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VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *SKANDINAVISTIKA*
(*valstybinis kodas – 612R61001*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES* (*state code - 612R61001*)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Skandinavistika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612R61001
Studijų sritis	Humanitariniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Skandinavų filologija
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės studijos (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Skandinavistikos bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2011-12-16

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Scandinavian studies</i>
State code	612R61001
Study area	Humanities
Study field	Scandinavian philology
Type of the study programme	University Studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (4)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor in Scandinavian Studies
Date of registration of the study programme	16 th December 2011

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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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.	Description of students’ practice organisation
2.	Examples of students’ practice reports

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

The basis of the evaluation of the Scandinavian Studies BA study programme (state code 612R61001) is the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) written in 2015, its annexes and the site visit of the expert group to Vilnius University in May 2015. The Self-Evaluation Report (66

p. plus CVs and course descriptions) has been written by a team composed of eight persons: three Associate Professors, one lecturer, one assistant lecturer, one administrator, one student and one representative of social partners. The tasks of the self-evaluation are clearly defined (SER, p. 3), and the report is precise and comprehensive.

The visit took place on 5th and 6th May and incorporated all required meetings with different groups: the administrative staff of the Faculty of Philology, staff responsible for the preparation of self-evaluation documents, teaching staff, students of all levels of study, alumni, and social partners. The expert group inspected various facilities (classrooms, libraries, IT provision), examined samples of students' work, such as course work and examination material. The site visit concluded with the expert group presenting its overview of the visit and general conclusions to the self-evaluation team and members of staff. After the visit, the team met to discuss and agree the content of this report, which represents the members' consensual views.

The Scandinavian Studies BA study programme is run by the Centre of Scandinavian Studies (the Centre), belonging to the Faculty of Philology (the Faculty), pursuant to all the legal acts of the Country and to the rules of the University. VU Division of Scandinavian Studies was established in 1991 as the Department of Scandinavian Studies. In 2006, it was renamed a centre.

The Faculty comprises 10 academic departments and 5 centres, which carry out research and study programmes. The Faculty is headed by the Faculty Council and the Dean. The administration of the Faculty consists of the Dean and Vice-deans. There are 243 members of academic and research staff and about 1470 students. The Faculty offers 10 Bachelor study programmes, Master study programmes and doctoral studies in the field of philology.

The Centre offers one *Scandinavian Studies* BA programme and two postgraduate MA programmes in *Scandinavian Studies* and *Scandinavian and European Studies*. In addition, a minor programme in *Scandinavian Studies* is available for students at the Faculty. The Centre is the only institution in Lithuania providing study courses of this kind and scope: Danish, Norwegian, Swedish languages, cultures and history, and partially Icelandic and Finnish. The Centre has 21 full-time or part-time teachers: 3 professors, 6 associate professors (Doctors), 4 Doctors of Humanities, 7 Lecturers and 1 Assistant lecturer.

The Centre contributes to the field of *Scandinavian Literature, Philology and Linguistics, Translation Theory* and *Lexicography*. It publishes a series of academic and educational books under the title of *Scandinavistica Vilnensis* and organises international research conferences and seminars, e.g. the conferences *Feast, Play and Puzzles in Scandinavian*

Studies. The 20th Anniversary Conference of the Centre of Scandinavian Studies and Children's Literature—Trends and Taboos. Two current teachers of the Centre defended their doctoral dissertations at the Faculty in 2012.

The current Scandinavian Studies BA programme was approved in December 2011, replacing the Bachelor study programme in *Scandinavian Philology* (SER, p.11) The reform was motivated by students' interests and trends at European universities. As stated in SER, the BA programme under analysis had only undergone an evaluation process as a new programme. Now self-evaluation is being performed for the first time, almost three years after the programme's registration and the start of activity implementation.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No 1-55 of 19 March 2007 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, as amended on 11 November 2011. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 5th and 6th May 2015.

1. **Dr. Irina Moore (team leader)** *University of Wolverhampton, Senior lecturer, United Kingdom.*
2. **Prof. dr. Hanna Lehti-Eklund**, *Helsinki University, professor, Finland.*
3. **Dr. Sturla Berg-Olsen**, *Language Council of Norway, Senior adviser, Norway*
4. **Snorre Karkkonen Svensson**, *UAB Nordisk, Director, Lithuania/ Norway*
5. **Ms. Alisa Stunžaitė**, *student of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Education with an emphasis on TESOL*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The general aim of the Scandinavian Studies BA programme according to the SER, is to develop highest-level professional skills, covering language skills, and fundamentals within linguistics, literary theory and area studies, for work connected to this area or for further education on MA level.

The Memorandum on Nordic Languages, signed by the Lithuanian Ministries of Social Security and Labour, Foreign Affairs, Economy, and Education and Science in the autumn of 2011 increased the strategic importance of learning of Scandinavian languages and cultures in Lithuania (SER p. 6). Discussions with the programme management and social partners showed

that the reform was also facilitated by the steadily increasing demand in linguistic expertise in Scandinavian languages in Lithuania, but a market analysis with specific numbers is not shown in the Self-evaluation report.

The aims of the *Scandinavian Studies* BA programme include the following areas of competences: Scandinavian languages (mainly Danish, Norwegian or Swedish) and their literature, geography and culture. The communicative competences in the aforementioned Scandinavian languages and in translation/interpreting skills should be consistent with the CEFR level B2. The programme aims and learning outcomes, as presented in SER, are accessible on the webpage of the Scandinavian Centre intended for students and entrants: www.skandinavistika.flf.vu.lt, now <http://www.flf.vu.lt/struktura/katedros/skandinavistikos-centras>. On the website, they are, however, presented in a very general manner and do not correspond fully with the statements made in the Self-evaluation report.

In order to achieve the aims of the programme, detailed lists of these competences and learning outcomes are presented in SER (Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4, pp. 12–16). The aims of the programme and its learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional requirements, take into account public needs and the needs of the labour market. They mainly correspond with the activities performed by professional philologists and translators/or interpreters. Abilities in intercultural communication, which are mentioned among the requirements for specialists, are also developed. However, the curriculum content could be more realistic and focused on students' needs (e.g. teaching skills).

The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The programme aims at providing universal education and educating specialists according to the mission of Vilnius University. The description of the programme aims is also compatible with the stipulations in the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and the Statute of Vilnius University (SER, p. 13). However, the ultimate aim of the programme (SER, p. 11), achievement of strong B2 level according to CEFR could be defined more precisely (see section 2.2 on curriculum design for more details).

The name of the programme (*Scandinavian Studies*) is compatible with the name of the field of study and its learning outcomes, which include Scandinavian languages, linguistics, literature, culture, history, social and political knowledge of Scandinavia at different levels. The content of modules/subjects of the programme mostly develops gradually at different stages of studies, although the choice of certain modules at level 1 seems somewhat puzzling (see section 2.2 on curriculum design for more details). After closely analysing the curriculum design and

after discussions with staff and students, the expert team noted that there is clear evidence of logical incremental progression of modules/subjects content from level to level. This corresponds mostly to planned learning outcomes.

After the meetings with administrative staff, students, and stakeholders, the evaluation team concluded that the aims and learning outcomes are strictly based on the academic requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. They are consistent with the type and level of studies. Level of qualification offered is of high value and is closely linked with future employment opportunities. The study programme is compatible with learning outcomes, content and qualifications offered. The minor suggestion of the Expert team is to emphasize teaching skills as an important part of the learning outcomes. Moreover, there is generally a need for a difference in aims for BA and MA programmes, where emphasis on practical skills is more suitable for BA programme, whereas deeper philological focus is more suitable for the MA programmes.

2.2. Curriculum design

The Scandinavian Studies MA programme comprises a total of 240 credits, organised in 4 blocks: 1) General university education, 15 credits, 2) compulsory subjects including BA thesis: 150 credits; 3) chosen subjects within the field of study: 45 credits; 4) Subjects of free choice: 45 credits. For students taking a minor, the minor has 60 credits, at chosen subjects within the field 30 credits. This curriculum design meets the legal requirements set out for higher education study programmes in Lithuania. The subjects are spread evenly. Generally the modules are consistent with the level of the studies. The following suggestions from the team are for further development and refinement of an in general good curriculum. There could be some adjustment regarding the design of the curriculum and also some adjustments in the offered subjects. It is positive that the students get an introduction to Scandinavian philology as a part of their studies, but for instance, translation of Gothic texts in first years of BA studies in Scandinavian studies when they are on A2 level in their Scandinavian major language is not appropriate with the level, although it might be good for development of analytical skills.

The usage of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR, http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/source/framework_en.pdf) has several advantages; comparability, support for the teachers in planning their lessons, as self-assessment for students and detailed criteria for assessment. That the Centre has chosen to use CEFR in their programmes is therefore positive. However, it seems to be implemented in the programmes somewhat cursory and inconsistently. For instance, the number of hours and level

do not go together as in the case of first semester Danish and Norwegian, where the target for students is to achieve only A1 level after 160 contact hours for Norwegian and Danish (The Swedish programme has A2.1 as a target, and that seems closer to reality). 160 contact hours seems to be excessive for this level, taken into consideration that students already have a good command of English entering the university and mostly have recent experience in learning from secondary school. And also the content of the programme suggests a higher level; although for A1 level learners are only expected to be able to write some simple separate sentences, weekly essay writing is mentioned as a way of working in the first semester Norwegian programme. The Expert team did not have a chance to see first semester exams papers, but the level of mid-term Danish test already suggests that A1 level has been achieved already.

Language skills mentioned in CEFR are not extensively integrated in the modules, mostly they are connected only to the general summary of the CEFR and not to the more than 50 descriptors of skills and sub-skills. Additionally, there are some unclear points regarding the levels. The programmes mentions middle levels B1.1. and B1.2 which are not fully standardised in CEFR, and since explanation is lacking, it is not clear whether it is B1 or B1+ level (between B1 and B2), or whether this meant first part of B1 and second part of B1. During the meetings with staff the team did not receive a clear answer to this. Also, the ultimate aim of the programme (SER, p. 11), achievement of strong B2 level could be defined more precisely (e.g. at B2 according to all descriptors in CEFR, B2+ level or B2 according to all descriptors and C1 according to some of the descriptors). During the meeting with students, it became apparent that they are not sure whether they achieved the required level of language competency.

Several of the modules have good design, for instance Scandinavian Cinematography, Old Icelandic and Celtic, Fundamentals and Cultural Context of Other Scandinavian Languages. The module “Projects in Scandinavian Country Studies“ is targeting skills within web 2.0, that are required by the market and is very useful.

Overall, curriculum design appears to be well structured and logical, although some parts of it could be improved by some amendments. There is lack of consistency, for instance, between the assignment and literature list for Contemporary Norwegian Language, Culture and Society (II), where different literary works are mentioned, which do not appear on the literature list. Although there are 7 contact hours out of 80 devoted to phonetics in the course “Introduction to Linguistics”, one would expect that the course “Scandinavian Linguistics (I–II)“ reaching over two semesters, also included phonetics/phonology, since the other main levels of language are represented.

According to the literature list, modules on Contemporary Scandinavian Language, Stylistics and Translation seem to be lacking an emphasis on the target language for translation –

Lithuanian, although such area as stylistics in the target language is of great importance for translators. It is stated in the SER that developing interpreting skills is one of the aims of the study programme (p. 18), however, modules' literature lists do not contain any sources on the theory of interpreting, nor there any relevant specific topics mentioned in the programme. For some of the modules literature lists do not seem to correspond with the content of the modules (e.g. Contemporary Norwegian Language, Stylistics and Translation (I)). In the module Contemporary Swedish Language, Stylistics and Translation (I/II and II/II) there is no mention of sources on stylistics and translation. In addition, in both Swedish modules it is stated that students should work on translation of fiction, although translation of non-fiction texts would also be desirable.

Several of the modules within literature and culture (e.g. courses about Ibsen, Andersen, Blixen, History of Scandinavian Countries) could benefit from the introduction of a more comparative perspective, both to analyse the Scandinavian impact on Lithuanian cultural life and to understand similarities and differences in cultural and historical processes in Scandinavia and Lithuania.

As it was mentioned in section 2.1, if teaching skills are emphasised as one of the main outcomes of the BA programmes, then an addition of modules focusing on second language acquisition, teaching methodology, and language testing should be considered. This is something that came up during various meetings and is stated in SER (BA, p. 43). Some of the staff have the expertise within this field, but if the existing teaching load does not allow them to teach such modules, the centre should consider co-operation with other departments of the Faculty, since this subject is taught in other programmes.

Although there is some focus on stylistics during the studies, specialized courses in Business Danish/Norwegian/Swedish would be useful, taken into consideration that several of the alumni are expected to work for Nordic companies and governmental and non-governmental organizations, and that several of the present students already do so (SER, p. 43). This course could, for instance, cover inter-cultural communication, stylistics and language use at work; telephone etiquette, correspondence, meetings, as well as different types of non-fiction texts, etc. This course might also be useful in connection to translation.

These new modules could be considered instead of modules students find of limited use after completing their studies (SER, p. 43).

2.3. Teaching staff

The *Scandinavian Studies BA* study programme is implemented by 21 full-time or part-time teachers: 3 Professors, 7 Associate Professors, 4 Lecturers with PhD degree, 8 Lecturers and 5

Assistant Lecturer and one doctoral student, of whom 7 work full time and also external lecturers from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Funding from the international research programmes from Scandinavian countries ensures the continuation of this practice. There are invited academical speakers and visitors also include several distinguished authors writing in Scandinavian languages (SER, p. 22). The study programme provided by the staff meets the legal requirements: scientists teach more than half of the subjects.

Most of the teachers of the *Scandinavian Studies BA* study programme also teach on the *Scandinavian Studies MA* programme and *European Studies MA* programme and on the minor studies programme.

The members of the academic staff implementing the study programme are highly qualified specialists in relevant fields and some are active researchers. Twelve of the full-time and part-time teachers have a doctoral degree; seven are permanent members of staff of the Centre. The Centre's teachers have regular opportunities to go for internships in Scandinavia and participate in methodical summer courses organised by the Scandinavian Ministries of Education and Science (SER, p. 23). The staff is given opportunities to attend courses, seminars, and research projects. Some of the staff also had grants for international academic visits to Scandinavian universities. The higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. However, it was not clear neither from the SER nor from the interviews, whether the University offers pedagogical training courses for new members of teaching staff. In many European universities it is a requirement for all members of staff to have teaching qualifications, and most universities have an established in-house Professional Development courses for new members of staff, which are compulsory and should be completed within the first two years of employment. This is usually a university-wide scheme with slight subject-specific modifications in different faculties. The expert team suggests that such a scheme could be discussed by the Centre with the Senior management and might even taken further for the university-wide implementation. Meanwhile, the Centre might consider internal training for its members without appropriate teaching and other skills, for instance, by a mentoring scheme for the new members lead by its experienced teachers.

The main aim of the BA studies is the acquisition of one of the Scandinavian languages. According to the CVs of the teaching staff, some have SLA as a part of their educational background (Kirsi Podschivalow, Jūratė Kumetaitienė, Jim Degrenius, Aurelija Mickūnaitė Griškevičienė, Jurgita Petronytė, Ringailė Trakymaitė). Moreover, Jurgita Petronytė and Ugnius Mikučionis state Foreign Language Teaching as their scientific interests. But still, this does not

cover all staff that is involved in language teaching. This would be an area where the Centre should enhance professional development of the staff and possibly contribute to an even higher quality of teaching. This could be done either by using internal resources or by inviting visiting lecturers in appropriate disciplines. Based on the materials the expert team was presented during the meetings, one more area where staff might need development is language testing, since the design of language exams does not fully meet the main principles in language testing, for example the principle of validity, i.e. that the test measures what it is meant to measure (see section 2.5 on students' performance assessment for more details).

Several of the teachers on the programme are active researchers in areas that cover lexicography, Scandinavian philology and linguistics and literature, which has resulted in publication of dictionaries and publications international, Baltic and Scandinavian language and literary journals and books, and the some of the members of staff are involved in international research projects. The researchers at the Centre publish the series *Scandinavistica Vilnensis* that has so far produced 9 volumes. The research activity of the staff is adequate, but could be somewhat higher and also more internationally oriented. According to the interviews with the staff, due to the heavy teaching load, the teachers cannot focus on research to the extent they would like to. During our discussions with staff it became apparent that the number of teaching hours on the programme is very high (most teachers teach on both, BA and MA programmes), therefore, teachers cited their high teaching load as a major obstacle in achieving their research aspirations. A pilot scheme aimed at the reduction of contact hours and higher proportion of independent study hours for students may be implemented. This may help with higher staff research activity and outputs. As the Centre has a tradition of good interaction between students and teachers e.g. in extra-curricular activities and student conferences, creating research projects, involving BA students could also be a way of enhancing the teachers' research opportunities

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes of the programme, although the several of the teachers also teach in the 2 MA programmes. This allows the Centre to take into account the educational needs of every student and to ensure individual learning.

The international contacts of the teachers are an important addition to the permanent staff contributing to the quality in teaching, supervision, assessment, activities and conferences at the Centre.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The studies of the BA Scandinavian programme take place in the old building of Vilnius University but the premises of the Centre of Scandinavian Studies (where most of the lectures and seminars are conducted) are new. According to the self-evaluation report (p.25) “Reconstruction of the premises and their adaptation for studies was carried out in the framework of the project “Development of Norwegian and Other Scandinavian Language Studies in Vilnius University in 2008–2010”. During the site visit on 5th May 2015, the team of experts has been given a guided tour of the Centre’s premises and visited various lectures rooms, staff offices, the main university library and the reading room of the Centre. The team of international experts was impressed by the premises occupied by the Scandinavian Centre. The centre has 5 fully furnished modern rooms for the lectures and seminars. The teaching staff has shared rooms to prepare for the lectures or for the individual work. The self-evaluation report (p. 25) also states that students have a specially adapted room with a kitchenette. During the visit the team of experts had visited the room, which was always full of students, chatting, relaxing, and revising. It was also commended during our meeting with the students.

Learning equipment for the programme of BA Scandinavian studies is also impressive. The self-evaluation report (p. 25) stated that the Centre has computerized rooms and an audio-visual laboratory. During the site visit, the experts saw that the rooms are fully equipped with computers; some rooms have TVs instead of multimedia. A new modern laboratory for the language teaching is to be open before in 2015; the expert team saw that the room is under renovation. The centre has a WI-FI connection on its entire territory. A reading room and the Centre’s library are available for work. It is indicated in the self-evaluation report (p. 25), that the library has 6 computerized working places for students.

The self-evaluation report (p. 20) states that students are obliged to have a vocational practice during their studies. During the site visit the expert team did not have a chance to meet any social partners receiving students for practice placements. However, it was learnt that students have many possibilities to complete their practice not only in Lithuania but also in partner institutions abroad. However, for the time being, practice is largely provided by translation companies, according to what the expert team learned during the visit, and there could be more variation in fields.

The Centre’s library for the students of the programme is impressive in its number of resources which exceeds 13 thousand (in English, Lithuanian and various Nordic languages). According to the self-evaluation report (p. 26), the library benefited from donations by social partners during the period between 2011-2014. During the visit the expert team was shown the donations by the Scandinavian organizations, embassies and visiting colleagues from other

universities. The university also has a range of electronic resources, it was learned during the visit that students have access to various electronic databases, which are accessible both from campus and home PCs.

Overall, the facilities and learning resources of the Centre are very impressive, however, there is some room for improvement. We suggest that the percentage of modern monographs and journals on the theory of interpreting and translation should be increased (if funds permit) and valuable publications of the last 5-10 years added to the lists of recommended literature for appropriate modules (in some cases the latest sources on the lists were at least 10 years old). Students would also benefit, if the funds related to language acquisition and teaching methodology would be expanded. It is also recommended for the centre to have a plan for the future, as the number of students is increasing and the present premises may be excellent for the current situation, however the situation may change dramatically due to the increase in the number of students of the study programme.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Vilnius University organizes its admissions process in accordance with the Lithuanian legal requirements outlined in Law No. V-2486 of the Ministry of Education and Science. Relying on the data provided in the self-evaluation report (p. 28 Table 8) the number of entrants for Scandinavian studies has steadily increased, 16 in 2011 to 34 in 2014. It is also indicated in the self-evaluation report (p.29) that the popularity of the programme remains very high. That was confirmed during the meeting with the administration of the programme, it was indicated that the number of applications is 20-30 times bigger than the admissions capacity. The same evidence is present in the self-evaluation report (p. 29 Table 11) stating that in 2012-2014 more students than planned were accepted to the study programme of the Scandinavian studies. The programme appears to be very healthy, as the dropout rate is considerably small. According to the data provided in the self-evaluation report (p.29 & p. 28, Table 8) only 1 student in 2011 and 2 students in 2013 cancelled their studies or were deleted from the students' list. During the meeting with staff and students the team learned that due to the popularity of the course some lectures felt overcrowded and there was a suggestion that, as a result, there might be a diminution in the quality of learning experience.

Information about the study process (study calendar, timetables for lectures and examination sessions, optional courses and free electives, assessment procedure), opportunities for study periods abroad, tuition fees, student grants, funding of studies are provided by the Vice-dean for academic affairs and study coordinators for the Faculty. The timetable for the next semester is announced at the end of the current semester to allow the students to choose optional subjects in

advance. According to the SER, VU Regulations provide guidance for students experiencing academic problems (p. 32). The team was satisfied to learn from discussions with students and staff that the Study Support System generally works well. However, during the site visit, it became apparent that students were not satisfied with the way in which the system of “individual choices” of elective modules is organized. During the meeting with the students it was stated that there are 30 modules listed as elective choices, but in reality the faculty limits the choice to 5 only. Nevertheless, students confirmed that they like to have an opportunity to individualize their study process and they find it useful as they have a chance to acquire additional skills and competences. According to the self-evaluation report the members of the centre are aware of the problem (p. 32) but seem to think that this is only due to the absence of a unified electronic database of all courses taught at the university. The Team of Experts is of the opinion that certain internal changes could be made in order to reduce the existing list of optional modules, focusing more on students’ needs and interests. Maybe a survey of students could be carried out to see what they would like to put on the list. The site visit demonstrated that students have enough information about the study process at the Centre and the University and that the organization of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme.

The self-evaluation report (p. 12, Table 1) states that one of the learning outcomes of the programme is development of cognitive and research skills. However, during the meeting with the administration it was stated that students are actually expected to conduct additional research but prefer to focus on the final thesis only. The teaching staff confirmed that students are not willing to do much additional research on the BA level. The same opinion was expressed by the students. The annual conference for presenting a research conducted is organized only for the 4th year students to pre-defend their BA thesis.

Students have very good opportunities and are very much encouraged to participate in mobility programmes. Most of them use this opportunities to spend a semester or two abroad and find it of use. Self-evaluation report supports the evidence of mobility programmes functioning properly. It is indicated (p. 35) that university has 111 bilateral agreements with other universities, 11 are Scandinavian universities. More than 30 students took the opportunity to experience the study process in foreign universities (data from SER p. 35-36, Table 13).

The university provides good academic support. Teachers are available for consultations; their schedules are well organized and clear. Individual consultations are available with all members of teaching staff. Even more, students have a chance to consult teaching staff via email. During the visit, it was learnt that students and teachers had developed good working relationship, students indicated that one of the best things about the programme is great relationship with the teaching staff. However, it also became clear that the support for students’

independent work provided by the teachers is not governed by a definite system; it is done mostly on the ad hoc basis. It is advised that the introduction of such a system be considered.

The university provides good social support as well, as students are often encouraged to do joint translations with the teaching staff. The University usually organizes various events, it is stated not only in the self-evaluation report (p. 36) but also confirmed by the students; and students are willing not only to organize them but also to participate there. The expert team was satisfied with the way the extra-curricular activities are organised. Students participate annual spring research conference; they have different opportunities to be engaged in cultural, sport and other activities offered by VU Cultural Centre and Health and Sports Centre, Student Representative Office (faculty and central) and others. Students also have a voice in programme development process, as there are students' representatives in the group responsible for the SER writing. Students also stated that they had developed a close relationship with the students from the other years and find it very useful, as senior students help to cope with various problems, for instance choice of elective courses. On the other hand, students expressed their dissatisfaction with the system of scholarships. It was indicated that there are very few chances to receive a scholarship, as the academic results have to be excellent. Only students with the average of 9,5-9,7 can apply for the scholarship. On the other hand, relying on the self-evaluation report (p. 37 (59)) socially disadvantaged, living alone, disabled, the students whose working capacity is less than 45% or the students whose parents are dead can apply for the social scholarship. Onetime social scholarship is available for the students who experienced loss of a family member; scholarships for particularly good results in other spheres could be received. Full time students may apply for the accommodation.

The assessment system (data from the SER p. 34) (a 10 point system) is chosen by the teachers in accordance with anticipated learning outcomes and assessment methods. The assessment is objective. None of the students or alumni the expert team spoke with could remember a case when he/she had been assessed subjectively. The students also stated that regular feedback is provided for all assessments in either oral or written form. However, there does not seem to be a formal system which ensures the objectivity of assessment. A unified transparent system of assessment feedback should be discussed and implemented. Assessment criteria should be clearly stated in the course descriptions and on the feedback sheets for all assignments. These should be comparable across all languages taught in the Centre. At some universities (for instance, in Norway), all exam papers are double marked, and one of the markers is an external marker (from another university in order to ensure objectiveness). However, this demands extra resources, and an easier way of doing this could be modelled on the European moderation and double marking system, which aims to provide transparent and

objective feedback by ensuring that all written assignments awarded top and failed grades are marked by a second tutor. A further 10 % sample of other grades is also marked by a second tutor. In case of large discrepancies between the marks by different tutors, the marks should be moderated. The process of moderation/double marking should be documented (copies of moderated scripts and moderation sheets signed by tutors are usually kept for two years).

In addition, many language departments across Europe choose to audio/video record students' oral performance, which, in turn, is also moderated/double marked. The form of moderation sheets and procedures could be established internally.

The expert team suggests that the Centre could run a pilot moderation project and then suggest it to the Senior management for the university-wide implementation (as it is done in the majority of universities across Europe).

During the visit, the expert team learned that some of the teachers had started to use Moodle as a platform e.g. for sharing materials, for communication and collaboration between teachers and students and for handing in and assessing students' work. This is a very positive development, and the expert team recommends that it is also adopted by the rest of the teaching staff. Moreover, the teaching staff could discuss the use of flipped classroom as one of the means of reducing the teaching load, but still keeping the good results of the students. The flipped classroom is a pedagogical model which reverses the traditional educational arrangement by delivering some teaching (for instance, recorded lectures and explanations) on-line, outside the classroom, and moving some typical home work activities like exercises into the classroom where there also will be more time to e.g. individual follow up, group work and discussions.

The expert team also has remarks about the design of the tests, as they are generally not up to date within the field of language testing. Many of the tasks in the language exams the team was presented to at the visit do not comply with basic principles in language testing. Several of the tasks had been taken from teaching material and other tests rather uncritically. Many of the tasks in several of the exams were of the type "use the verb in correct form". Such task may be suitable for training, but are not good for testing since the students are prompted. The exams are also to a quite large extent form-orientated on the cost of function. In one case, similar tasks were even repeated on different levels. Moreover, criteria as "Percentage of written test tasks performed correctly" (several of the language programmes) is used for language assessment since correctness is only a part of linguistic competence, and to give this aspect this large role seems unsuitable. Training of the staff in language testing and to a greater extent to implement CEFR would be helpful.

After graduation students find employment immediately and sometimes even during their studies. Administration and the teaching staff confirmed that students of Scandinavian

studies are in demand. However, university does not conduct any analysis of labour market needs. After graduation majority of the students choose an occupation of teaching but the programme itself does not provide any teachers' qualifications. Even more, there are no obligatory subjects related to second language acquisition or teaching methodology. Even though the self-evaluation report states that majority of the students plan to continue their studies on the second cycle, students expressed an opposite opinion.

2.6. Programme management

VU 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 each programme is the Study Programme Committee, which reports to the Council of the Faculty at least once a year. The current Study Programme Committee for the Scandinavian Studies BA programme, approved in 2013, consists of 7 persons: 5 academic representatives from the Centre, 1 student and 1 representative for social partners (SER p. 39).

The SER (p. 39–40) states that the Centre's procedures for ensuring quality encompasses the practice that courses are mostly taught and students' performance assessed by several teachers. Other factors contributing to ensuring the quality of the studies is the fact that visiting teachers from partner institutions contribute to teaching in various ways.

According to the SER (p. 41) student surveys are regularly performed, either verbally or through questionnaires. At the end of each semester data from course evaluations are discussed by the Study Programme Committee and teachers may be asked to implement changes to their courses if deemed necessary. The SER mentions some concrete examples where comments from students lead to changes in the design of the BA programme.

The provision of feedback is also said to involve social partners (SER p. 42), but it seems that the role of the social partners in this respect could be expanded. During the meetings with social partners the team met director Lolita Varanavičienė of the Lithuanian publishing house Tyto Alba and a team leader from a Swedish company. There are many companies looking for employees with language skills and because of this, Nordic companies employ the students for different positions (SER, p. 42-43). During the meetings with social partners and the Faculty administration it was also said that several members of the Centre's teaching staff work for these companies as language teachers in their free time. During the meeting with social partners, the publishing house representative said that the students have no input in the company's activities. The representative for the Swedish company said that students help enormously with teaching languages to employees (but again, this is done on the ad hoc voluntary basis). In addition, the

Centre is supporting these companies by letting them advertise job opportunities they offer on the premises of the Centre.

Currently, the social partners gain considerably from this situation as opposed to the Centre; this imbalance can be described as unhealthy. Many of the companies, like banks, insurance companies, call centres and manpower companies, have considerable economic resources, and this could and should be a potential asset for the Centre. The cooperation with social partners should be more formalized not only with organisations like the Nordic Council of ministers and the embassies, but also with commercial companies for the benefit of the Centre. Companies that contact the Centre for help to their business should be requested to offer the Centre something in return.

Only very few of the students receive scholarship now, and social partners could contribute with financed internships and possibly scholarships for students. In future, companies could contribute with scholarships for the teaching staff of the Centre to encourage their work on research projects, writing articles, and participating in conferences. A concern about the recruitment of staff for the Centre was expressed during the meetings, but such scholarships might make it more attractive to work at the Centre. Also, close contact and a possible formalized system for cooperation with alumni who work in companies and organisations could be useful for the development of the Centre.

If the legal framework and the university rules permit, the Centre could provide language courses for companies that not only give the possibility to pay the teachers a larger salary for these particular projects, but also contribute to the administrative costs and other expenses as suggested above. This could also make it more attractive to work for the Centre.

Although the Centre already receives book donations from organisations and embassies, a possible discussion with social partners could also encompass contribution to the Centre in the form of funding for buying course books according to the needs of staff and students, as well as equipment that would improve the learning process (some students mentioned that there are not always full sets of course books).

All in all the management of the Scandinavian Studies BA programme should be considered satisfactory, but there are areas where there is a clear potential for improvement.

2.7. Examples of excellence

There are several examples of excellence in the BA programme in Scandinavian studies.

From the very establishment, the Centre has shown an international orientation, and has taken part in international co-operation by inviting many distinguished visitors, both academic and non-academic, and this enables staff and students to be at the cutting edge of developments in Scandinavian Studies. Moreover, the staff of the centre has done a tremendous job applying for funding for various projects. This has also delivered very good results in terms of academic exchange and material situation. One area where other institutions could get inspiration from the Centre, is the extra-curriculum activities which are an excellent way to implement cultural aspects of the studies and also to open up the university for society in general. Close co-operation between lecturers and students is also an example of excellence.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.
The aims and learning outcomes in the BA programme should be clarified by creating a clearly discernible profile with reference to the MA programme and with more focus on students' professional needs and practical skills, e.g. by introducing modules in second language acquisition, language teaching methodology, and Scandinavian business language.
2.
The Common European Framework of Reference should be used to a greater extent in course descriptions and detailed criteria for assessment, as a tool for student self-evaluation during the courses, and by teaching staff when designing examinations.
3.
Transparency and standardisation of assessment tasks and feedback should be discussed and implemented. Moodle should be used to a larger extent, and the method of flipped classroom should be discussed.
4.
The Centre should discuss, develop, and implement a plan for closer cooperation with social partners and alumni in order to enhance development of the centre, student welfare and vocational practise, and to keep and attract teaching staff.
5.
The Centre should discuss, develop, and implement a strategy for staff development, which should include mentoring of new staff and seminars or courses that would inspire and encourage the staff in general to develop in different areas of teaching methodology.

IV. SUMMARY

The Scandinavian Studies BA programme is a solid, well delivered programme which is unique as a university programme in Lithuania. On the basis of the SER and the site visit, the evaluation team noted the following strengths and weaknesses. Below are also given some recommendations which would help the BA programme to improve.

The aims of the programme and its learning outcomes are based on academic and professional requirements and take into account the great need of experts in Scandinavian languages, culture and politics in Lithuania. However, they could be clarified in order to give the programme a clearer practical and professional profile, distinguishing it more from the MA programme.

In the curriculum, the literature, culture and the translation elements of the programme are strong. However, competence in business language and second language acquisition would make the students even more attractive on the labour market and fit the overall profile of the programme. The curriculum and teaching methods are appropriate for ensuring that students reach the intended learning outcomes. There is a clear progression in linguistic competence levels and the students reach the high competence that is expected of them. Still, there is a clear potential for changing the curriculum somewhat, making it more focussed on students' needs. It is positive that students are offered many specialty-related subjects, but they should be given a realistic picture of what optional subjects will be offered and at what level. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment is used somewhat cursory in the modules and assessments, and should be implemented to a larger extent in the programme, assessment, and teaching.

The number and qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes, and the international contacts of the teachers are an important addition to the teaching and supervising given at the Centre. The members of the academic staff are highly qualified specialists in their relevant fields and some are active researchers in lexicography, philology, linguistics, and literature, etc. Research activity of the staff at the Centre, although adequate, could possibly be increased and become somewhat more internationally oriented. In order to reduce heavy teaching load, a pilot scheme aimed at the reduction of contact hours and a higher proportion of independent study hours for students may be implemented. Also, a plan for mentoring of new staff and development of staff in general should be developed and implemented. The Centre has very good facilities for its students and teachers. The Centre's learning and library resources are also good, even though the recommended literature lists could

be updated more regularly. The areas of excellence are the international orientation of the programme and extra-curricular activities of the centre. The staff of the centre also has done a tremendous job applying for funding for various projects. This has delivered good results in terms of academic exchange and material situation.

The admission requirements are well-founded. The active and successful Erasmus student mobility programme is beneficial in many ways: it exposes students not only to the culture and language of Scandinavian countries, but shows them variety in higher education in different types of assessments and forms of feedback. The Centre also gives its students good academic support: there is a close co-operation between teachers and students receive individual attention. However, the programme seems to lack a unified system of assessment feedback. It is suggested that such a system should be discussed and a pilot project implemented. Although the Centre presently co-operates with several social partners, the role of these partners could profitably be expanded and more formalised.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Scandinavian studies* (state code – 612R61001) at Vilnius 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	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	2
	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.

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Santraukos vertimas iš anglų kalbos

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V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Skandinavistika* (valstybinis kodas – 612R61001) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	2
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	17

* 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

Bakalauro studijų programa *Skandinavistika* yra stipri, gerai vykdoma programa, viena tokia tarp Lietuvos universitetų. Vertinimo grupė, remdamasi savianalizės suvestine ir apsilankymu universitete, nurodo programos stiprybes ir silpnybes. Toliau dar pateikiama keletas rekomendacijų, kurios galėtų padėti tobulinti šią bakalauro studijų programą.

Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai yra pagrįsti akademiniais ir profesiniais reikalavimais, atsižvelgiama į didelį skandinavų kalbų, kultūros ir politikos specialistų poreikį Lietuvoje. Tačiau jie galėtų būti išsamiau paaiškinti siekiant suteikti programai aiškesnį praktinį ir profesinį profilį, labiau atskiriantį ją nuo magistrantūros studijų programos.

Šios programos studijų turinio stiprybės yra literatūra, kultūra ir vertimas. Tačiau mokėdami verslo kalbą ir žinodami antrosios kalbos įsisavinimo principus studentai būtų dar patrauklesni darbo rinkai, tokios kompetencijos taip pat atitiktų bendrą šios programos profilį. Studijų turinys ir mokymo metodai leidžia studentams pasiekti numatomus studijų rezultatus. Akivaizdžiai didėja lingvistinių kompetencijų lygis, studentai pasiekia aukštą lygį, kokio iš jų ir tikimasi. Tačiau vis dar yra galimybių keisti studijų turinį, didesnę dėmesį skiriant studentų poreikiams. Gerai tai, kad studentams siūloma daug su specialybe susijusių pasirenkamųjų dalykų, bet reikėtų pateikti realistišką planą, kokie pasirenkamieji dalykai bus siūlomi ir kada. Bendrieji Europos kalbų mokymosi, mokymo ir vertinimo metmenys moduluose ir vertinimuose

naudojami šiek tiek paviršutiniškai, jie programoje, vertinimo ir mokymo veikloje turėtų būti įgyvendinami labiau.

Dėstytojų skaičius ir kvalifikacija yra pakankami numatomiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti; dėstytojų tarptautiniai ryšiai labai prisideda prie Skandinavistikos centre teikiamų studijų ir vadovavimo praktikai. Akademinių personalą sudaro aukštos kvalifikacijos savo sričių specialistai, kai kurie aktyvūs leksikografijos, filologijos, kalbotyros, literatūros ir kt. sričių tyrėjai. Centro darbuotojų mokslinių tyrimų veikla pakankama, bet galėtų būti intensyvesnė ir tarptautiškesnė. Norint sumažinti didelį dėstytojų darbo krūvį, būtų galima įgyvendinti bandomąją schemą, kuria būtų siekiama sumažinti kontaktinių valandų skaičių ir daugiau valandų skirti savarankiškam studentų mokymuisi. Be to, reikėtų parengti ir įgyvendinti mentorystės naujiems darbuotojams planą, taip pat dėstytojų tobulinimosi apskritai planą. Centras turi labai geras patalpas studentams ir dėstytojams. Centro bibliotekos ir metodiniai ištekliai taip pat labai geri, nors rekomenduojamos literatūros sąrašai galėtų būti atnaujinami dažniau. Geroji patirtis yra programos tarptautiškumo akcentavimas ir centre vykdoma papildoma akademinė veikla. Centro darbuotojai atliko didžiulį darbą prašydami finansavimo įvairiems projektams. Tai davė gerus rezultatus akademinį mainų ir materialinės padėties atžvilgiu.

Priėmimo į studijas reikalavimai yra pagrįsti. Aktyviai ir sėkmingai įgyvendinama studentų judumo programa *Erasmus* naudinga daugeliu aspektų: ji padeda studentams susipažinti ne tik su Skandinavijos šalių kultūra ir kalbomis, bet ir su įvairiomis aukštosiomis mokyklomis, turinčiomis savus vertinimo būdus ir grįžtamojo ryšio formas. Be to, centras teikia savo studentams gerą akademinę paramą – dėstytojai glaudžiai bendradarbiauja tarpusavyje ir skiria daug dėmesio kiekvienam studentui. Tačiau, atrodo, nėra bendros įvertinimų grįžtamojo ryšio sistemos. Siūloma aptarti šios sistemos sukūrimo ir bandomojo projekto įgyvendinimo galimybę. Šiuo metu centras bendradarbiauja su kai kuriais socialiniais partneriais, bet būtų naudinga išplėsti ir formalizuoti partnerių vaidmenį.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1.

Reikėtų aiškiau nustatyti bakalauro studijų programos tikslus ir numatomus studijų rezultatus, kad ji aiškiai skirtųsi nuo magistrantūros studijų programos, labiau akcentuojant studentų profesinius poreikius ir praktinius gebėjimus, pvz., įtraukiant tokius modulius kaip: antrosios kalbos įsisavinimas, kalbų mokymo metodika ir skandinavų verslo kalba.

2.

Aprašant dalykus ir nurodant išsamius vertinimo kriterijus reikėtų plačiau naudotis Bendraisiais

Europos kalbų metmenimis kaip studentų įsivertinimo priemone studijų metu ir dėstytojams rengiant dalykų egzaminus.

3.

Reikėtų apvarstyti ir išspręsti vertinimo užduočių ir grįžtamojo ryšio aiškumo ir standartizavimo klausimą. Turėtų būti daugiau naudojamosi virtualia mokymosi aplinka *Moodle*, be to, reikėtų aptarti „atvirkštinės klasės“ (angl. *flipped classroom*) metodą.

4.

Skandinavistikos centras turėtų aptarti, parengti ir įgyvendinti glaudesnio bendradarbiavimo su socialiniais partneriais ir alumnais planą, siekdamas sustiprinti savo veiklos plėtrą, didinti studentų gerovę, tobulinti jų profesinę praktiką, išsaugoti ir pritraukti dėstytojus.

5.

Centras turėtų aptarti, parengti ir įgyvendinti dėstytojų tobulinimo strategiją, apimančią naujų darbuotojų mokymą (mentorystę) ir seminarus arba kursus, kurie apskritai paskatintų dėstytojus tobulėti įvairiose mokymo metodikos srityse.

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