Social partners and stakeholders are involved in the evaluation and improvement processes of study programme. This secures the competitiveness of the programme in the changing work environment.

The students should be more intensively involved in the quality improvement of programme as the active cooperation with students and their feedback is needed when developing and improving the quality of programme.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Fashion design* (state code – 621W20002, 62402M105) 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	2
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	2
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>14</b>

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

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

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

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

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