



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
Ikimokyklinė ir priešmokyklinė pedagogika
(valstybinis kodas – 612X11003)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF PRESCHOOL AND PREPRIMARY EDUCATION
(state code – 612X11003)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences

Expert team:

1. **Dr Eve Eisenschmidt (team leader),** *academic,*
2. **Dr Cathal de Paor,** *academic,*
3. **Prof. Dr Inge Johansson,** *academic,*
4. **Ms Tatjana Kriliuvienė,** *representative of social partners,*
5. **Mr Ervinas Spūdys,** *student representative.*

Evaluation coordinator -

Ms Renata Grinaitė

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Ikimokyklinė ir priešmokyklinė pedagogika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612X11003
Studijų sritis	socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	pedagogika
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinės (4), iššęstinės (5,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	ikimokyklinio ugdymo pedagogikos bakalauras, pedagogas
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2012 m. lapkričio 7 d.

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Preschool and Preprimary Education</i>
State code	612X11003
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Teachers' Training
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (4), Part-time (5,5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor in Teachers' Training for the Pre-School Level, Teacher
Date of registration of the study programme	7 November 2012

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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 the 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 during the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	The Guidelines of Study Programme Committee for 2012-2015
2.	The Development Strategy of Faculty of Education at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences for 2012-2020
3.	Professional Development of LEU teachers

4.	Annual Workload of LEU teachers
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1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

Training of early childhood education teachers at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (hereafter – LEU) began in the 1968. Starting with 2001 training of pre-school and pre-primary teachers was carried out within one study programme *Educational Studies*. In 2010 the study programme was renamed as *Early Childhood and Primary Education*. In 2012 was decided to separate two specialisations of the study programme *Early Childhood and Primary Education* and to design a new Bachelor study programme *Early Childhood and Pre-Primary Education* and *Primary Education*.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team/external evaluation team (hereafter - EET) was assembled in accordance with the *Expert Selection Procedure*, 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 3rd November, 2015.

- 1. Dr Eve Eisenschmidt (team leader)**, *vice-rector for development at Tallinn University, external evaluation expert at the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency, Estonia.*
- 2. Dr Cathal de Paor**, *Senior Lecturer and Director of Continuing Professional Development at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland.*
- 3. Prof. Dr Inge Johansson**, *professor emeritus in Pedagogy, University of Stockholm, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Sweden.*
- 4. Ms Tatjana Kriliuvienė**, *teacher expert (English as a foreign language), Kuršėnai Laurynas Ivinskis upper secondary school, Lithuania.*
- 5. Mr Ervinas Spūdys**, *student at Vilnius University, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Public Relations representative at the Students' Union of Vilnius University, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

According to the Self-evaluation report (hereafter – SER) the aim of the study programme is to train a responsible and competent early childhood and pre-primary teacher with an university education who possesses a broad theoretical understanding of education in childhood, creatively interprets traditions of culture, is able to organise high quality early childhood and pre-primary education in the context of globalisation, social diversity and new technologies and to develop and implement innovations of children's education as well as establish partnerships with a family, professional and other communities (SER, p. 5). Learning outcomes of this study programme are broad including aspects of child development, organisational skills on micro-as well as macro levels (for example, communication and curriculum planning) and personal development.

Description of competences acquired (based on the project "Tuning", the European Qualifications Framework and Lithuanian National Framework, the Dublin Descriptors, the National Descriptor of Teacher's Professional Competences) is provided in Annex 4. Annex 5 provides the correlation between the study programme outcomes and modules. Additionally leaders of the study programme illustrated compliance of the learning outcomes with areas of professional activities in Picture 1 and the proportion of general and special competences in the programme in Picture 2. Learning outcomes compared with the requirements of first cycle of Bachelor studies are presented in Table 1 and Annex 9. Programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined and based on academic and public needs. The external expert team (hereafter – EET) acknowledge activities the study programme committee analysing the programme aims and LO compliance to all mentioned requirements.

The SER also provides data to explain the need of graduates of this study programme in Lithuanian society. The statistical analysis of the data related to the labour market has shown that the demand for training of early childhood and pre-primary education teachers is very high. Also information was offered in the SER that the tendency of including children with special educational needs into regular groups in educational institutions is growing. Therefore, the learning outcomes related to special needs children and inclusive education is included.

The EET experienced that there is ongoing programme development. During the site visit the head of the Study Programme Committee expressed that some new themes were recently included to the programme like individualized child development methods, working with children groups with multicultural background, how to teach foreign language. Teaching staff also emphasised that aims and goals of the programme have been continuously revised and assessed based on feedback of students and representatives for the labour market.

The aims and LOs of the study programme are made public in several ways, i.e. on open internet website of AIKOS (Informational, Consulting and Counselling System), on website of Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for Organisation of General Admission (LAMA BPO) and on the website of LEU. Additional several publications are offered for prospective students.

EET welcomes the decision made 2012 to separate Pre-school and Primary school teacher education into two programmes. This programme has clear name and qualification offered compatible with each other.

To sum up, the programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined and based on the academic and professional requirements. There is on-going programme development based on public labour market needs. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design is in compliance with all of the legal requirements, relating to programme volume, and the subjects of the study field. The content of the subjects is fully consistent with the type and level of studies expected from such programmes, with an appropriate amount of credits being allocated to the subjects of the study field. The study field subjects are of a higher qualitative problem-solving as regards the study content. The programme was designed in 2012 focusing only on the *Early Childhood and Pre-Primary Education* sector, having been previously offered in another version as part of a broader degree catering for both early childhood and primary (SER, p. 3). This revision was necessary in view of the Regulations of Teacher Training (2012). The programme carries a workload equivalent to 240 credits (4 years full-time and 5.5 years part-time).

The programme is modular, and consistent with the creation of a common European higher education area. The subjects are spread evenly throughout the programme, and timetabled to help students develop knowledge about theory and practice together. The first semesters includes introductory modules of early childhood education pedagogy and modules of general university studies (SER, p. 16). Students are introduced to core knowledge, applying and further developing this knowledge as the programme progresses.

However, some thought should be given to ways in which students could alternate more regularly between the taught courses and spending some time in practice. There is a need to further develop opportunities for students to routinely collect evidence about their own practice, and to use this in the work they do for the taught courses. Students could then use their experience from practice as the basis for discussing theoretical concepts in class, developing their own theory of teaching, constructing new knowledge and then using and further developing this in their teaching. The work of Schön relating to reflective practice may be useful in guiding this work. The use of integrated assessment could also be valuable in enabling students to make connections between study subjects.

The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of outcomes in line with level 6 of the European and Lithuanian Qualifications Framework. At this level, graduates need to be capable of solving tasks in the field of early childhood education, using a variety of tools and methods, and applying theoretical knowledge to adapt to changing needs. The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, i.e., ‘to train a responsible and competent early childhood and pre-primary teacher [...] able to organise high quality early childhood and pre-primary education’ (SER, p. 5). Learning outcomes provide an appropriate level of challenge, and are aligned with programme aims, and cover the range of knowledge which students will need in the workplace. A range of teaching and learning approaches are used including active learning, independent work, project-based work, research and reflective practice.

The range of subjects reflects the diverse needs of teachers, with scope for students to specialise using elective modules (worth 75 ECTS). Supporting resources and reference lists show that the subjects are well researched and reflect current and emerging trends and innovations. Key issues are catered for in the programme, including the preparation of graduates to work 'with special educational needs in general groups (SER, p. 7). Students may conduct their teaching practice in a range of settings, including, 'early childhood education institutions, pre-primary groups, kindergartens, day centres for non-formal education, private and public institutions implementing Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio Emilia, Gardner educational programmes and others' (SER, p. 25). During the site visit, the EET heard suggestions from teachers to increase the allocation of time to various subjects, including children's literature, and arts education. The EET would agree that language and the arts are crucially important for the creative and imaginative development of you children. Greater integration between subjects would also enable the programme to develop the skills and knowledge of students in promoting the language arts with children.

The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes. Courses target develop students' general methodologies, as well as catering for specialist knowledge, focusing on particular issues of practice and learning areas (given an allocation of 90 ECTS). There is an appreciation of the multi-faceted role of the practitioner working in early childhood and pre-primary, for example, 'educator, curriculum designer, the supporter to the child and his family; while organizing inclusive education, the leader cooperating with parents, professional community and other social participants; a researcher able to choose effective theoretically grounded ways of introducing innovations of early childhood education and ways of solving problems' (SER, p. 7). The programme therefore focuses on both general and special competences for these professional roles. However, while there is some provision within the programme for catering for the varied interest of students, this could be further developed through the further use of electives, thereby reflecting the varied professional contexts in which graduates of the programme may wish to work. The thesis provides students with opportunities to conduct a piece of research in the last year of their studies. The relevant regulations for this research are clearly outlined, with the requirements for the preparation of final thesis and its defence being fully met. The pedagogical studies thesis also helps in preparing students for this requirement. The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in research and practice. Teachers from the Department of Childhood can draw on their participation in research projects directly related to the programme (SER, p. 21). During the site visit, there were opportunities to see the use of technology for the teaching of subject areas such as Music, and also robotics. Children's play is an area of research that offers great potential for the programme. During the site visit, the EET visited a special play room where research was being conducted on children's play. This offers great potential as a resource for curriculum design and would enable the programme to reflect even more the latest theory on how children learn. Social partners also commended the students for using new and innovative ideas during practice in the settings. The content also addresses new priorities in early childhood education such as inclusion, working with children with special needs, and technology.

To summarize, the panel commends the commitment shown by staff to ongoing curriculum design and review. The continued development of programme modularization should help with this work, by increasing the size of learning units. This will also encourage students to approach their own practice with children in a more integrated way. There is a need to further develop opportunities for students to routinely collect evidence about their own practice, and to use this in the work they do for the taught courses. There is also scope to include a greater focus on reflective practice. Opportunities for group review can be used to enable students support each

other and also provide the basis for discussion during taught courses (educology and didactics). Students should receive some preparation in enabling them to leading curriculum initiatives in the future. EET recommends to increase the size and coherence of learning units in the interests of greater integration in the learning experience, and to combine certain courses which deal with closely-related curriculum areas. Greater integration between subjects in the programme to encourage students to approach their own practice with children in a more integrated way should be supported. Also to promote greater use of reflective practice so that students continue to construct new knowledge about their teaching, and develop their own theory of teaching and to develop the use of language and the arts both as discrete areas within the programme, but also through integration with other subjects.

2.3. Teaching staff

The list of teachers indicating the existing pedagogical and academic degree, pedagogical work experience, fields of research interests, practical work experience in the area of taught subject and taught subjects is presented in the SER. The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements.

The list of teachers (presented in Annex 2) gives the evident that the following staff is involved in the teaching process: 14 teachers (1 professor - 0.5 FTE; 7 associate professors (5 full-time associate professors; 2 associate professors: 0.25 FTE); 2 lecturers with doctors degree (1 full-time lecturer (Dr.); 1 lecturer (Dr.): 0.5 FTE); 4 assistant lecturers (1 full-time assistant lecturers; 3 assistant lecturers: 0.25 FTE)) and other teachers who teach 1-2 module subjects.

As it is stated in the SER (=Table 8), the study programme is implemented by teachers with very high qualifications: 79.04 % of programmes volume of credits are taught by teachers with a scientific degree (associate professors, professors and other), only 20.96 % are delivered by assistant lecturers and lecturers without a scientific degree. LEU has a sufficient number of full time teachers to successfully implement the programme. 85 % volume credit courses are taught by full time teachers, 2.08%. - LEU part-time teachers, 12.92 % - teachers timeworkers. The SER states that “teachers-timeworkers are invited to work to gain experience or because of relations with employers” (SER pg.20). As it was clarified by the SER group they are usually invited because of their experience. For example, the programme didn’t have a lecturer having competences in art therapy, so, a teacher-timeworker was invited to work. The SER also states that the composition of the teaching staff in the study programme fully satisfies the requirements of legal acts (“The Description of General Requirements of Bachelor Study Programmes“ (April 9 2010, No. V-501) and the requirements of LR Government regulation (May 13, 2009 No. 402).

A particular advantage of the programme is that “the average age of full-time and part-time teachers working in the Bachelor study programme is 49.6 years,” so, it can be concluded that teachers’ age is optimal: only two professors are over 66, whereas nine teachers are younger than 40 years. Therefore, the EET comes to the conclusion that the academic staff is naturally renewed. The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes (see above).

As it is stated in the SER, a natural turnover took place and the Department enlisted very professional teachers instead of those who left their posts (Assoc. Prof. Dr. V. S. Glebuviene (full time) retired in 2012, assistant lecturer J. Gedvilienė (0.25 FTE) resigned because of heavy workload at her primary position. Lecturer Prof. O. Petronienė (0.5 FTE), Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Galkienė (0.5 FTE), Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Diškus (0.25 FTE) have joined the study programme.

EET found it clear that during the assessed period changes in teaching staff in this programme did not have a critical influence for study quality. Nobody complained about the teachers' turnover. On the contrary, the meeting with students, gave strong evidence that some teachers brought innovations to the programme, which is welcome by students. Therefore, teaching staff turnover seems to be able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme.

The ratio of teachers and students in the study programme equals 1:13 (12.93) which seems to EET adequate.

The higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. Teachers' professional development is ensured by the attestation system (the SER provides an exact list of the resolutions of the Lithuanian Research Council. Teachers go through attestation every 3–5 years and teachers' pedagogical, research, artistic and educative activities are assessed. The SER states that "teachers' professional development is ensured on all administrative levels (department, study committee, faculty and university), information is publicly announced on the internet websites of the Department, Faculty and University" as Asta Meškauskienė, Vice-Dean of the faculty of Education, during the meeting gave the detailed explanation of the structure and procedure of the teachers' development. In addition, the document "Professional development of LEU teachers", which reflects the wide range of the possibilities to develop teachers' qualifications.

The SER also gives a detailed description of ways of teachers' development. Table 13 in the SER provides areas of professional development of teachers of the Department of Childhood Studies, which mirror the teachers' participation in a wide range of development areas. As stated in the SER, "each teacher participates in 3-6 training every year", which was approved by teachers during the site visit.

Descriptions of teachers work illustrate coincidence of their scientific, project-based, scientific applied and educative work, professional development with the subjects of the programme (Annex 3 of self-assessment summary).

As the SER states, the teachers of the Department of Childhood Studies are constantly involved in applied research activities, which are conducted under openly announced tenders. Table 10 illustrates teachers' research works (scientific articles for publication abroad; participation in preparation of scientific monographs and studies, preparation of methodological publications). Thus, although the teaching staff of the programme is involved in research directly related to the study programme being reviewed, it can be encouraged to dedicate more time to the production of research papers, not only in Lithuania but also beyond.

Teachers from Department of Childhood Studies regularly conduct applied research, for which public competitions are announced. All research is related to the study programme, with some research done together with students. From the meeting with students the EET have a strong feeling that students are well aware of what the research is, some good examples were provided, like How can art be the way of expressing emotions. During the site meeting with the administrative staff, it became clear to the EET that the number of publications and presentations reflects teachers' participation in research work, and the administrative staff are completely satisfied with the results.

The SER states, that during the assessed period, the teachers delivered about 12-35 presentations in national and international scientific conferences each year (SER, table 11). The number of

delivered presentations differs from year to year and is not equal (from 12 in 2010 to 35 in 2014). According to the SER, the number of presentations in international conferences abroad has decreased from 6 to 2. The EET was assured by the administrative staff that all teachers are encouraged to apply for grants but the decrease can be explained by the lack of finances, though every single application is being considered by the administration for financial support. The teaching staff also approved the fact that they can apply for grants at all levels (department, faculty and university) as well as using their personal relations. Therefore, it can be stated that teachers' research, project-based and dissemination activities are adequate.

The SER states that the Department of Childhood Study intensively expands teachers' academic exchange. The number of incoming teachers from abroad to the Department or Faculty has been growing annually (from 3 (in 2010) to 15 incoming teachers (in 2014). Meanwhile the number of teachers on study visits is lower (only 4 in 2014) During the site meeting with administrative staff the main reason was highlighted as the shortage of finances and lack of teachers' foreign language skills. Teachers mentioned the objective reason for the decrease as teachers' load in the home institution. Besides, the time spent abroad has been longer (from a week to 3 months. (table 12). The SER also notes the reason as not sufficient knowledge of foreign languages.

The workload of teachers is regulated by the document "*Description of Structure, Norms and Procedure of Teachers' Working Time Accounting in LEU*" approved by the LEU Senate in 2012, according to which, teacher's pedagogical work should comprise 700-1000 hrs., research and/or artistic activities: 400-760 hrs, activities related to effect on regional development (project activities) 20-100 hrs., organisational, professional development activities 20-200 hrs. The head of the Department is in charge of accounting of workload. The teachers of the Department of Childhood Studies have workload not only in the Bachelor study programme *Early Childhood and Pre-primary Education* but also in the Master study programme *Early Childhood Education Studies*. As it has been mentioned, the teacher-student ratio in the programme is 1:12.93.

To sum up, the teachers working in the programme meet the legal requirements and are highly qualified. Young teachers are available to be integrated into the implementation of the programme. The relationship between teachers is close and EET has strong evidence of the team work and collaboration among teachers. Teaching staff turnover seems to be able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme. The university and department create conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. However, despite some good international exchange opportunities, international cooperation could be increased and international research publications have to be increased as well. But on the whole, it can be stated that teachers' research, project-based and dissemination activities are satisfactory. The EET recommend that more time should be dedicated to the production of research papers, not only in Lithuania but also beyond. International research publications have to be increased. Also international cooperation could be increased. It is recommended to look for more possibilities to provide grants for outgoing teachers. The administrative staff should look for and ensure the further development of teacher staff's foreign language skills.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The SER refers to a range of learning resources and facilities to support delivery of the programme. The SER concludes that, 'there are enough premises for studies, all are technically equipped, the equipment is regularly renewed, teaching practice base is varied and particularly modern conditions for students; practice are being created' (SER, p. 26). There are also plans to

open a university kindergarten, which will serve as the centre for research in childhood, innovation development and their dissemination.

Wifi is available throughout. A total of 14 rooms are used in the delivery, including an innovative didactics room, and a room for video-conferencing and distant learning. A range of teaching rooms, including video-conferencing room, computer rooms, and rooms for teaching subject areas were observed during the suite visit.

Social partners also commended the students for using new and innovative ideas during practice in the settings. Access to practice settings is arranged by the University. Social partners noted that students are well-prepared for practice. The setting-based mentor and university teacher collaborate together in the assessment of a student's performance.

The SER notes that library resources (including books, journals, databases) is 'favourable for convenient and effective studying and pursuing the intended outcomes of the study programme' (SER, p. 28). Work conditions in the libraries and reading rooms are described as 'good' (SER, p. 26). During the site visit, the EET had the opportunity to visit the library and see the range of materials available to students.

A range of teaching materials for ensuring a successful learning experience is available. However, the availability of resources such as children's reading books, toys, musical instruments, etc. could be further enhanced so that students are enabled to learn from the university teachers how to use these effectively. These skills can then be developed more while they are on placement. There is therefore a need to further enhance the learning environment within the teaching rooms so that they can promote practical tasks. Learning how to teach effectively requires an environment rich in learning resources. Even though these future practitioners may have access to these resources in the pre-school and other settings, they need to be introduced to them during their training in the university. This will make it easier for them to learn how to effectively use these materials and also inspire students to develop their own resources.

To summarize, there are good conditions and enough materials to ensure the learning outcomes of the programme. The teaching and learning resources are adequate both in size and quality. It is recommended to develop further the use of special rooms equipped with a plentiful supply of resources for different subjects such as music, physical education, visual arts. To develop the provision of resources within the library to include children's books. While these may be present in the practice settings, students need access to them during the programme so that they can use them in their study in the various subjects, i.e., not just while on practice.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The requirements for the applicants to the Bachelor's study programme are provided for in the Regulations of Student Admission approved by LEU Senate, which was prepared following the General Provisions of the Rules of General Admission to First-cycle and Integrated Studies at Higher Education Institution in Lithuania (the admission procedure is announced on the website of LAMA BPO at lamabpo.lt). The entrants are admitted to the programme according to the order of priority of a study programme in the application, the highest competitive point and the results motivational test. The motivational test was introduced in May 5, 2010 and is compulsory for every student entering the state-financed places in the study programmes ascribed to the study field of Education and Training. The competitive point value is calculated according to the formula introduced by LAMA BPO. Only applicants with the competitive point no lower than

2.0 may be admitted (10 is the highest point, +2 additional points for motivation testing results) (SER, p. 28). Most of the students mark the study programme as their first priority and are highly motivated.

The SER states that each module subject has clearly defined outcomes and qualitative description of students' achievement which indicates what achievements are graded 9-10, 7-8, 5-6 or negatively. Students' knowledge, understanding and abilities are assessed. At the end of a module, the average grade is counted according to the formula provided in the module's descriptor (SER, p. 31). Students accumulate 50 or 60 percent of the summative mark by completing assignments of smaller volume, and 40-50 percent for the final assignment. Assignments encourage the students to work independently or in a team preparing essays, projects, problem solving, simulations, etc. There is much attention given towards reflection and self-reflection.

During the site visit the students indicated that the assessment system is clear and explained during the first lecture of each course. They also noted that the reflection they do during the practices is paper based.

The EET was told that there could be more elective courses during the study process so the students could specialise in the areas of their interest.

Students are able to apply research in practice institutions, in which they can see the realities of several schools, although the EET observed that students were not involved in the research projects undertaken by the teachers.

The students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes.

The information about the programme is available on the regularly-renewed websites of Faculty of Educations and Department of Childhood Studies, on the telephone or individually. Students get individual consultations on study questions, can choose a variety of study forms, take part-time courses from full-time programme or vice versa, can go on academic leave, and choose non-successive studies. The university has also prepared the procedure of acknowledging competences acquired informally, and has consultations on career as well.

The information about the assessment system of each module is published in website of Faculty of Educations and Department of Childhood Studies, and introduced in the beginning of a module to the students as well.

The SER states that the programme is the only university education programme in the Vilnius and Kaunas regions leading to a Bachelor in Early Childhood Education and providing a professional qualification of teacher. Graduates have the possibility to continue their studies in the Master study programme, Early Childhood Education Studies implemented in the LEU (SER, p. 13).

The social partners assured the EET that there is a great need for these specialists and graduates are welcomed in their institutions.

To sum up, the admission process is clear and ensures that most of the students are well motivated. The students are satisfied with the provided studying conditions, however the study

programme could offer more elective courses and an opportunity for students to individualize their studies. Electronical feedback and reflection forms could be encouraged as well. The study programme could offer more elective courses and make an opportunity for the students to individualize their studies. Electronical formats of feedback and reflections could be encouraged.

2.6. Programme management

The responsibilities of programme management are described clearly at faculty level in the SER (p. 4). The Dean of the faculty is responsible for strategic management and the quality of the faculty's activities. There are three vice-deans and two of them are responsible for studies. However, as there are two vice-deans in same area, the role sharing is not clear. The Study Programme Committee is responsible for the assessment of programme implementation. The cooperation levels of the Study Programme Committee are described in Picture 4 (p. 33). In table 18 the system of quality assurance of the Study Programme implementation is clearly described.

During the site visit the management team demonstrated their commitment to develop a study programme according to recent trends and to the needs of the society. During the meetings teaching staff and also students mentioned that they are aware to whom to turn to if they face some problems or complaints. It was also mentioned several times that the Study Programme Committee analyses feedback and plans measures to improve the programme. The responsibilities of decisions and monitoring the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated, although the positions of the two vice-deans should be clarified.

The data on the quality of implementing the study programme is collected from the students, teachers and social partners. The SER states that at University level *The Department of Marketing and Career* annually conducts an LEU students' survey on general satisfaction with the studies.

The SER states that Department of Academic Quality prepared a common questionnaire for administration and teaching staff. Such surveys are conducted regularly: in the first half of the year – anonymous LEU teachers' survey, in the second half of the year – open survey of all teachers of the study programme.

During the site visit teaching staff mentioned that they collect feedback directly from students at the end of the course. Students are also asked to propose ideas for improving the programme. Students mentioned that their feedback about the study process could be collected already in the middle of the course which would support the idea of ongoing improvement of the programme. Memos of the Study programme committee meetings and feedback analysis were introduced to the EET group. The review group recommends to use electronical platform to collect, analyze and store the data. This helps to see trends in data and plan measures to improve the study process more systematically.

The EET considered that there is data available on implementation of the programme but it need to be better systematized and stored in some electronical environment.

Internal and external evaluation results are used to improve the programme. For example, the heavily criticised study subject *Information Technologies* was withdrawn and practical classes of *Introduction into Studies and Technologies* is now introduced to students in technologies studies

(see SER p. 35). During the site visit the EET mentioned that attempts are made to apply ICT in every study subject. The SER group mentioned that based on social partners feedback special education topics were included. To support better integration of the studies' subjects and didactics of subjects were integrated. This is a big change in teaching approach and it is welcomed by teaching staff and students. During the site visit the EET mentioned that there is an ongoing process of updating the programme. The EET also discovered that teaching staff is open for changes. Students mentioned that there is an open atmosphere and good communication. The EET recommends implement teachers' self-reflection reports as they can reflect their workload, their most important achievements and may propose activities for their professional development.

The university cooperates with several social partners like schools, the Ministry of Education and Science, Education Development Centre, National Examination Centre, Lithuanian Association of Primary Teachers etc. Social partners participate in the work of the study programme committee. Together with social partners conferences, in-service trainings and joint projects are organized. The most important feedback comes from school mentors - they give feedback after the students' practice period. During the site visit social partners suggested several topics to improve future teachers competences, for example outdoor learning activities, knowledge on how to develop higher order thinking skills, formative assessment skills etc.

Social partners emphasised that they haven't participated in feedback surveys. The EET recommends the implementation of regular feedback survey for main social partners who are involved in student teachers' study process, which could help improving the programme.

To summarize, there is a system to collect information on programme implementation. The staff is committed and open for innovation. Management of the faculty and teaching staff are focused on development and on-going improvement of the programme. Several changes according to the needs of educational system have been made recently. Social partners participate in programme development. The EET recommends implementing teachers' self-reflection reports as they can reflect their workload, their most important achievements and may propose activities for their professional development. Also, electronical platforms are recommended to collect, analyse and store the information and data on implementation of the programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To increase the size and coherence of learning units in the interests of greater integration in the learning experience, and to combine certain courses which deal with closely-related curriculum areas.
2. To promote greater use of reflective practice so that students continue to construct new knowledge about their teaching, and develop their own theory of teaching.
3. To develop the use of language and the arts both as discrete areas within the programme, but also through integration with other subjects.
4. More time should be dedicated to the production of research papers, not only in Lithuania but also beyond. International research publications have to be increased.
5. International cooperation could be increased. It is recommended to look for more possibilities to provide grants for outgoing teachers.
6. The administrative staff should look for and ensure the further development of teacher staff's foreign language skills.
7. To further develop the use of special rooms that are equipped with a plentiful supply of resources for different subjects such as music, physical education, visual arts.
8. To develop the provision of resources within the library to include children's books. While these may be present in the practice settings, students need access to them during the programme so that they can use them in their study in the various subjects, i.e., not just while on practice.
9. To offer more elective courses and provide an opportunity for the students to individualize their studies and compile individual learning plans.
10. To support the culture of self-critical reflection on all levels – from student level to top management of the faculty.
11. To use electronical platforms in order to collect, analyse and store the information and data on the implementation of the programme.

IV. SUMMARY

Teacher education is the main focus of the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences. Training of early childhood education teachers at LEU began in the 1968.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined and based on the academic and professional requirements. There is on-going programme development based on public the labour market needs. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered.

There is a commitment shown by staff to ongoing curriculum design and review. The continued development of programme modularization should help with this work, by increasing the size of learning units. This will also encourage students to approach their own practice with children in a more integrated way. There is a need to further develop opportunities for students to routinely collect evidence about their own practice, and to use this in the work they do for the taught courses. There is also scope to include a greater focus on reflective practice. Opportunities for group review can be used to enable students support each other and also provide the basis for discussion during taught courses (educology and didactics). Students should receive some preparation in enabling them to leading curriculum initiatives in the future.

The teachers working in the programme meet the legal requirements and are highly qualified. Young teachers are available to be integrated into the implementation of the programme. The relationship between teachers is close and EET has strong evidence of the team work and collaboration among teachers. Teaching staff turnover seems to be able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme. The university and department create conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. However, despite some good international exchange opportunities, international cooperation could be increased and international research publications have to be increased as well. But on the whole, it can be stated that teachers' research, project-based and dissemination activities are satisfactory.

There are good conditions and enough materials to ensure the learning outcomes of the programme. The teaching and learning resources are adequate both in size and quality. It is recommended to develop further the use of special rooms equipped with a plentiful supply of resources for different subjects such as music, physical education, visual arts. To develop the provision of resources within the library to include children's books. While these may be present in the practice settings, students need access to them during the programme so that they can use them in their study in the various subjects, i.e., not just while on practice.

The admission process is clear and ensures that most of the students are well motivated. The students are satisfied with the provided studying conditions, however the study programme could offer more elective courses and an opportunity for students to individualize their studies. Electronical feedback and reflection forms could be encouraged as well. The study programme could offer more elective courses and make an opportunity for the students to individualize their studies. Electronical formats of feedback and reflections could be encouraged.

There is a system to collect information on programme implementation. The staff is committed and open for innovation. Management of the faculty and teaching staff are focused on development and on-going improvement of the programme. Several changes according to the

needs of educational system have been made recently. Social partners participate in programme development. The EET recommends implementing teachers' self-reflection reports as they can reflect on their workload, their most important achievements and may propose activities for their professional development. Electronical platforms are recommended to collect, analyse and store the information and data on implementation of the programme.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Preschool and Preprimary Education* (state code – 612X11003) at the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences 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	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	18

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

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

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

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

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Dr Eve Eisenschmidt
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr Cathal de Paor
	Prof. Dr Inge Johansson
	Ms Tatjana Kriliuvienė
	Mr Ervinas Spūdys