



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
Pradinio ugdymo pedagogika
(valstybinis kodas – 612X12003)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF PRIMARY EDUCATION
(state code – 612X12003)
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

Vilnius
2015

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Pradinio ugdymo pedagogika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612X12003
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	pradinio ugdymo pedagogikos bakalauras, pedagogas
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2012 m. gruodžio 5 d.

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Primary Education</i>
State code	612X12003
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 Primary Level, Teacher
Date of registration of the study programme	5 December 2012

© Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras
The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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	5
1.4. The Review Team.....	5
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	6
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	6
2.2. Curriculum design	6
2.3. Teaching staff	8
2.4. Facilities and learning resources	10
2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment.....	11
2.6. Programme management	13
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	15
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	18

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 protocols of Study programme Committee and Department meetings
2.	The Development Strategy of Faculty of Education at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences for 2012-2020

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

The Bachelor study programme *Primary Education* was previously offered as a separate specialisation within the joint *Early Childhood and Primary Education*. The study programme is offered in the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (hereafter – LEU), which trains teachers for all stages of formal and non-formal education as well as other specialists such as special needs teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, experts in education quality and education leaders. The Faculty of Education is the largest at LEU, consisting of seven departments including the Department of Fundamentals of Education which is responsible for implementation of the assessed study programme.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team 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 4 November 2015.

1. **Dr Eve Eisenschmidt (team leader)**, *vice-rector for development at Tallinn University, member of the Quality Assessment Council for Vocational Education and Training 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

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and readily available for students and others to consult and understand them. As stated in the SER, the aim of the study programme is to train primary teachers who can use a range of professional and pedagogical knowledge and skill, to provide high quality educational experience to primary children.

Information about the programme is sufficiently accessible at the university website. In the meetings during the site visit it was confirmed by the students that this information is clear and publicly accessible.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. During the site visit social partners and students referred to the way in which the content and design of the programme matches the professional needs of teachers in Lithuania, providing a broad and balanced programme of initial teacher education. However, given the ever-evolving nature of schooling and teaching, in line with changes in society, technology, and culture, it is important that students on the programme also develop a commitment to their own lifelong learning even after graduation with their Bachelor degree. The programme should seek ways of further developing these attitudes in the students. This also reflects the interdependence between teacher's learning and children's learning.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The learning outcomes are formulated in accordance with legal acts like the Descriptor of Professional Competences of a Teacher (2007), Teacher Training Standard for Primary Education Teachers (2008) and the primary school teacher training experience in Lithuania and abroad. The competences acquired by the students in the programme are formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Bologna Process.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. However, a lot of work has been done to create coherence between competences, learning outcomes, teaching methods and student activities across the subjects included in the study programme. The External Expert Team (EET) encourages teaching staff to continue to develop a constructive alignment between aims, activities, assessment. This is an ongoing process. Ongoing review of the programme by staff as well as collaborative planning can help to ensure that the programme is balanced and that any unhelpful overlap between courses is avoided.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design complies with the requirements regulating first cycle university pedagogical studies. 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 relevant regulations for this research are clearly outlined.

The subjects are timetabled to help students develop knowledge about theory and practice together, and following the principle 'from simple to complex'. General university education and pedagogical theories are introduced early in the programme, with professional, methodological and practical knowledge included soon after (SER, p. 12). Students are therefore introduced to core knowledge, applying and further developing this knowledge as the programme progresses. Ongoing curriculum review should enable the team to remove any unhelpful overlap and to

identify areas where some study subjects can be combined into bigger units. However, there are possibilities for improving the distribution of some courses, particularly, the study subjects of primary education didactics, for example, in science and mathematics so that students can learn about these throughout the programme rather than in certain semesters only. This would enable them to use this knowledge while undertaking practice throughout their programme.

The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. At this level, graduates need to be capable of solving tasks in the field of primary education, applying theoretical knowledge, and adapt constantly to new priorities and needs. Modules include general education, core pedagogical studies, pedagogical specialisation, didactics for primary subjects, and a final series of study subjects established by university amounting to 40 credits (SER, p. 13). Teaching practice amounts to 30 credits. A final year research project is an opportunity for students to develop scientific thinking, use scientific research methods, conduct research, write and defend research works (SER, p. 12). 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.

The range of subjects reflects the diverse needs of teachers. 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. The SER makes special mention of the integration of primary education content and didactics, based on a Swiss model, 'which provides for integrated learning of scientific knowledge and didactics of their teaching in primary classes (SER, p. 14). Such integration, it states, follows the latest European higher education trends, 'to practice active student learning culture, which direct the student from the study subject-related learning towards improvement of professional competences (SER, p. 14).

However, there are possibilities to further improve integration between pedagogical studies and primary education didactics and between courses taught in the university and student practice. Greater integration between theory and practice will enable the programme to more successfully meet the programme learning outcomes and to produce graduates who are ready to work as reflective practitioners.

The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes. A range of teaching and learning approaches are used including active learning, independent work, project-based work, research and reflective practice. Courses target develop students' general methodologies, as well as catering for specialist knowledge, focusing on the teacher as a reflective practitioner.

However, as noted above, there is a need to improve the integration of theory and practice. This could be achieved by providing opportunities for the subject course to include more practical tasks related to teaching. 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. It would be useful if the role of the university teacher during student practice could be extended, for example, opportunities for observation of the student teaching, followed by meeting between student, mentor and university teachers.

While part of the practice includes teaching under the supervision of a mentor, the importance of students learning from each other (one observing the other) should also be emphasized. This provides opportunities to learn from each other by having pairs of students teach in the same classroom (e.g., one student teaches a lesson, then observes her partner teach).

The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in research and practice. One way in which this is promoted is the use of the research project in the final year. The SER explains that, 'the focus is laid on the novelty and relevance of the analysed theme; insights into problem aspects of the analysed theme' (SER, p. 16).

To summarize, the panel commends the commitment of staff to ongoing curriculum review so that the programme can continue to develop and make a lasting contribution to the quality of early childhood and pre-primary education in Lithuania. 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 and develop the role of university teachers in supervising student practice. Opportunities for group review can be used to enable students support each other as they develop their understanding about teaching excellence, and also provide the basis for discussion during taught courses (educology and didactics). Students should receive some preparation in enabling them to lead curriculum initiatives in the future.

2.3. Teaching staff

The SER provides the list of the teachers involved in the programme: 3 professors, 13 associate professors, 4 lecturers (3 with research degree), 6 assistant lecturers (2 doctoral students). It might be stated that the qualifications of the academic staff members working in the study programme is appropriate and sufficient for successful implementation (23 teachers (88%) are full-time employees of LEU and 10 teachers (38%) are full-time in the Department of Fundamentals of Education).

The assessed study programme meets the requirements for the composition of the staff outlined in *On the Approval of the Description of General Requirements for First Study Cycle and Integrated Study Programmes Which Award a Degree* (Official Gazette, 2010, No. 43-2139) and *The Regulation of Teacher Training* (Official Gazette, 2012, No. 58-2915) (61 % of the academic staff members in the study programme are research degree holders and 65 % of the teachers in the study programme have experience in working at school).

As it is stated in the SER the study programme is implemented by teachers with high qualifications (69% of them have research degrees) (see above). Teachers' CVs show the qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes as the composition of the teaching staff in the study programme fully satisfies the requirements of relevant 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). All the teachers in the study programme (with exception of ICT specialists) have professional experience related to the assessed study programme. 56 % of the teachers are practitioners as they have accumulated professional experience of working at school.

The SER group in the meeting mentioned that the subjects were integrated with didactics, which is an innovation. Teachers saw this as a challenge, therefore, collaboration is encouraged. As an illustration, for example, the teaching staff, mentioned that music and IT teachers will design virtual musical instruments which could be used to teach music. Another positive thing of the innovation is the raised students' motivation, as they get a two sided view on the same topic (for example, while teaching mathematics as a subject, the didactics of how it works with the primary students is analysed).

As social partners explained, the teachers prepared in the programme are prepared as generalists, which means they are qualified to teach the primary curriculum in its entirety.

The ratio of students and teachers in the study programme equals 13.76 (one full-time equivalent post for every 14 students). The SER states this is an optimal ratio as the documents of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania require. Therefore, it can be stated that the number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes.

According to the SER, the analysis of turnover of academic staff in the study programme has revealed a slight increase in the number of teachers over the last 3 years. The turnover of staff sometimes occurs both due to reasons conditioned by the employer and inevitable circumstances. Over the last 3 years the turnover of staff has been insignificant. Therefore, it can be stated that teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme.

As stated in the SER, the professional development includes several ways for academic formal and non-formal acquisition of competences, like doctoral studies and post-diploma university studies, to participation in specialised events, like training courses, seminars, conferences, and collegial adoption of experience (internship, thematic discussions). According to the SER group and the teaching staff, professional development depends on a person, though training courses are being organised on methodology both inside the university, when teachers share experience, and outside the university. Self-reflection is also very important to every teacher.

According to the SER, the teachers are “active participants in seminars and training courses held in Lithuania”, but are “less active in foreign training events”. The meeting with the teaching staff revealed that the reason for that is the shortage of financing. However, 7 out of 18 teachers present in the meeting participated in different international mobility events in 2015, almost all of them taking part in international conferences. The SER notes another reason which is the lack of foreign language skills. The areas of professional development are in line with the research interests of the teachers.

As stated in the SER, the teachers of the department are actively involved in scientific and applied research related to primary education and in the period of 2012–2014 (in 11 EU structural funds and national projects). The SER provides the list of both EU financed and national projects.

The main research topic of the programme is integration of didactics with other subjects (see above). Therefore, the SER group is sure that this area must be deepened. Also, the topic the programme focuses on is literacy in different areas. The research on informal education at schools has been carried out, as Lithuania moved to the informal education basket. So, the SER group will learn about the real situation at schools after the research has been carried out, and assured the EET that this will be mirrored in the content of the programme.

According to the SER, the teachers of the study programme have published 21 articles in Lithuanian scholarly publications, 11 articles in foreign publications, 1 scientific monograph, and 54 methodological and teaching aids. Also, the teaching aids for school, which are written for school by the teachers of the study programme, have a significant impact on the national education. The data on distribution of publications written by the teachers of the Department of Fundamentals of Education according to years are presented in the SER. The conclusion may be drawn that the number of both foreign publications (2) and conferences abroad (1) is not satisfactory. The SER group assured the EET that the programme paid more attention for compiling teaching aids for Lithuanian educational institutions. The EET were assured that 4 teachers will be on Erasmus + programme in 2015, as they have already got the grants from the National Agency.

As stated in the SER, the teachers of the study programme take part in activities of national and international research institutions and organisations and take part in various other scientific activities, editorial boards of scientific publications (most are Lithuanian, one mentioned is Latvian). The teachers of the study programme are also involved in expert activities and in workgroups for preparation of national and regional documents, which help the teaching staff see the real situation in the country to make improvements for the programme.

The teachers from the Department of Fundamentals of Education take part in international academic mobility and collaboration programmes (*Erasmus, Tempus*). The SER illustrates the data on incoming and outgoing teachers according to academic mobility exchange. As it may be seen, during the period of 2012-2014, a total of 4 teachers from the Department went to give lectures to foreign universities and on 6 occasions, the students of the assessed study programme had opportunities to attend lectures of foreign lecturers.

As stated in the SER, the teachers of the study programme took part in various scientific events in Lithuania and abroad. However, the teaching staff complained that they do not have enough time for the research work. They have to update their courses and manage the Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), so they have little opportunity to leave the home institution.

The distribution of academic staff members according to age groups is rather equal. Most teachers are research degree holders of average age (the data on the structure of academic staff (excluding teachers of general education subjects) according to age groups and volumes of the taught study subjects are presented in the SER).

The workload of a teacher, who has one FTE (Full Time Equivalent), shall be 36 hours per week and will consist of: 1) pedagogical work (700–1000 hrs.); 2) research and/or artistic work (400–760 hrs.); 3) activities of university publicity (20–100 hrs.); 4) organizational work and qualification development (20–200 hrs.).

To sum up, the teachers working in the programme meet the legal requirements and have high qualifications. The relationship between teachers is close and there is strong evidence of collaboration especially after the subjects' integration with didactics. Teaching staff turnover seems to be able to ensure adequate provision for the programme. The management and administrative staff seem to create conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the programme. However, though the EET was assured that good international exchange opportunities for teachers are provided, international cooperation could be increased.

The EET finds it valuable to introduce more time for research work which would be beneficial for teachers' development. International research publications have to be increased. More time should be dedicated to the production of research papers, not only in Lithuania but also in other countries. In addition, the programme management could look for more ways to increase the teachers' mobility, and further development of teachers' foreign language skills.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The Department of Fundamentals of Education has access to a range of learning resources and facilities to support delivery of the programme. A range of teaching rooms, including video-conferencing room, computer rooms, and rooms for teaching subject areas were observed during the site visit. All the classrooms are equipped with computers and multimedia, giving possibilities to use overhead projectors, TV, and portable paper boards.

The SER notes that technological resources have recently been enhanced – ‘more computers have been purchased, and interactive study (Moodle) and teaching/learning technologies have been launched and mastered (SER, p. 25). It notes that, ‘favourable conditions for high quality studies, self-dependently work, create group projects, to communicate and collaborate have been established.’ During the site visit, the EET visited teaching rooms and technology-enhanced rooms showing how technology is used in the preparation of students. This includes the teaching of music and also robotics. During the period in which the SER was being prepared, the technological infrastructure was improved, including more computers, and the use of Moodle.

Students complete their teaching practice in primary schools, which have signed agreements of collaboration with the University. However, the SER notes a challenge in that the increased volume of practices necessitate a search for a bigger number of practice institutions. On the other hand, this brings an advantage in that, ‘the possibilities of completing practice in various kinds of educational institutions are expanded’ (SER, p. 25). However, there is scope for increasing the partnership between the university and the schools so that the work of both can complement each other. Visits by university to schools while the students are on practice can help increase the successful collaboration between both the university and the school.

Library resources (including books, journals, databases) are available to support delivery of the programme. The library organise training courses to develop the skills of students in using the various resources, for example, databases. However, the availability of resources for work with children can be further enhanced. Even though these future practitioners may have access to these resources in primary school, 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.

In summary, the Department of Fundamentals of Education has access to a range of learning resources and facilities to support delivery of the programme. A range of teaching rooms, including video-conferencing room, computer rooms, and rooms for teaching subject areas were observed during the site visit. During the site visit, the EET visited teaching rooms and technology-enhanced rooms showing how technology is used in the preparation of students. This includes the teaching of music and also robotics. During the period in which the SER was being prepared, the technological infrastructure was improved, including more computers, and the use of Moodle. Library resources are available to support delivery of the programme, although the availability of resources for work with children could be further enhanced. EET recommends to develop library resources to include children’s literature so that students can use them in their study for the various subjects, before going on practice, 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.

2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment

The admission requirements are provided for in the Regulations of Student Admission and the Regulations for General Admission to First Cycle and Integrated Studies in Lithuanian Higher Education Schools. The SER notes that only entrants with not less than 2 points are admitted to the Bachelor study programmes at LEU. The motivational tests are obligatory for entrants to the programme in the study fields of education and training. Positive results from the motivational tests may add 1 or 2 points to the competitive admission point.

However, while the admission requirements are well-founded, the SER does highlight a difference in the level of prior achievement of students according to whether they choose the full-time or part-time option. For example, the average competitive point of part-time students is significantly lower than full-time students’ average competitive point (6,66 / 2,11). The SER

also highlight the difficulties that part-time students may encounter in pursuing their studies. A significant dropout rate for part-time students, reaching 46,7% could be observed in 2012. The dropout rate decreased to 0% in 2014, although this needs to be considered in the context of a much smaller student cohort, i.e., down from 15 students in 2012 to 4 students in 2014. The SER notes that the most frequent cause for dropout of students (whether full-time or part-time) is 'academic failure related to insufficient knowledge and lack of skills and abilities, low motivation to learn and unfulfilled expectations regarding studies, (SER, p. 30). This therefore highlights the need for appropriate academic support for students throughout the programme.

The study process is organised in a way which aligns with the programme aims and learning outcomes. Students' work consists of a range of classwork arrangements including lectures, seminars, practical classes, consultations), independent learning, group work, research and reflective practice. It also includes the use of a virtual learning environment, although during the site visit the students expressed a wish that every teacher would use the virtual learning environment providing tasks and feedback on work produced. Student views are collected routinely after finishing the course, although during the site visit, students expressed a need to provide feedback during the courses, for instance, in the middle of it so that it could be improved if needed rather than wait until the end of the course.

Students are encouraged to participate in research activities, principally through the final year research project. This provides students with an opportunity to pursue a research interest, based around a research question, where they collect data and analyse it using educational research methods. This is then defended orally (SER, p. 12). Programme electives also enable students to develop their own professional interests. During the site visit, the students expressed an interest in having a greater range of electives to choose from. Consultations with students on the type of electives to be offered could also be beneficial to make sure the range of electives reflects student preferences. Electives would also be a way of involving students in the research activities undertaken by the teachers in specialist areas.

The students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes. For example, the SER (p. 31) notes that in the period of 2012–2014, there were ten student mobilities abroad as part of the ERASMUS programme: Portugal (3), Spain (2), Turkey (3), Czech Republic (1), Austria (1). One of the tasks for the future development of the programme which the EET recommends is to increase the number of student mobilities as well as the range of countries involved.

The SER notes that students are entitled to constant and consistent support. A teacher tutor is appointed to students of each year of studies. Greater provision for academic support such as help with academic writing could play an important role in addressing student failure and programme dropout. There are opportunities for student to participate in social events, in university clubs, volunteering, culture and leisure activities (SER, p. 26).

The assessment system is clear and is readily accessible to students. The assessment arrangements for each course are introduced at the very outset, at the start of the course, although some students noted during the site visits that the level of detail provided in some cases was less than in others. The information about the assessment system is also published in website of university.

The SER reports that the students do not face problems finding jobs, with some being offered jobs even before they have finished their studies. During the site visit, the social partners assured the EET that there is a great need for graduates from the programme and there is a particular welcome for them in their schools. The students are able to consult on career options in the career centre of the university, and can apply for scholarships and avail of consultations via e-mail, in the institution or individually.

To summarize, the admission process is clear. The study process is organised in a way which aligns with the programme aims and learning outcomes. Student views are collected routinely after finishing each course, although during the site visit, students expressed an interest in providing feedback during the courses, so that this could be used formatively before the conclusion of the course. Students are encouraged to participate in research activities, principally through the final year research project, but would also like to have a greater opportunity to make individual study plans with a greater range of electives available. Electives would also be a way of involving students in the research activities undertaken by the teachers in specialist areas. The assessment system is clear and is readily accessible to students. There are mobility opportunities for students through the Erasmus programme, although there is scope for increasing these even more. The SER reports that the students do not face problems finding jobs, with some being offered jobs even before they have finished their studies. Social partners note that there is a great need for graduates from the programme and there is a particular welcome for them in their schools.

2.6. Programme management

The responsibilities of programme management are described clearly on faculty level in 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. As there are two vice-deans in same area, the role sharing is not clear. The Study Programme Committee is responsible for assessment of implementation of the programme. 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 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 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 of 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 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 electronic 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 needs to be better systematized and stored in some electronic 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 implementing teachers' self-reflection reports as they can reflect their workload, their most important achievements and may propose activities for their professional development.

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 to implement 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, electronic platforms are recommended to collect, analyse and store the information and data on implementation of the programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To continue the process of curriculum review, both at the programme level, and also at the level of each individual course, in order to continually improve the alignment between aims, intended learning outcomes, the teaching activities used, and student assessment, and in order to optimise the coherence and integration of the learning experience
2. To seek ways of further developing a commitment to lifelong learning among students so that they are encouraged, after graduation, to continue developing themselves as professionals, thereby reflects ongoing changes in teaching, as well as the interdependence between teacher's learning and children's learning.
3. To use modularization to i, and to combine certain courses which deal with closely-related curriculum areas.
4. To use greater integration between pedagogical studies and didactics in the programme so that students to approach their own practice with children in schools in a more integrated way.
5. To further develop the collaboration between university teachers and mentors through the use of meetings between the university teacher, mentor and student immediately after observation of student teaching.
6. To introduce more time for research work which would be beneficial for teachers' development, enabling them to publish in international research publications in Lithuania and in other countries.
7. To increase the mobility of teachers and the further development of teachers' foreign language skills.
8. To further develop the use of special rooms that are equipped with a plentiful supply of resources for different subjects such as children's literature, music, physical education, and visual arts, and to enable students can use these resources in their study for the various subjects, before going on practice.
9. To involve students more in research projects undertaken by the teachers and to encourage teachers to do research.
10. To implement teachers' self-review so that they can reflect on their own work, their most important achievements and plan and undertake activities for their own professional development.
11. To use online platforms to collect, analyse and store the information and data on implementation of the programme, including tools for collecting student feedback.

IV. SUMMARY

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. However, the programme should seek ways of further developing in students a commitment to their own ongoing professional development. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. However, ongoing review of the programme should be undertaken in order to increase the constructive alignment between aims, activities and assessment. The Evaluation Team commends the commitment of staff to ongoing curriculum review so that the programme can continue to develop and make a lasting contribution to the quality of early childhood and pre-primary education in Lithuania. 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 and develop the role of university teachers in supervising student practice. Opportunities for group review can be used to enable students support each other as they develop their understanding about teaching excellence, and also provide the basis for discussion during taught courses (educology and didactics). Students should receive some preparation in enabling them to lead curriculum initiatives in the future.

The teachers working in the programme meet the legal requirements and have high qualifications. The relationship between teachers is close and the EET has strong evidence of collaboration especially after the subjects' integration with didactics. Teaching staff turnover seems to be able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme. The management and administrative staff seem to create conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. However, though the EET was assured that good international exchange opportunities for teachers are provided, international cooperation could be increased and international research publications seem necessary be increased as well.

The Department of Fundamentals of Education has access to a range of learning resources and facilities to support delivery of the programme. A range of teaching rooms, including video-conferencing room, computer rooms, and rooms for teaching subject areas were observed during the site visit. The EET also visited teaching rooms and technology-enhanced rooms showing how technology is used in the preparation of students. This includes the teaching of music and also robotics. During the period in which the SER was being prepared, the technological infrastructure was improved, including more computers, and the use of Moodle. Library resources are available to support delivery of the programme, although the availability of resources for work with children could be further enhanced.

The admission process is clear, and the study process organised in a way which aligns with the programme aims and learning outcomes. Student views are collected routinely after finishing each course. They are encouraged to participate in research activities, principally through the final year research project, but would also like to have a greater opportunity to make individual study plans with a greater range of electives available. The assessment system is clear and is readily accessible to students. There are mobility opportunities for students through the Erasmus programme, although there is scope for increasing these even more. Social partners indicated a very high regard for the programme and for the kind of graduates it produces.

There is a system to collect information on programme implementation, with the he staff being 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, with social partners playing a role in ongoing programme development.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Primary Education* (state code – 612X12003) 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