



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos

Kauno fakulteto

**GRAFINIO DIZAINO PROGRAMOS (621W20003,
62402M108)**

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF GRAPHIC DESIGN (621W20003, 62402M108)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius Academy of Arts
Kaunas faculty

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Grafinis dizainas
Valstybinis kodas	621W20003, 62402M108
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 bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-16, No. 565

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Graphic design
State code	621W20003, 62402M108
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	1997-05-16, 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 Kaunas faculty (hereafter, VVA KF) 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 Graphic Design took place in 2008. At that time the programme document allowed for specialisation in either Graphic Design or Industrial Design and a major recommendation of the evaluation team was that the actual title of the programme – MA in Graphic Design-was potentially misleading and should be changed to bring it into line with accepted international practice. In response the programme has now been reformulated as an MA with a single specialisation in Graphic Design and the Industrial Design stream has now been reconfigured as a separate MA in Design. The reformulation of the programme as a single specialisation also allows the programme to achieve the key aim of deepening the student's knowledge of graphic design to the required level of an MA programme.

The new programme has also 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.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aim of the MA in Graphic Design as defined in the SER is to prepare Graphic Design specialists who are educated to an accepted international level and can function as professional graphic designers either as sole traders or as part of a team in national and international contexts. The decision to have a single specialisation in Graphic Design was taken in response to the main recommendation of the previous panel to restructure the MA and bring it into line with international practice. In addition a graduate of the MA in Graphic Design will also be able to undertake a PhD programme of studies in Design. The SER describes the general and specific learning outcomes of the programme in detail and the SER team clearly understands

how these relate to the Dublin Descriptors, the Tuning Template for Design and the general regulations of the VAA. The SER clearly identifies the difference between the BA level and the MA level in terms of learning outcomes and specifically identifies the ability to work independently and creatively in the field of Graphic Design as a key feature of the MA programme. The correlation of the Learning Outcomes with the individual subjects on the programme 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.

It was clear from the visit that the employers had been consulted about the redevelopment of the MA as a single specialisation in Graphic Design and that the learning outcomes reflected the needs of the labour market and also the needs of society at large in the local area. 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 challenging on a creative and conceptual level.

There are 2 specific observations about the aims and learning outcomes:

- There should be some reference to Graphic Design and to the level the graduate will operate at in the general statement of Aims. For example, a statement to the effect that “A graduate of the programme will work as a “senior designer” could be included.
- The role of the graduate in the design industry should be mentioned in the Validity of the Programme Aims.

2. Curriculum design

In response to the recommendations of the 2008 external evaluation report, the programme has been restructured as a specialist MA in Graphic Design. The programme is built around a number of Core modules in Research and Design which are taken in the first three semesters. These are supplemented with a number of new modules Visual Art and Context 1 and 2 and a series of modules on topics that are relevant to contemporary design practice. Students are also introduced to the key elements of Entrepreneurship through a series of seminars and lectures by industry specialists. The programme is designed to facilitate an individual creative approach but follows a shared structured model over the 4 semesters. In semester 1, an initial proposal is developed based on an analysis of the general context of the field and in semester 2, an intensive research process takes place which leads to the formulation of a definite project proposal in Semester 3. Semester 4 concentrates on the realisation of the project and the completion of the written report or thesis. The programme content is designed to achieve the broad objectives of deepening knowledge of contemporary graphic design, providing advanced problem solving skills while giving students a thorough grounding in research methodology and enabling them to develop an individual creative design practice.

In general the design of the curriculum in relation to the structure and sequencing of the core subjects is acceptable and the types of modules offered are appropriate to a programme at this level. However, the structure of the Final Project needs to be clarified so as to explain the relationship between the theoretical and practical sections. It is not clear from the Module Descriptor supplied in the Annexes where and how the theoretical part is located in the Final Project. In addition the level and complexity of the final project needs to be reviewed to ensure that the complexity of the project is adequate for the purpose of achieving the intended learning outcome at MA level. A clearer statement of the relationship between the Research modules 1, 2 and 3 and design 1, 2 and 3 could be included in the SER. There should also be more detail about the choice of supplementary subjects included in the SER. There is one very important critical observation the panel wish to make and that is that the level and complexity of the final project

needs to be reviewed to ensure that the complexity of the project is adequate for the purpose of achieving the intended learning outcome at MA level.

3. Teaching Staff

The lecturing staff meet the necessary legal requirements, the qualifications of staff are sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes and there is a sufficient number of qualified staff. There are 19 staff teaching on the programme including 4 professors, 8 associate professors and 7 lecturers. Ten of the teachers have a doctoral degree, 21% are professors and 53% are associate professors.

There is an active programme of guest lectures given by invited design industry specialists and a number of international visiting lecturers have participated in the programme giving seminars and holding creative workshops. The subjects covered include media and communications, advertising, psychology, new technologies as well as graphic design and the visual arts.

There have been a number of significant appointments to the teaching staff since 2008 and most notably with the appointment of a new head of department. There have been changes to the team that delivers humanities and social sciences subjects and the new Visual Art and Context modules are delivered by invited graphic designers and artists.

A key feature of many of the members of the lecturing team on the programme is the mix of professional design experience and practice with a solid grounding in educational practice and theory.

The visit confirmed that there is support for staff development including attendance at conferences and general research.

4. Facilities and learning resources

There has been a huge improvement in the facilities available to the programme which were virtually non-existent in 2008. New dedicated studio space and new workshops have been provided and students confirmed that the resources of the Design Innovation Centre in Vilnius are available to all students in Kaunas.

Students also have access to the facilities of the NIDA art colony.

The Digital Design laboratory with 14 workstations, 2 scanners and 2 printers is a major and necessary addition to the programme but will

All stakeholders including lecturers, students, graduates, alumni and employers praised the VAA for the major improvements to studio, workshop and lecturing facilities at Kaunas. It must be noted that these improvements to facilities have simply brought the programme to what is the minimum standard level internationally and the improvements must continue.

The improved facilities and equipment including digital equipment mean that the aims and learning outcomes of the MA in Graphic design are now achievable.

5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Since the last evaluation in 2008 the Admission procedure has been completely updated and become more targeted and selective. The new policy is to recruit graduates from BA Design programmes if possible and graduates of other programmes such as Fine Art can be admitted but must complete a programme of supplementary studies. The focus on recruiting design graduates

means that students can begin to specialise immediately in the area of Graphic Design unlike the old programme which had to devote a portion of the curriculum to the study of conversion type modules. The main effect is that the programme can achieve the deepening of knowledge which is essential to achieving the level required for a specialist MA programme. The panel suggests that some more detail on the scoring system for the Admissions procedure would be welcome.

The SER provides a detailed list of students participation in artistic and applied research activities. In the past number of years students have participated in the following public activities: the 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 Nordplus, the “Design of the Curonail Spit” international creative workshops, Design Week, Vilnius, “5555” professional education event of the Lithuanian Design Association and the ICOGRADA conference in Vilnius in May 2011. The best of the final degree projects have been published and exhibited publicly in various public venues such as “Akademija” and “Titanikas”. The SER also provides a list of lectures by international designers and the programme of visiting international lecturers is to be commended. The VAA provides an adequate level of creative support for students by helping students participate in a range of public exhibitions. Transport is provided for students who wish to travel to other centres in Lithuania to exhibit their work. The VAA has a close relationship with the Lithuanian Graphic Design Association and helps students participate in LGDA events, conferences and exhibitions.

The SER provides a detailed break down of the how students are assessed but the panel felt that more information was required on the composition of the Final project committee. It also felt that more detail was needed on how the practical and theoretical sections of the final project were interrelated and how the final grade was determined. In section on grading it would be useful to include some extra information on how the grading system, the assessment criteria and the learning outcomes relate to each other. Some of this detail was provided during the meetings with the staff and should be incorporated into the SER.

The SER provides details of graduate employment and reports that graduates of the MA in Graphic Design have been quite successful in getting employment in advertising or design firms. A number of graduates had been operating as sole traders and others were in the process of establishing their own design business. The panel was informed that graduates are employed at a level commensurate with the MA qualification and are sometimes put in charge of small design teams. The panel felt that the level at which graduates of the MA Graphic Design were employed was worth further investigation.

6. Programme management

The management of the programme is organised through the Programme Committee which has a minimum of 6 members. The chair of the committee is the Head of the Department and includes two lecturers, one student, one graduates and one social partner. 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.

Data about all aspects of the programme is collected in the department data base. 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 major improvement in communication initiated by the new Head of Department. The panel agrees with the SER that the internal and external QA measures are effective and efficient.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The level and complexity of the final project needs to be reviewed to ensure that the complexity of the project is adequate for the purpose of achieving the intended learning outcome at MA level.
2. A clearer statement of the relationship between the Research modules 1,2 and 3 and design 1, 2 and 3 could be included in the SER.
3. The level at which graduates of the MA Graphic Design are initially employed should be investigated.
4. The structure of the Final Project needs to be clarified so as to explain the relationship between the theoretical and practical sections. It is not clear from the Module Descriptor supplied in the Annexes where and how the theoretical part is located in the Final Project.
5. There should be some reference to Graphic Design and the level the graduate will operate at in the general statement of Aims, i.e. “a graduate of the programme will work as a “senior designer”.
6. The role of the graduate in the design industry should be mentioned in the Validity of the Programme Aims.
7. The choice of supplementary subjects should be explained in more detail in the SER.
8. The volume of independent work in the elective theoretical and study course subjects needs to be checked to see if it’s not below 30%.
9. The composition of the membership of the committee for the final project evaluation needs to be discussed and clarified.

IV. SUMMARY

The mapping of Learning Outcomes with the content of individual modules is a very welcome addition to the programme documentation.

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 Graphic 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 an excellent relationship between students and lecturers.

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

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

The briefs and content of the Final Projects need to be re-examined with a view to developing more challenging and sophisticated content which is appropriate to a MA programme.

There is an insufficient level of digital design or design for screen on the programme and this needs to be re-examined immediately e.g. Design for Apps needs to be included in the curriculum.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Graphic design* (state code – 621W20003, 62402M108) of Vilnius academy of arts Kaunas faculty 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	3
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	4
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	18

*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:

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Doc. dr. Virginija Daukantiene

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