



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINĖ VERSLO TEISĖ*
(valstybinis kodas - 621M90030)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS LAW* (state code - 621M90030)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vytautas Magnus University

Experts' team:

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Tarptautinė verslo teisė</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621M90030
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Teisė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Teisės magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2013-08-26

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>International Business Law</i>
State code	621M90030
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Law
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (1,5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Law
Date of registration of the study programme	26-08-2013

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Background of the evaluation process	4
1.2. General	4
1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information	4
1.4. The Review Team	5
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	5
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes	5
2.2. Curriculum design	9
2.3. Teaching staff	11
2.4. Facilities and learning resources	13
2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment:	15
2.6. Programme management	21
2.7. Examples of excellence *	24
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	25
IV. SUMMARY	25
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	27

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: none.

No.	Name of the document

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

The programme ‘International Business Law’ (Programme Code 621M90030), which is designed as a programme of 1.5 year duration, is provided by the Faculty of Law of Vytautas Magnus University (hereafter: VMU) as one of a total of three law programmes, amongst which it is the only one offered at master level (save the integrated law programme of VMU, which leads to an equivalent level of qualification, as stated in the National Qualification Framework). The programme ‘International Business Law’ is a specialist programme of small size in terms of student enrolment, with an annual student intake of about 2 per cent of the total of approximately 770 law students at VMU. The programme is intended to offer students with a first degree, be it either in law and in other subjects if further requirements are met, the opportunity to specialize in matters related to business law with a special focus on international perspectives of law. As a master programme, the programme aims at linking hands-on legal expertise with sharing and

developing research experience and research competence. Due to its international focus, the programme also serves as a means to foster internationalization at VMU and its Law Faculty as well as to enhance international experience of students enrolled in the programme.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 10 May 2016.

Dr. Kristi Joamets could not take part in the site visit while she was fully integrated in the review process in all its other elements, partly due to use of electronically supported consultation.

- 1. Prof. Dr. jur. Jürgen Kohler (team leader)**, professor of civil law and civil procedure, Greifswald University, Germany,
- 2. Prof. Dr. Rolf Dotevall**, professor of commercial law, University of Gothenburg, Sweden,
- 3. Dr. Kristi Joamets**, lecturer in business law, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia,
- 4. Mrs Dovilė Satkauskienė**, director of the Bailiff's Chamber of Lithuania, Lithuania,
- 5. Ms Janine Wulz**, research student in social sciences, University of Vienna, Austria.

Considering the quality features of the programme in line with the quality criteria of study programmes as defined in the current SKVC 'Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes, the review team evaluated the master-level study programme 'International Business Law' (state code - 621M90030) provided by Vytautas Magnus University (hereafter abbreviated as: VMU) in Kaunas (hereafter abbreviated as: IBLMP) with regard to the following items:

- Programme aims and learning outcomes;
- Curriculum design;
- Teaching staff;
- Facilities and learning resources;
- Study process and students' performance assessment;
- Programme management;
- Examples of excellence (where applicable).

Each of these items was considered in view of specific sub-items, as indicated in the SKVC methodology; these will be identified when reporting on each of the aforesaid items.

The review team made and verified the following observations, based on the self-evaluation report and documentation provided and on the information given during the site visit.

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The evaluation of programme aims and learning outcomes considered and assessed the following criteria:

a) Well-defined and clear programme aims and learning outcomes, publicly accessible:

VMU (SER p.6-7) states the following programme aims and attaches the following learning outcomes to them: (1) Performing and applying integrative analysis of the main legal acts regulating international business law; (2) performing integrative analysis of the system of dispute settlement institutions, their competences and dispute settlement procedures in the international business law, and to acquaint students with possible alternatives in cases when there is no consistent and defined legal regulation concerning the selection of a dispute settlement institution; (3) performing integrative analysis of disputes arising in the international business law, preparing innovative instrumentation for international business dispute resolution, and enabling to make decisions considering the alternatives in cases when there is no consistent and defined legal regulation; (4) performing integrative analysis of international business legal relations, with a view towards preparing innovative instrumentation for the regulation of international business legal relations and argumentatively convey generalised information about international business legal relations.

VMU has specified concrete learning outcomes in relation to these four overarching aspects in the 'Description of Study Cycle' (excerpt SER p. 8-9). Referencing these in detail to the overarching aspects is accomplished and provided in VMU documentation.

The review team judges that the aforementioned aims and intended learning outcomes are sufficiently well-defined and clear in general terms. They proceed from analysis of (1) relevant legislation via analysis of (2) dispute settlement institutions and availability of alternatives and via analysis of (3) disputes actually arising in international business and modes for settling these to analysis of (4) both existing and innovative legal instruments regulating international business relations. In principle, these are valid programme aims, and enabling students to analyse the aforementioned aspects as well as to perform in practice in these areas is meaningful. In detail, VMU has specified concrete learning outcomes with reference to the aforementioned four overarching programme objectives.

The defined specifications of programme aims and learning outcomes are publicly accessible. The overarching four programmatic objectives, i.e. learning aspects, and the aforementioned 'Description of Study Cycle' is to be found on the VMU and the Law Faculty websites, as well as in the 'AIKOS' Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System.

b) Reference of programme aims and learning outcomes to academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market:

VMU, its Law Faculty, operates a scheme and process to ensure alignment of programme aims and learning outcomes to academic and professional requirements and public as well as employment needs. The IBLMP Study Programme Committee, consisting of academic staff, students, graduate and a social partner (a lawyer of an international food company), reviews the study programme on a regular base, using input from data collected to identify strengths and weaknesses of the programme in operation. In view of the need to keep the programme relevant for society and the labour market, there are regular processes of discussion with relevant social partners, namely companies and attorney offices which operate nationally and internationally, as well as courts, prosecutor offices and police headquarters.

The Law Faculty identifies the following main professional opportunities of IBLMP graduates: Legal profession (lawyers, judges, notaries, bailiffs, for those with a BA in law); administration of bankruptcy or restructuring of companies; leaders in management of companies with an international component; legal counselling of companies. Fostering these opportunities is

facilitated by developing both specialist legal knowledge and relevant practical skills for applying such knowledge in problem-solving. This identification of the aforesaid career opportunities, and of both theoretical competencies and know-how in application as key to successful performance in the aforesaid jobs, is based on plausible judgment.

The IBLMP appears to meet national demand. International demand is aimed for but has – at present - not materialized to the extent which the faculty had expected, while stronger intake of international students is strived for in the future. This is not unrealistic, as indicated by a survey covering VMU and Texas Technical University students. Offering a master programme helps students to gain special competencies which a general law programme at bachelor level cannot accomplish. National spread of programmes beyond the capital city Vilnius can be seen as a developmental feature for Lithuania as a whole. However, there are several other master programmes in Lithuania with a focus on international business law or EU business law, which does not lower the validity of the IBLMP of VMU but may raise an issue as regards overlap and overall societal needs. The justification of the IBLMP programme of VMU in parallel to other similar programmes can be seen in its specificity to focus on a ‘hands-on’ approach of the programme and teaching method philosophy as reflected in its Socratic, problem-based and case-study oriented mode of teaching.

The main change to the programme, due to the findings of the Study Programme Committee, was the initiation (in 2015) of a switch to running the programme – with the exception of some optional courses – in Lithuanian. This change appeared to be reasonable due to the predominant intake of Lithuanian students and their competencies. In addition, VMU Law Faculty changed the curriculum in the area of compulsory subjects by replacing ‘corporate law’ with ‘finance and tax law’ in the first semester and ‘torts and contract’ with both ‘economic analysis of legal relations between a private person and the state’ and ‘enterprises and contract law’ in the second semester. Replacing ‘corporate law’ was based on the fact that the issue is covered in bachelor programmes while certain add-on aspects could and should be incorporated into the course ‘enterprises and contract law’; providing deeper insight into ‘finance and tax law’ seemed necessary since these issues are not covered in bachelor programmes while they gain importance in transnational business and international monetary systems as well as monetary union. Changes in the second semester programme extended to providing the aforesaid two compulsory courses instead of only one on ‘torts and contract law’, based on the assumption that concentration on Lithuanian students leads to less heterogeneity of student intake, thus allowing giving up the module on torts and contract since its legal issues are covered by domestic bachelor programmes in law. THE IBLMP also underwent certain replacements and addenda in optional modules: tort law, internet law, and legal ethics were added, while finance and tax law, agency law, property law, environmental law, and business ethics were abandoned.

VMU, as an institution and as proclaimed in its statements concerning mission and vision, aims at being a “hotbed for intellectual sophistication and civil consciousness in Lithuania, strictly adhering to its set of values listed in the Mission and Vision statement documents, i.e. to be critical and engaged, to be international and multilingual, and to promote creativity in science and arts. “ The VMU Law Faculty claims that its law studies “stand out due to their international component”. However, these institutional aims – namely internationalization and multilingualism –, and also the aligned professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market to ensure internationalization and multilingualism are under challenge as far as their tangible translation into IBLMP programme aims and learning outcomes is concerned. This is due to the fact that the IBLMP has undergone re-nationalization in the sense that the input of teaching in English, or of other foreign languages, has been grossly diminished in the course of time since the introduction of the IBLMP. However, the Law Faculty strives to retain a

relatively strong international element by ensuring the provision of international learning experience through inviting foreign teachers for modules in the area of programme options.

The review team concludes that this, together with the overarching aim to provide a strong element of legal comparison, justifies labelling the programme as international. However, the Law Faculty is encouraged to consider how to revive the initial idea of an even stronger international dimension to teaching the programme. It is in that line that the review team recommends the Law Faculty to safeguard linguistic competence of all student participants in English systematically, rather than to rely on the fact that such competence can be assumed merely because of language courses in bachelor programmes which students enrolled in prior to joining this programme.

c) Consistency between the programme aims and learning outcomes and the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered:

VMU Law Faculty undertakes to ensure alignment of the IBLMP academic and professional performance to the research-related quality level expected for master programmes in several ways: (1) Staff development; (2) gathering information on expected levels of academic performance through membership in law organizations; (3) developing pan-European standards of academic performance relevant for the IBLMP.

These tools are put to practice as follows: (1) Lecturers are supported in being up-to-date in legal research in the field, and they are expected to be active in study-related research. (2) The Law Faculty keeps itself informed on international standards concerning the academic field covered by the IBLMP through participation in transnational law associations which provide scope for developing, exchanging, and disseminating standards of teaching at master level (International Association of Law Schools; Committee of Legal Studies of the Campus Europae Association; Education Law Association ELA). (3) VMU Law Faculty was a partner in the EU/Erasmus-LLP-funded project 'Menu for Justice: towards a European Curriculum Studiorum on Judicial Studies (JUSTMEN)' which aimed at an analysis of the legal training and professional development models across the EU region and at presenting proposals for a possible harmonization and improvement of these models; the VMU Faculty of Law represented Lithuania and headed one of the working groups responsible for the second cycle legal studies. (4) Visiting professors as well as experience of VMU teaching staff abroad ensure substantial contact used for benchmarking an importing, as adequate, of novel concepts.

As a result, the review team is of the opinion that VMU Law Faculty has made sufficient provision to make sure that the faculty is informed on the standards required to operate a law programme like the IBLMP at master level. The learning outcomes described, and more so the actual inclusion of students into a research experience – initially through the Socratic teaching method which makes students apply legal reasoning in problem-based debates, then by means of term papers designed to cover investigation into a legal problem, and eventually through the master's thesis as a major piece of independent scholarly enquiry – indicate the appropriateness to classify the programme as a master's programme.

The review team judges: There is a degree of desirability to ensure a broader concept of multilingualism (as stated above), which shows some degree of inconsistency with regard to the type of studies as regards its institutional hallmark claim of VMU to internationalization. However, there still is a reasonable level of internationalization, as indicated above, which is sufficient to justify the title 'international'.

d) Compatibility of the name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered:

The name of the programme – International Business Law, Master Programme – is compatible with its intended, declared learning outcomes, content and qualifications offered (see above). This can be said within the limits stated above with regard to the fact that the programme does not foster multilingualism, or even English, as a learning outcome as strongly as desirable.

2.2. Curriculum design

The evaluation of curriculum design considered and assessed the following criteria:

a) The curriculum design meets legal requirements:

The IBLMP is described as comprising three semesters at 30 ECTS credits each and a total of 90 ECTS credits, hence lasting for 1.5 years in total. The first part of the programme, located in the first and second semester and covering a total of 60 ECTS credits, is mainly devoted to the studies of compulsory courses (42 ECTS credits, not counting the ECTS credits for the master thesis, thus leading to a total of 74 ECTS credits for compulsory study programme elements) and to optional courses (16 ECTS credits from a choice of optional courses of 36 ECTS credits in total), while the second part of the programme in the third semester is fully (30 ECTS credits) set aside for writing the compulsory master thesis. The IBLMP does not cover more than 5 subjects per semester. According to the study programme design stated, students' individual workload amounts to 78 percent, contact hours amount to 22 percent of total workload.

The review team verified the aforesaid features of the IBLMP, based on the curriculum information given. The data described above and verified indicate that the IBLMP meets the legal requirements as outlined in the relevant Order of the Lithuanian Education and Science Minister of 3 June 2010.

b) Study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive:

Each obligatory subject/course carries 8 ECTS credits, each optional subject 4 ECTS credits, each term paper 6 ECTS credits; the maximum number of credits is 30 ECTS credits per semester, related to writing the master thesis in the third semester.

Compulsory courses of the first semester cover 'International private law and dispute resolution' and 'Finance and tax law', compulsory courses of the second semester cover 'Economic analysis of legal relationships between private person and state' and 'Enterprises and contract law'. In addition, one term paper during the first and second semesters, i.e. two term papers of 12 ECTS credits in total, is/are obligatory. The themes of the optional courses are: Tort Law; European Union Law; EU Competition Law; Comparative Labour Law; Internet Law; Legal Ethics; Special Course. The optional courses, of which every student must choose two subjects in both the first and the second semester – hence, 8 ECTS credits per semester –, are located randomly either in the first or second semester.

Overall, therefore, the compulsory subjects/modules, including the term papers, are spread evenly between the first and the second semester, while the optional courses are not fixed to either the first or the second semester, thus enabling students to ensure even spread of workload throughout the first year of their studies. The themes of the subjects/modules are not repetitive.

c) The content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies:

The content of the IBLMP modules as well as the definitions of the intended learning outcomes are described in detail in the study course descriptions provided. The information thus provided relates to the subject titles of the modules quoted above. Hence, the review team judges that overall alignment of module title and module content as well as related intended learning outcomes is ensured, with all these elements being consistent with the level of provision expected at master level.

d) The content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes:

The IBLMP study course descriptions outline the content of each module in terms of the legal issues considered and the objective of the module, aligning them to in-detail descriptions of expected competences and thus to intended learning outcomes. In addition, teaching and studying methods are outlined as well as specific literature is recommended. The distribution between contact time and self-study time is outlined for each module. Judging these study course descriptions, the content of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes appear to be appropriate for achieving the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

VMU emphasizes the application of the ‘Socratic teaching method’. This method is seen as a way to activate student participation during lectures by involving students in discussions or in other ways, namely by presentations of cases, analysis of legal concepts, solving specific practical tasks, or by simulations of legal disputes. This method aims at preparing students for a lawyer’s career in a practical manner while stimulating academic proficiency.

While the review team fully appreciates the academic and motivational value of the aforesaid teaching method, the team also raised concern that this teaching method might fall short in ensuring overall systematic consistency of the learning process, thus endangering a holistic understanding of the academic field concerned. However, these risks are convincingly mitigated by the fact that teachers make provision to counteract such effects by not only referring students to textbooks which cover the given area holistically and systematically but also by applying a mix of problem-based case study approach and elements of systematic presentation of the given field.

Independent academic engagement and development of academic, research oriented competencies of students is fostered by means of individual work tasks assigned to students, based on lecturers’ preparation of tasks, oversight and feedback. Organization and evaluation of teamwork and distance work is provided. The term papers in the first and second semester support a research approach to the IBLMP.

Expectations as to the quality of the master thesis and its defence are adequate in terms of expected academic, research-related quality. Writing the thesis is expected to involve the substantial ability to research the chosen topic, to analyze the issue, and to write the paper; eventually, the thesis must be defended orally. It is the purpose of the thesis to show the students’ capability to provide high quality of individual, well-founded academic research, demonstrating that the students are able to comprehensively demonstrate theoretical and practical competence, to analyze the chosen relevant research problem at both national and international levels. The thesis topics dealt with indicate that this aspiration is met, and that thesis assessment is carried out at a considerable level of quality expectation.

The features above could be verified in interviews with staff and students during the site visit. The examination papers and the term papers as well as the master's theses which the review team could see and scrutinize during the site visit also indicate adequacy of teaching modalities to match the aspired learning outcomes at master level. Therefore, the review team concludes that the content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

e) The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes:

The extent of scope of the IBLMP can be judged mainly with regard to its compulsory elements. These cover: (1) Basic subjects with a focus on political and public law background, such as 'economic analysis of legal relationships between private persons'; (2) essential material elements of private law, such as 'enterprise and contract law'; (3) provision of input on core matters of international law-related interest, such as 'international private law and dispute resolution'; and (4) focus on specific business management aspects, such as 'finance and tax law'. A range of options, out of which four must be selected, provide room for individual specialisation.

The aforesaid four basic elements provide a scope wide enough to cover the essentials of the subject matter while being realistic as to what can be done within one year of study input. The choice of options provides ample opportunity for developing individual interest, thus adding a hallmark of personal specificity to the range of essential aspects provided to cover the core facets of international business law issues.

The Law Faculty recognizes that there is scope for improvement as regards strengthening the international dimension of intended learning outcomes through fostering language competence more strongly (as indicated above). In addition, graduates and employers felt that mediation and negotiation competences should be considered and fostered more systematically through specific training focussed on abilities needed for mediation and negotiation.

f) The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in science, art and technologies:

The programme content, as described in the study course description, and the ambitious topics set for the master theses indicate the aspiration of the IBLMP to provide up-to-date input in terms of academic relevance. In matters of staff, lecturers are encouraged to engage in research personally, thus making transfer of research experience into teaching and learning likely. Hence, there are ample provisions to assume that current academic discussions and results are reflected in the way in which the study programme is conducted. The interview with social partners, some of whom were employers of programme graduates, showed that these appreciated the specific competence of graduates in managing legal issues arising in international context, mainly due to graduates' competence to act independently and find approaches to solving problems in a creative and professional manner.

2.3. Teaching staff

The evaluation of human resources as an input factor considered and assessed the following criteria concerning qualitative and quantitative features of teaching staff:

a) The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements:

The IBLMP was provided by the following staff: In autumn 2013, 11, of which 10 hold an academic degree; in spring 2014, 13, of which 12 hold an academic degree; in autumn 2014, 21, of which 16 hold an academic degree; in spring 2015, 16, of which 13 hold an academic degree. The average is 12.75 staff with an academic degree, from a total of 15.25 staff on average. These figures represent a ratio of 85 per cent of academic staff in the IBLMP. Therefore, the review team is satisfied to see that IBLMP meets and surpasses the legal requirement of a minimum of 80 per cent of academic staff on average.

On average, 75 per cent of staff operating the IBLMP are either professors or associated professors, with slightly more than half of these – 36 per cent in total numbers of teachers in the IBLMP – being professors. On average, 18 per cent are lecturers, of which slightly more than half hold an academic degree. In total, on average 85 per cent of teachers involved in the IBLMP hold an academic degree. On average, 7 per cent are assistants, most of whom are also doctoral students. Therefore, the review team states that the legal requirements – at least 20 per cent need to be professors and at least 80 per cent of teachers must have an academic degree – are met in quantitative terms.

b) The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes:

In qualitative terms, VMU Law Faculty states that, on average based on the period from autumn 2013 to spring 2015, 6.5 teaching staff with an academic degree out of a total of, on average, 8 teaching staff with an academic degree are active in research fields compatible with the subject matters of the IBLMP. In addition, the VMU Law Faculty established the research cluster ‘Impact of Globalization on Law’, and it has organized multiple conferences on topics centred around issues of globalization and the law. Moreover, academic members are active in editorial boards of academic journals related to legal fields relevant for the IBLMP. In effect, therefore, on average 81 per cent of teaching staff with an academic degree involved in the IBLMP are active in related research areas. This indicates that staff meets the legal requirements, stating that no less than 60 per cent of compatibility between taught subjects and research activities is expected.

The IBLMP is run by staff of which 90 per cent are younger than 50, and on average 43 per cent of teachers are women. THE IBLMP is host to a number of international scholars and practitioners, all in all 26 between autumn 2013 and spring 2015; per semester, between 5 and 9 visiting professors per semester taught in the IBLMP. The review team appreciates this as being a commendable feature of the IBLMP.

c) The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes:

The IBLMP ‘study course descriptions’ indicate the person or persons who is or are to provide the course. Names are given for each module. It can therefore be concluded that VMU Law Faculty has the staff in place, both qualitatively and quantitatively, that is required to operate the IBLMP.

d) Teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme:

Teaching staff represents a fairly stable body of personnel, mainly in areas of professors and assistant professors, which should be sufficient to ensure stable conditions over time to provide the necessary input to the programme. As for staff turnover, there is no indication as to VMU Law Faculty not being able to fill any vacancies adequately, if and when these should occur. In particular, a considerable circle of stable relations with non-Lithuanian institutions enables VMU Law Faculty to draw on external resources, as and where necessary.

e) The higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme:

VMU operates a pay scheme for its staff which aims at remunerating successful teaching and research performance. Teaching proficiency is assessed by means of electronic enquiry of students' impressions of teacher performance. These two means serve as 'carrot and stick' devices to enhance professional development. VMU has not indicated that it operates a 'teach-the-teacher' or 'support-the-weaker-teacher' scheme on a regular, proactive base, which might be useful as an additional device for professional development of teaching staff. The Law Faculty has had some training of staff in problem-based teaching on a voluntary base, but the review team believes that such training may need to be carried out by didactic specialists on a regular base at specified intervals, with a stronger element of expectancy of staff participation. The Law Faculty is aware of the need to increase international experience of its staff by enhancing participation in international activities, such as discussions and working groups at non-Lithuanian universities.

f) The teaching staff of the programme is involved in research directly related to the study programme being reviewed:

As was shown in judging adequacy and proficiency of teaching staff qualifications to ensure learning outcomes of the IBLMP (item b) above), a major number of VMU Law Faculty staff is involved in research activities related to the IBLMP, and runs conferences in relation to IBLMP issues. In effect, it can therefore be concluded that teaching staff is involved in research directly related to the study programme under review.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The evaluation of facilities and learning resources as an input factor considered and assessed the following criteria concerning qualitative and quantitative features of facilities and learning resources:

a) Adequacy of the premises for studies, both in their size and quality:

THE VMU Law Faculty is situated in a newly renovated building used in conjunction with the Faculty of Social Sciences. There are 13 auditoriums in the building, of which the Law Faculty uses the following: 109 (50 work places); 110 (50 work places); 209 (50 work places); 210 (50 work places); 206 (196 work places); 108 (50 work places); 112 (15 work places). The auditoriums 109 and 110, also 209 and 210 have common movable walls, so they can be transformed into two big auditoriums, each providing 100 work places. Provisions for the disabled are in place.

The review team was impressed by VMU's strong policy and practice in support of disabled students. This shows in adequate facilities for handicapped learners throughout the premises, reaching from barrier-free ways to reading facilities in the library (see hereafter), and also in extra personal support given to these students.

b) Adequacy of the teaching and learning equipment (library and computer equipment, consumables), both in size and quality:

All classrooms are equipped with multimedia equipment; additional technical equipment is available when needed. Computer networks of all main VMU buildings and dormitories are interconnected with optical or radio lines, including the Wi-Fi Internet Eduroam being implemented throughout the buildings of VMU. There are 2 computer classes with 20 work places each, 1 video conferencing auditorium laid out to accommodate about 15 people, 1 classroom with a smart board with 10 work places, room for meetings with 15 work places.

The review team concludes that the teaching and learning equipment provided by VMU is fully adequate in terms of size and quality.

c) Adequate arrangements of the higher education institution for students' practice:

Students preparing individual or group projects may either use the classrooms for those purposes or other studying areas situated at the university, such as four special areas where students can work in groups and prepare for project presentations. Each building of the university is equipped with special spaces for group work and informal communication, which are available to all students at the university.

The review team commends the availability of a unit specially designed to facilitate individual learning of foreign languages.

There is a room for ELSA, the European Law Students' Association, and a cafeteria as well as an area in the main hall of the faculty building where students can buy coffee, work in groups and communicate.

Judging on items covered in paragraphs a) to c) above together, in view of the number of students enrolled in the Law Faculty altogether (approx. 700 in all law programmes) and in view of the small numbers enrolled in the IBLMP in particular – so far, less than 20 students per enrolment period –, the review team is of the opinion, that the space available for teaching is sufficient both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

d) Adequacy and accessibility of teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases):

The Central University Library, accessible for all students, consists of 3 lending departments, 11 reading rooms and an audio library. It provides 471 work space units, and about 100 computers for public use; students can use Wi-Fi. The Central University Library possesses approx. 280,000 copies of approx. 135,000 document titles. It has approx. 140,000 documents in open access collections, 49 full-text online licensed data bases and 30 full-text trial databases.

The Law Faculty Library in Jonavos str. 66 provides 50 work places, of which 2 are adapted for the disabled including special equipment for those with eyesight impairments, 2 rooms for the group work in groups of 6 people. It has 26 computer places and provides printing and copying services. Modern technology of radio frequency identification (RFID) are installed, allowing self-serviced order and return of publications and other documents, thus ensuring independence and privacy of readers.

The Law Faculty Library supplies approx. 24 thousand books, scholarly periodicals, CD's in various languages, all of which are freely available to all members of the faculty. There are more than 20 databases of legal information, including Westlaw (International and UK), Academic Search Complete (via EBSCO), HeinOnline, Oxford Journals Online, SpringerLink, Sage Journals Online, Taylor & Francis. Interdisciplinary business areas are made available through

Library internet interface. The list of subscribed international databases is supplemented with important Lithuanian legal database, namely Infolex (law and practice), where updated legal acts interrelated with resolutions, decisions, reviews, consultations of Lithuanian courts are provided.

The Moodle system is used throughout. It provides students with all information necessary for each module of the learning process. Students stated that they appreciated the Moodle provisions, especially the supply of relevant course material, including relevant scholarly texts from journals and of court rulings, which facilitates their learning process and also helps to compensate any shortcomings in terms of book supply that may inevitably occur.

The expert panel concludes with respect to the issues covered in paragraphs d) and e) above that IBLMP students are provided with sufficient library and data base material, both in quantitative and in qualitative terms, and that these learning devices are fully accessible to them. In particular, the review team appreciates the fact that access to internet data bases is made available to students working outside the university premises, e.g. at home.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment:

The evaluation of study process and students' performance assessment considered the following criteria:

a) Well-founded admission requirements:

Admission follows the ministerial admission recommendations and the admission rules approved by the VMU Rector, with the latter being published on the VMU website.

The quotas for the admission to state financed graduate (master) study programs are assigned for the individual educational institutions by ministerial order. In addition, students who pay for their studies can participate in the contest and can be enrolled in addition to the quota for the state-funded positions if these students satisfy the minimum requirements as formulated for the programme.

To date, the IBLMP studies are open to persons with: (1) a bachelor's degree or equivalent degree in law; (2) bachelor's degree or equivalent degree in another field for those who have passed university-level examinations in the field of law of at least 12 ECTS credits; (3) persons with professional bachelor's degree in law or equivalent degree who have passed university-level examinations in Legal Theory, Legal Discourse and, in addition, the examinations of legal subjects of at least 12 ECTS credits. The courses of supplementary legal studies (12 – 24 ECTS credits) are available for the applicants who have a bachelor's degree in another field than law and with the professional bachelor's degree in law.

However, as from 1 June 2016 the Law Faculty is going to implement the new governmental regulations on admittance of students into master programmes in the field of law. Hence, from then on students will be expected to either present a bachelor degree in law or else undergo preparatory training in law to the extent of 60 ECTS credits. This new practice will remedy any critical issues which may be raised in the past as regards adequacy of student intake into a master programme in law. However, while the review team appreciates that this new development helps to solve the problem of undue diversity of student intake, the review team would also want to remind the Law Faculty that the new standards of prior learning for those to be admitted to the programme bring with them the negative effect that elements of interdisciplinary competence of programme graduates may get lost, e.g. economic and business management competencies or specific language skills, or communication and mediation skills. Since social partners and

employers indicated in the interview with the review team that such competences are indeed much sought for in addition to competences in law, the Law Faculty may be advised to reconsider the curriculum of the IBLMP with a view to ensuring how the development of such competencies can be safeguarded by means of providing fit-for-purpose learning input.

Admission grade is calculated following such rule: the admission grade (K) shall be calculated according to the formula $K=0.8A+0.2C$, where A is the arithmetic average of all examination grades listed in the bachelor's diploma supplement and C is the grade of the bachelor's thesis.

The review team views the aforesaid features to be in line with national regulations at the time of the site visit and appreciates the awareness of the Law Faculty to adjust to the new regulations put into force as of 1 June 2016.

b) The organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes:

The sequencing of modules as outlined in the 'Study Course Description' appears to be plausible. Setting aside 30 ECTS credits for the master's thesis, i.e. a third of the entire programme and thus matching the requirements laid down in the 'General Requirements for Master Study Programmes' (No V-826 of 3 June 2010) is adequate for a master's programme not only from the viewpoint of national regulation but also with regard to de-facto research requirements which must be met in order to enable students to develop and demonstrate their abilities to carry out independent research. Optional modules are spread evenly in the first two semesters.

The ratio of contact hours in the IBLMP is 22, i.e. considerably higher than the required minimum ratio, which is 10 hours per week. This high number of contact hours especially in the first two semesters appears to be inevitable in view of the ambitious aspiration of the programme, while this extent of contact time may be an obstacle to fostering capabilities to practice independent research. However, this risk may be balanced by modules and teaching methods which safeguard student participation in the learning process, such as case based and problem based learning.

The time set aside for independent student work exceeds the minimum of 40 per cent, as expected in paragraph 10 of the ministerial "Descriptor of Study Field of Law". The range of independent work of the master's thesis accounts for 33 per cent of self-study time, while the overall time set aside for independent student work amounts to 78 per cent of the overall study time.

The results of the first two enrolment periods indicate that the programme is manageable: In the academic year 2013-2014, 11 students – 9 national and 2 international students – were admitted. Of these, 4 students dropped out; 1 international student did not turn up, 2 students left at their request, 1 student dropped out due to negative academic results but managed to finish the IBLMP later. 5 students finished the programme in January 2015, and another 3 students in June 2015. Hence, the ratio of students who were admitted and successfully graduated the programme is (8/11) 73 %. The average grade of final results is 7.4. – In the academic year 2014-2015, 17 students – 15 national and 2 international students – were admitted. Of these, 4 students dropped out; 2 students dropped out at their request, 2 students due to negative academic results.

As indicated above, the Law Faculty should ensure that there is an opportunity for students to fully match the international aspiration of the IBLMP especially by means of supporting the

development of language skills – particularly so since the programme has been transformed into a course widely taught in Lithuanian.

c) Students are encouraged to participate in research and applied research activities:

The VMU Law Faculty states that participation in research takes place mainly (1) through the European Law Students' Association (ELSA) activities, such as conferences, debates and social campaigns, (2) through the activities of the Scientific Law Club of the VMU Faculty of Law, which are related to the publication of the scientific journal "Teisės apžvalga" ("Law Review") and to organizing discussions on topical issues of legal science, and (3) through participation in the activities bringing together students from various VMU faculties, for example the United Nations student club, focussed on participating in civic activities and fostering tolerance and human rights, and (4) through activities in the VMU club "Economicus", which brings together students with an interest in economics, marketing, investments and business.

While all these activities based on students' initiatives are valid and fully appreciated, the review team also and in particular appreciates that the Law Faculty attempts to do more under its direct steerage and responsibility, to foster student participation in research of its staff by offering students the opportunity to choose the topic of their master thesis from a field which is in the centre of research interests of the supervisor, thus enabling closer interaction of student research aspiration with staff research projects and experience.

d) Students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes:

Students can participate in internationalization by means of mobility – 'internationalization abroad' – and by means of 'internationalization at home'.

'Internationalization at home' is extensive: There is a high number of guest lecturers from abroad, who provide teaching mainly in optional subjects. International students are enrolled in the IBLMP, thus providing a joint learning experience in modules such as Alternative Dispute Resolution, International Trade Law, International Public Law, International Private Law, Intellectual Property Rights, Tort Law, International Trade Law, Energy Law, Trust Law, and International Public Law.

The Summer School/Program of International Law jointly provided in Kaunas by VMU and Texas Tech University School of Law, which is based on formal inter-institutional agreement and is accredited by the American Bar Association, is a specific feature, aiming at broadening the experience of the faculty and the students. The programme comprises courses in European Union Competition Law, Legal Environment of Transitional Economies, Public International Law, and International and Comparative Family Law. All courses are taught in English. In 2014, 2 students of the IBLMP participated successfully; 25 students – 16 in 2013 and 9 in 2014 – from Texas Tech University School of Law took part in the Summer Law Program.

Strengthening 'internationalization abroad' is desirable. While it is commendable that the Law Faculty has Erasmus agreements with 30 partners from various European countries, students appear not to see them as attractive, and hence there has only been 1 outgoing student. This is due to the strong element of 'internationalization at home', but also, and perhaps more so, due to the fact that almost all students already work parallel to their studies.

The Law Faculty may need to consider how it can nevertheless encourage students to go abroad. In doing so, the review team appreciates that there are clear and encouraging policies on

recognition of imported credits. In order to do more, the Law Faculty may also be advised to consider setting up joint programmes with foreign universities, thus sharing certain modules.

However, the review team considers the Law Faculty's attempt to foster mobility as positive and believes that obstacles to international mobility in terms of outgoing students are largely outside the responsibility of the faculty, while the faculty is nevertheless encouraged to consider ways and means for improving the latter, as indicated above.

e) The higher education institution ensures an adequate level of academic and social support:

VMU offers support in various ways, namely:

(1) Ensuring easily accessible and timely information on the study programme, concerning study plans, list of elective courses, timetables, consultation hours, course content, examination procedures. Information is provided during various communication channels and means. One of them is the university's intranet system "First Class" (FC) and distance learning system Moodle. First year students are informed on possibilities to choose foreign languages and opportunities to study abroad, and they are introduced to the students' representation body and academic clubs, and information on the use of library resources.

(2) Recognizing and evaluating informally acquired competencies of students, due to their individual work experience, internships, and volunteer activities.

(3) Implementation of tutoring activities, i.e. advanced students are encouraged to help their colleagues who have difficulties in the study process, and provision of a mentoring scheme, namely for incoming foreign students.

(4) Providing students with scholarships and financial support: There are various ways to receive scholarships and allowances. Top-grade full-time students receive state scholarships. Students may receive additional scholarship in case of social deprivation or specific need. In addition, there are a number of specific scholarships of VMU in place.

(5) Special support of specific student activities:

(a) Provision of an advisory service, through the Career and Competences Centre, for students who intend to enhance their competencies by means of gaining expertise and skills in workshops, internships, and other forms of volunteer activities.

(b) University students attending academic conferences, seminars and other events for research, public representation, cooperation and other purposes related to VMU may receive full or partial compensation of expenses.

(c) Promotion of volunteering in different activities organized by VMU, by means of a scheme which rewards one hour of volunteering activity by payment of four euros, by granting a certificate and the reduction of payment to those who have accumulated 40 hours, and by the opportunity to be given a scholarship.

(6) Provision of student accommodation, with 3 dormitories offering comfortable living, learning and resting facilities; dormitories include guest rooms for visiting relatives.

(7) Facilities for disabled students, such as specially equipped working spaces, elevators, etc., are provided. Disabled students with an accompanying person can choose to live in the dormitory rooms, which are equipped for their needs.

The review team is satisfied that IBLMP students are adequately supported by VMU and the Law Faculty. The establishment of a tutoring and mentoring system, provision of aid for students taking part in specific academic and societal activities, and an advisory service to facilitate internships etc. are commendable in particular.

f) The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available:

The assessment system is made transparent by means of publicly available information and specific information given to participating students: In terms of clarity of expected academic performance, all descriptions of subjects in the IBLMP, as outlined in the 'Study course descriptions', include the expected learning outcomes in terms of competences, the order of assignments and the criteria for the evaluation of student achievements. In terms of clarity of process, VMU Regulation on Studies and other University documents, also at the level of the Law Faculty, define the procedures of studying, achievement evaluation, re-examination of students and possibilities to repeat the courses. The lecturer responsible for module in question informs the students about the evaluation system during the first lecture and in the course plan.

The assessment system is clear in principle. The final grade is arrived at by taking the average of accumulated grades achieved for the compulsory and chosen modules of the programme, including the master thesis module. Each 8 ECTS credit course is assessed according to a cumulative grade achievement system, which means that 50 per cent of the grade is based on mid-term and final exams respectively, while students must have a pass grade for each of these two exam elements. 4 ECTS credit courses are evaluated only by a final exam. Student study achievements are assessed through written supervised tests, but homework and teamwork assignments, research and creative projects, or presentations can also be taken as bases for graded assessment.

The assessment system is also clear as regards regulation of consequences of failure. In such a case, a student is entitled to retake the exam once free of charge. In case of failing the repeated exam again, the student must repeat the course, at the end of which the student may then be examined again. In case of a repeat, students may ask for their positively evaluated achievements to be transferred to the final grade. In the case of failure to take part in an exam for a valid reason the dean grants the student the opportunity to be examined at the beginning of the following semester. Failure to take part in an exam without due reason or dishonest behaviour during an exam bars the student from taking the exam altogether.

The assessment system is adequate in principle. It aims at testing learning outcomes and competences. Accepting and implementing a broad range of assessment devices – written supervised tests, but also homework and teamwork assignments, research and creative projects, or presentations – support diversification of examination methods, thus allowing for a broader, more diverse approach to testing competencies and skills, including oral competence. Offering a two-stage assessment process for 8 ECTS credit courses encourages students to work independently and study consistently throughout the semester, and the evaluation of their performance becomes more objective and balanced.

The Law Faculty has an appeals system in place which is fair, clear, and manageable.

Overall, the review team views the aforementioned features of the assessment system positively. However, the Law Faculty may consider whether or not accomplished grades should be

weighted in the calculus used for establishing the overall final grade in a more differentiated mode by giving more weight to modules which carry a higher number of ECTS points.

g) Use of methods and strategies for tackling plagiarism and cheating:

Methods and strategies for tackling plagiarism and cheating are in place. VMU has overarching regulations on combatting and handling these issues in its 'Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works'. The Law Faculty endorses the overarching VMU strategy against academic fraud by paying attention to the prevention of academic dishonesty and by treating all the cases of dishonesty in a highly principled and strict manner.

The master theses are uploaded in, and checked by means of, the database of the Lithuanian Academic e-Library and special program iThenticate²⁹. Academic fraud of theses is also diminished due to the ongoing involvement of supervisors and reviewers in the process of writing the thesis.

Other examinations and evaluations are organized for small groups of students which can be supervised easily. Assistance from members of the students' representative body for supervision of order in classrooms during examinations is accepted in order to ensure both equal evaluation conditions and a high level of fairness and ethical conduct of students. Examination tasks are updated annually; in case of closed-type questionnaires, several different encoded versions of the tasks are prepared and exam papers are checked by the means of a computer programme.

g) Professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers' expectations:

The IBLMP is a relatively new programme with only small intake and even smaller number of graduates – 8 in total – so far, with another 13 in spring 2016. Therefore, understandably so, the evidence base is narrow.

In general, professional perspectives of graduates differ, depending on their previous education and previous or current work experience. A questionnaire on the professional activities of first year students (answered by around 50 per cent) disclosed that they were already employed in legal profession or take the positions very closely related to legal profession, for example in pre-trial debt collection. However, since there is also a considerable number of graduates who have no bachelor in law, these participants cannot be attorneys, prosecutors, judges and notaries. Nevertheless, differences in previous education and professional activities open a variety of job opportunities. Graduates found employment in various fields, with participation in the IBLMP being a benefit; for example: A holder of a bachelor degree in law works in legal profession; a holder of a PhD in technical sciences is working in the position related to science while preparing for the exams of a patent lawyer; a graduate works for the tax inspectorate, another one in the army.

The specific value of the IBLMP can be seen in addressing the need for participants to deepen and broaden their competences as an add-on to their qualifications and job experience already had when entering the programme. The review team believes that there is professional value in the IBLMP programme to the benefit of enhancing employment opportunities and to the benefit of national economy and administration.

The Law Faculty is planning to establish a career counselling service. This aspiration is commendable.

2.6. Programme management

The evaluation of programme management considered the following criteria:

a) Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated:

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are allocated as follows:

- (1) IBLMP Study Program Committee (SPC) as the main coordinating body, being responsible for study programme review, quality assessment and programme updating processes, consisting of experienced teachers, students, and external partners.
- (2) Faculty Council, mainly responsible for approving major changes proposed by the SPC.
- (3) Dean's office, responsible for steering the overall processes of quality assurance and adjustments to the programme.
- (4) In addition, if and when necessary, other efficient forms of organizational activities are implemented in solving specific study content and study environment improvement issues; special working groups for solving specific problems may be formed, and joint activities with social partners, such as seminars, conferences, strategy discussions, are organized. As for the latter, however, the review team was given the impression by social partners that their involvement did not take place on a regular, formalized base but was rather dependent on individual initiative and ad-hoc consultation.

Programme responsibilities, administration and quality assessment processes, including the roles of the 'Quality and Strategy Office' at VMU level and the IBLMP 'Study Program Committee' (SPC) at Faculty level, are regulated by the VMU Charter, VMU Regulations of Studies, namely the VMU Teaching Quality Assessment Policy and the VMU Study Program Update Policy and Assessment of Study Subjects, the Rector's regulation on study subject volume, contact hours, etc., the VMU Study Program Update Policy. These regulations define the responsibilities and requirements for the study programme update and for the preparation of programme documentation. All aforesaid documents are publicly available on the VMU internet or intranet. SPC includes experienced teachers, students and external experts.

The review team considers responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme to be in place and to be transparent in principle.

b) Information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed:

The SPC collects and discusses information about all issues related to teacher and student activities in the programme and provides solutions. Information is gathered as follows:

- (1) Surveys of students and teachers, based on questionnaires, are carried out at the end of each semester, asking students and teachers to provide information on aspects of teaching quality, such as using visual tools, keeping contact with the audience, teaching conformity to the desired learning outcomes, etc.
- (2) The Law Faculty states that fora of teachers, students, alumni and social partners on the study quality issues are held at least once a year. As for involvement of social partners, the review could not verify this statement in the interview held with social partners present; however, social partners voiced that they nevertheless felt that they had sufficient opportunity to make suggestions as to the improvement of the programme in informal ways.

(3) So-called bi-directional oral feedback initiated at the discretion of each lecturer or at students' request, i.e. students' feedback to teachers and teachers' feedback to students other than by filling in survey questionnaires, giving the opportunity to highlight specifically relevant issues and to discuss them with teachers.

(4) At the overarching level of VMU as a whole, VMU performs a so-called express questioning throughout the entire university.

In terms of data collection, the following mechanisms are in place:

(1) The VMU International Relations Office collects data on teacher and student mobility. (2) The VMU Office for the Academic Affairs collects and stores student academic records. (3) The dean of the Law Faculty collects and analyses relevant information in the annual reports of the dean. The Dean's office of the Law Faculty stores exam and mid-term exam papers.

In view of the aforesaid tools regarding collection and analysis of information and data on the implementation of the programme, the review team judges these to be in place to the extent needed for detecting strengths and weaknesses at the implementational, i.e. operational level of the IBLMP (notwithstanding the call for adding certain tools for quality assurance at strategic level and from the viewpoint of a holistic assessment of the programme; cf. paragraph e) hereafter).

c) The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme:

(1) The Study Programme Committee organizes a programme assessment at least once a year. This assessment appears to be based largely on the questionnaire surveys carried out at the faculty level. These surveys are oriented towards individual teacher self-reflection and self-development.

(2) Fora of teachers, students, alumni and social partners on the study quality issues have been established. These are intended to gather viewpoints to be considered by the SPC and the Dean's Office in order to induce programme improvement are used by taking them into account when updating the programme is considered by the SPC and the Dean's Office.

(3) The so-called bi-directional feedback enables lecturers to be informed about their performance and to inform students about their performance, to explain the examination process and criteria, etc.

(4) At the overarching level of VMU as a whole, VMU performs a so-called express questioning throughout the entire university. It is based on a questionnaire which focuses on the main areas of study quality, such as teaching/learning, ethics, study materials, methodology/didactics, student satisfaction with studies, novelty, evaluation objectivity, teacher competence, communication. Every teacher is reviewed.

d) The evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders:

Social partners are encouraged to provide suggestions to the SPC, their opinion is seen as a significant factor for improving the programme. The main social partner and the member of the SPC is a lawyer of the international company Kraft Foods Lietuva and Mondelēz International. In addition, the overall quality of all study programmes of the Faculty of Law is discussed in the meetings with various social partners such as attorney offices, courts, prosecutor offices, police headquarters, companies, etc. In view of the nature of IBLMP, an important role in improving

the quality of the IBLMP is played by international business companies and by international advocate bureaus, such as the attorney offices of Magnusson, Sorainen, Tark Grunte Sutkiene, and the innovation park Technopolis with more than 10 companies of different activities, and the company Volfas Engelman managed by a graduate of the VMU Law Faculty. The review team heard that the Law Faculty can indeed be effectively approached by social partners in informal ways, while there is scope for improvement as to the regularity and periodicity of exchange of views on programme adjustments.

e) The internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient:

(1) The results of annual programme evaluation carried out by the SPC, which is mainly based on the questionnaire-based survey at faculty level, are oriented towards individual teacher self-reflection and self-development. They are considered to be confidential, so they are discussed individually by the teacher and the Chair of the Study Program Committee, Vice-Deans or the Dean. After such discussions, individual actions for the improvement of the study quality are planned and implemented, if deemed necessary (e.g. update of the study subject content, inclusion of additional practical examples, preparation of didactical material, etc.). In effect, the Law Faculty has put changes in the curriculum in place, as indicated in the first chapter of this report.

(2) Fora of teachers, students, alumni and social partners on the study quality issues have been established. These are intended to gather viewpoints to be considered by the SPC and the Dean's Office in order to induce programme improvement are used by taking them into account when updating the programme is considered by the SPC and the Dean's Office.

(3) The so-called bi-directional feedback processes are left to the initiative of each lecturer or students' requests. These activities are therefore irregular by nature, they are not documented due to their informal oral nature, and hence there is no safeguard as to the regularity and effectiveness of these processes, nor is there a guarantee that their input and outcome feed into the overarching quality assurance processes. Bi-directional feedback is therefore valid as a quality instrument with effect at a case-to-case level of problem solution and deserves to be maintained. However, the Law Faculty may want to consider whether the regularity of these processes can be monitored, and whether there are ways to ensure that outcomes of general relevance can be fed more reliably into the quality processes installed at the level of the SPC.

(4) The so-called express questioning performed at the overarching level of VMU as a whole leads to findings which every teacher reviewed and the deans of the faculties have access to. The survey outcomes then may be discussed in the meeting with deans or, at a more general level, the faculty teaching staff. Based on the express questioning survey, teachers are ranked and the list of the best 50 teachers is created. All students have access to the ranking through the intranet system. Outcomes of the express survey are discussed in the Students' Representative Council, inviting the representatives of the Rectorate and the Quality and Strategy Office in order to formulate propositions for the improvement of the content of the survey instruments. This process can therefore be a useful, i.e. effective means for improvement. However, making the findings broadly known may have an ostracising effect, especially when related to individual teacher performance, in which case there could be negative effects as regards undue attempts to influence findings and acceptance of the findings. Moreover, and in particular, the impact could be considerably enhanced if there was evidence that the findings of the so-called express questioning could feed directly into the quality enhancement processes run at faculty by the SPC, of which there is no express evidence.

The review team judges that the devices in place for checking and improving the operational quality of the IBLMP are used effectively and efficiently, leading to reconsidering content and procedural features of the programme in a self-reflective, critical manner. There is evidence of change taking place as a consequence of the quality assessment devices in place.

The review team would specifically like to emphasize its impression that the Law Faculty shows a considerable degree of 'quality culture'. This term denotes the preparedness of faculty members to openly address the need for constant improvement, and for showing the personal willingness to face criticism and to act positively in response to new ideas for improvement. The faculty's quality culture did not only show during the site visit but is also demonstrated by the practice to consult, on a regular base, with students, namely with the course speaker elected by students, in regular meetings with the dean's team, and by action taken in readdressing course design swiftly, as was the case when the Law Faculty made changes to the programme even early on when realizing that there was some scope for improvement.

At a more technical level, the review team nevertheless sees scope for broadening the quality assessment scope to be employed by the VMU Law Faculty: While quality issues are largely addressed at the level of concrete lecture-based issues of individual teacher performance in each module – with some consideration also being given to matters of students' opinion on relevance of the given module and the level of personal and academic enhancement provided by means of the module - considering strategic and holistic issues concerning the IBLMP appears to be less developed. These are at strategic level: adequacy and concreteness of the overarching learning objectives and alignment of competencies (e.g., by systematic analysis of employment features); language policy; foci of internationalization in terms of strategic partnerships, of possibilities, of opportunities of joint programmes and of effective safeguarding of a recognition strategy; assessment of the holistic elements of the programme, i.e. by considering the validity of course sequencing, course interplay, and overlap; analysis of examination processes and match between exam tasks given and testing expected learning outcomes and desired competencies; regular evaluation of support elements, such as library and internet services and student counselling.

2.7. Examples of excellence *

The IBLMP shows the following features of excellence:

1. The compulsory elements of the IBLMP provide a scope wide enough to cover the essentials of the subject matter, while the choice of options provides ample opportunity for developing individual interest.
2. The Socratic method, problem-based learning and safeguarding holistic, systematic exploration of a given academic field, including a staged process of familiarizing students with a research experience, does not only carry academic value but also ensures development of hands-on, self-managerial competencies and skills.
3. Since the IBLMP is host to a considerable number of international scholars and practitioners on a regular base, the programme offers scope for the provision of international expertise.
4. Implementation of a tutoring and a mentoring system, by means of which advanced students are encouraged to help students with difficulties in the study process and by which support is given to foreign students.
5. The facilities provided, especially in terms of internet access, and provisions made for the disabled are commendable.
6. The Law Faculty has developed a high degree of quality culture in terms of openness for adaptation and improvement.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The programme could profit from sharpening the international element more decisively by ensuring full foreign language competence of all its graduates.
2. International partnerships could be more targeted at an institutional level, also addressing the possibility of joint programmes.
3. A more consistent 'teach-the-teacher' scheme may be advisable in particular to address the challenges of the Socratic, problem- and case-based teaching method.
4. Quality assurance practices could be sharpened with regard to elements related to the holistic features of the programme and the so-called student life cycle.
5. Graduates' and social partners' opinion could be integrated into the quality assurance process more consistently.

IV. SUMMARY

The International Business Law Master Programme (IBLMP) of Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas) shows a number of positive aspects, such as:

1. The aims and intended learning outcomes of the IBLMP are sufficiently well-defined and clear in general terms. They proceed from analysis of relevant legislation via analysis of dispute settlement institutions and availability of alternatives and via analysis of disputes actually arising in international business and modes for settling these to analysis of both existing and innovative legal instruments regulating international business relations.
2. The aims and intended learning outcomes of the IBLMP are, in principle, valid programme aims, enabling students to analyse core aspects of international business law as well as to perform in practice in areas of international business law in a meaningful way.
3. Processes are in place to ensure alignment of programme aims and learning outcomes to academic and professional requirements and public as well as employment needs.
4. The application of the 'Socratic teaching method', i.e. activating students by involving them in discussions, by means presentations of cases, analysis of legal concepts, solving specific practical tasks, or by simulations of legal disputes, is commendable.
5. Alignment of the IBLMP academic and professional performance to the research-related quality level expected for master programmes is ensured in several ways; i.e. by staff development with a special focus on research involvement of staff, by gathering information on expected levels of academic performance through membership in law organizations, and by developing pan-European standards of academic performance relevant for the IBLMP.
6. The compulsory elements of the IBLMP provide a scope wide enough to cover the essentials of the subject matter while being realistic as to what can be done within a 90 ECTS credit point programme, while the choice of options provides ample opportunity for developing individual interest, thus adding a hallmark of personal specificity to the range of essential aspects provided to cover the core facets of international business law issues.
7. The staff responsible for the IBLMP is remarkable not only in that 90 per cent are younger than 50 and in that on average 43 per cent of teachers are women, but also and in particular in that the IBLMP is host to a number of international scholars and practitioners, all in all 26 in recent years, with 5 and 9 visiting professors per semester teaching in the IBLMP.
8. The establishment of a tutoring system, provision of aid for students taking part in specific academic and societal activities, and an advisory service to facilitate internships are commendable.

The IBLMP and the way it is operated could nevertheless be improved with regard to the following aspects:

1. The scope of the international concept of the IBLMP may need to be reconsidered as to the language policy and the demand for foreign language capabilities of IBLMP students, also in view of VMU's institutional aspiration to foster internationalization and multilingualism.
2. Also in terms of internationalization, the Law faculty may consider to encourage IBLMP students to go abroad; in this context, the faculty may consider clear policies on recognition of imported credits (need to check whether there is a recognition scheme in place in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention), and it may also consider setting up international joint programmes.
3. In terms of a more proactive approach to staff development, VMU may consider the introduction of, or the participation in, 'teach-the-teacher' scheme.
4. While quality issues are addressed at the level of concrete lecture-based issues of individual teacher performance, and while there are certain elements considering strategic and holistic issues concerning the IBLMP overall direction and its compilation are in place, there is scope for developing quality enhancement processes with a focus on strategic and holistic aspects of the programme further.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *International Business Law* (state code – 621M90030) at Vytautas Magnus 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	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	4
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	21

*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: Review leader:	Prof. dr. jur. Jürgen Kohler
Grupės nariai: Review members:	Prof. dr. Rolf Dotevall
	Dr. Kristi Joamets
	Mrs Dovilė Satkauskienė
	Ms Janine Wulz

**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINĖ VERSLO TEISĖ* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621M90030)
2016-06-29 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-160 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Tarptautinė verslo teisė* (valstybinis kodas – 621M90030) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	4
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	4
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	21

* 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

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto magistrantūros studijų programos *Tarptautinio verslo teisė* teigiami aspektai:

1. Šios studijų programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai yra pakankamai apibrėžti ir iš esmės aiškūs. Jie nustatyti atsižvelgiant į atitinkamų teisės aktų analizę, ginčų sprendimų institucijų analizę ir turimas alternatyvas, tarptautinio verslo srityje kylančių ginčų ir šių ginčų sprendimo būdų analizę, esamus ir naujus teisinius instrumentus, reglamentuojančius tarptautinio verslo santykius.
2. Šios studijų programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai iš esmės yra pagrįsti, jie užtikrina, kad studentai gebės analizuoti pagrindinius tarptautinio verslo teisės klausimus ir praktiškai dirbti tarptautinio verslo teisės srityje.
3. Įdiegtos procedūros, užtikrinančios programos tikslų ir numatomų studijų rezultatų derinimą su akademiniais ir (ar) profesiniais reikalavimais, visuomenės ir darbo rinkos poreikiais.
4. Pagirtina tai, kad taikomas „sokratiškas studijų metodas“, t. y. studentų aktyvumas sužadinamas įtraukiant juos į diskusijas, pristatant bylas, nagrinėjant teises koncepcijas, sprendžiant konkrečias praktines užduotis ar modeliuojant teisinius ginčus.
5. Šios studijų programos dėstytojų akademinės ir profesinės veiklos rezultatų atitikimas su moksliniais tyrimais siejamos kokybės lygiui, kurio tikimasi iš magistrantūros programų, užtikrinamas keliais būdais, t. y., keliant dėstytojų kvalifikaciją, ypač įtraukiant juos į mokslinius tyrimus, renkant informaciją apie tikėtiną akademinės veiklos rezultatų lygį per narystę teisinėse

organizacijose ir tobulinant šiai studijų programai svarbius visos Europos akademinės kvalifikacijos standartus.

6. Privalomieji šios studijų programos elementai yra pakankamai platūs, kad apimtų svarbiausius srities dalykus, kartu realiai atsižvelgiant į tai, kokia gali būti 90 kreditų vertės apimties programa; o laisvai pasirenkami dalykai suteikia dideles galimybes suformuoti asmeniškai dominančių dalykų rinkinį, taip įvairius esminius dalykus, apimančius pagrindinius tarptautinės verslo teisės klausimų aspektus, papildant konkrečiais asmeniškai dominančiais dalykais.

7. Puiku ne tik tai, kad 90 proc. šios studijų programos dėstytojų yra jaunesni nei 50 metų ir kad vidutiniškai 43 proc. iš jų yra moterys, bet ypač tai, kad dėstyti studijų programą *Tarptautinio verslo teisė* atvyksta daug tarptautinių mokslininkų ir praktikuojančių teisininkų, pastaraisiais metais iš viso 26, t.y. 5–9 dėstytojai per semestrą.

8. Pagirtina tai, kad sukurta tutoriavimo sistema, teikiama pagalba konkrečioje akademinėje ir socialinėje veikloje dalyvaujantiems studentams, teikiama konsultavimo paslauga, skirta norintiems išvykti į stažuotes.

Tačiau magistrantūros studijų programa *Tarptautinio verslo teisė* yra tobulintina šiose srityse:

1. Galbūt reikėtų persvarstyti šios studijų programos tarptautinės dimensijos apimtį, turint omenyje kalbų politiką ir šios programos studentų poreikį mokėti užsienio kalbas, be kita, atsižvelgiant ir į VDU siekį skatinti tarptautiškumą ir daugiakalbystę.

2. Tarptautiškumo didinimo tikslais Teisės fakultetas galėtų paskatinti šios programos studentus vykti į užsienį, taikyti aiškią užsienyje įgytų kreditų pripažinimo politiką (reikia patikrinti, ar taikoma pripažinimo schema laikantis Lisabonos pripažinimo konvencijos); fakultetas dar galėtų apsvarstyti jungtinių tarptautinių programų kūrimo klausimą.

3. Siekdamas iniciatyvaus požiūrio į dėstytojų tobulėjimą, VDU galėtų apsvarstyti „mokyti dėstytojus“ (*teach-the-teacher*) schemas taikymo ar dalyvavimo joje klausimą.

4. Nors kokybės klausimai sprendžiami atsižvelgiant į atskirų dėstytojų kvalifikaciją siejant ją su konkrečiomis paskaitomis ir nors strateginiai bei holistiniai aspektai, susiję su šios studijų programos bendra kryptimi ir jos sudarymu yra svarstomi, kokybės gerinimo procesų srityje dar yra ką tobulinti toliau akcentuojant strateginius ir holistinius šios programos aspektus.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Būtų naudinga ryžtingiau stiprinti studijų programos *Tarptautinio verslo teisė* tarptautinį elementą užtikrinant, kad visi jos absolventai labai gerai mokės anglų kalbą.
2. Universitetui reikėtų labiau stengtis sudaryti tarptautinės partnerystės susitarimus, tirti jungtinių programų galimybę.
3. Rekomenduotina nuosekliau taikyti „mokyti dėstytojus“ (*teach-the-teacher*) schemą, ypač siekiant priimti sokratiškojo, problemų ir atvejų analize pagrįsto mokymo metodo keliamus iššūkius.
4. Būtų galima stiprinti kokybės užtikrinimo veiklą, turint omenyje jos elementus, susijusius šios studijų programos holistinėmis savybėmis ir vadinamuoju „studentų gyvavimo ciklu“.
5. Absolventų ir socialinių partnerių nuomonė galėtų būti nuosekliau įtraukiama į kokybės užtikrinimo procesą.

<...>

Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)