SKVC

STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus verslo kolegijos
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *VERSLO VADYBA IR MARKETINGAS*
(*valstybinis kodas – 653N11006*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT
of *BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING*
(*state code – 653N11006*)
STUDY PROGRAMME**
at Vilnius business college

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	*Verslo vadyba ir marketingas*
Valstybinis kodas	653N11006
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Verslas
Studijų programos rūšis	koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (3), ištęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Verslo administravimo profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2001-08-31

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INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	*Business management and marketing*
State code	653N11006
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Business
Type of the study programme	College studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3), Part-time (4)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Business Administration
Date of registration of the study programme	31-08-2001

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes,** approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team at the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as "very good" (4 points) or "good" (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as "satisfactory" (2 points).

The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	VBC Strategic Plan 2014/2020
2	VBC promotional marketing materials
3	Innovative Info Technologies – For Science Business and Education. An International Journal Published by Vilnius Business College
4	Report on the implementation of the operational plan for 2014

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

Vilnius Business College (VBC) is a private institution founded in 1989 as one of the first non-state high schools. It is now a graduate accredited school with the approval to grant Bachelor's Degrees in the fields of study of philology, informatics, management and business administration. The study programme *Business Management and Marketing* (653N11006) has been delivered since 2001 although the name was changed in 2013 from *Business Management* to *Business Management*

and Marketing. This programme has been assessed by international expert groups in both 2005 and 2008 resulting in full accreditation of the program in 2008. In addition the College has been accredited by SKVC in 2014 as a higher education institution.

The evaluation of the program *Business Management and Marketing* of Vilnius Business College has been based on the presentation of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) dated April 2015 and the subsequent visit by the panel of experts that took place on Wednesday, 21 October, 2015.

The SER was prepared by the self-evaluation group of the College that consisted of the Head of Department, Deputy Director for Academic Affairs, two lecturers within the Department of Economics and Business, an HR specialist, a student on the study programme and a social partner. The report was supported by 12 detailed annexes that supported the report and provided sufficient detail for the panel to be well informed prior to the visit. The report provided a comprehensive overview and highlighted the strengths of the programme. The report was a descriptive narrative that would have benefited from a more evaluative analysis and self-reflection. It did however contain valuable information and data that supported the work of the panel. The scope of the work and responsibilities identified within the self-evaluation group members was clear and appropriate.

The Review Team visit included all of the required meetings with the differing groups including, senior administrative staff, the staff responsible for the preparation of the self-evaluation, teaching staff on the programme, student representatives of the different levels and modes of study, alumni and representatives of the social partners. The Review Team had the opportunity of inspecting and reviewing all of the physical resources and facilities provided by the college and were able to examine samples of student work including the final thesis. The meetings were very positive, conducted in a professional manner and helpful to the panel in providing opportunity for the panel to be able to test the evidence against the SER and to be able to make judgements on the overall evaluation of the programme. The visit concluded with feedback session to the college staff were an overview of the visit and initial conclusions were presented. The Review Team met post the visit to discuss and agree the contents of the report including final evaluation and recommendations for approval.

The professional bachelor's degree, the subject of this Report, is the responsibility of the Department of Economics and Business. This is one of 3 departments within the Studies Division of the College. The other divisions provide supporting and collaborative functions across the college including: communication and international relations, infrastructure (including the library resources) project and business development, and finance. The structure of the College provides for self-governing academic activities through the Academic Council which acts in accordance with the internal college statutes and the Law on Higher Education and Research. The administrative

structure provides for clear functional areas of responsibility including for the Quality Management Systems that are implemented throughout the College.

The Review Team noted the presentation of the VBC Strategic Plan 2014/2020 as a positive contribution that confirmed the strength of the leadership team of the college and the nature of its strategic vision. This reflects a commitment to innovative learning and teaching methods as well as the broader internationalisation of the College and its programmes.

The study programme is offered in both full-time (3 years) and part-time (4 years) modes and requires 180 credits for graduation. This meets the requirement of the Higher Education System in Lithuania where colleges provide first cycle professional bachelor study programmes. Practical training is integral to these programmes and covers one 3rd of the overall programme content.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on *21ˢᵗ October 2015*.

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1. **Prof. dr. Peter Jones (team leader),** *Educational Consultant, Visiting Professor at University of Derby, University of West London, Dean of the ehotelier Academy, the United Kingdom.*
2. **Prof. dr. Wes Wierda,** *Educational Consultant for Hobéon Agency, professor at Les Roches Gruyère University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands.*
3. **Prof. dr. Tatjana Volkova,** *Professor at BA School of Business and Finance, Educational Consultant, Latvia.*
4. **Prof. dr. Giedrius Jucevičius,** *Professor at the Dep. of Management, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.*
5. **Ms. Karolina Zelbienė,** *Recruitment Project manager at "Western Union", Lithuania.*
6. **Ms. Vaida Spūdytė,** *Master student of International Business, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania*.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aim as set out in the SER, is to "prepare professionals with the skills of business processes, modern marketing and entrepreneurial behaviour and an ability to apply them purposefully while evaluating the external and internal needs of the organisation". The aim and learning outcomes are defined and publicly accessible. The outcomes achieved at the end of the study programme are appropriate for graduates to be able to understand the requirements in

managing a business, establishing small companies or work on a self-employed basis. The evidence presented through the discussions with social partners and alumni indicated that graduates had confidence, understanding and skills to add value to businesses on graduation and to be able to take an entrepreneurial approach in setting up and creating new enterprises.

The learning outcomes are presented in the context of "Graduate Attributes" that is the level of expected outcomes of a graduate following a professional bachelor's degree programme. These attributes are described under the headings of, knowledge and its application, research skills, special attributes, social abilities, and personal abilities. This is an appropriate manner in which to present the relationships between the desired programme aims through the graduate outcomes and the learning outcomes of the study programme. This also demonstrates a coherence and articulation in the programme design that is carried through to the individual subject level. Annex 7 of the SER demonstrates a clear consistent articulation and provides evidence of where learning outcomes are developed within the individual study subjects, and is considered to be an example of good practice.

However, describing learning outcomes in terms such as "to be able to…" is not entirely in line with the Dublin descriptors and imply a task activity rather than a level of understanding and ability to identify and apply the relevant knowledge in a professional context. International best practice suggests that terms such as "to be able to" should be avoided as this can imply that the responsibility for achieving the outcomes is that of the institution and not the student. Terms such as "should be capable of demonstrating the necessary understanding, skills and attributes…" tend to be more widely used.

In discussions with the different groups during the course of a visit the Review Team were appraised of the strategic intention to expand the internationalisation of the programme and therefore the College, and to recognise the entrepreneurial ambitions of graduates and students. This was particularly reinforced in discussions with the alumni and the social partners. The strengths of developments in new technologies and focusing on innovative entrepreneurial opportunities would provide a distinctive focus to the programme that would support their international agenda of attracting more international students. Clearly this focus should be reflected in the overall aim of the programme and developed through programme and the subject learning outcomes. This would additionally provide opportunity to incorporate the term "manager" given that the aim should reflect qualification awarded. Thus the programme aim may be considered as "to prepare managers with the knowledge, skills and attributes to create and manage business organisations through a better understanding of the business processes, modern marketing techniques and methods in an international and entrepreneurial context".

The Review Team noted that the SER listed 19 programme learning outcomes whilst the online resource at http://www.kolegija.lt/dokumentai_img/programme_learning_outcomes.pdf. suggests 12. This should be clarified to avoid miscommunication with students and other stakeholders and the presentation of the outcomes could be refined to reduce the opportunity for further fragmentation.

The Review Team recognised that the programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional requirements, the public needs and the needs of the labour market and they are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualification offered. The main objective of the programme is to prepare professionals with the skills of business processes, modern marketing, entrepreneurial behaviour and ability to apply them purposefully while evaluating the external and internal needs of the organisation. The learning outcomes content and qualifications are compatible with each other, although they would suggest that term "manager" be incorporated into any revised programme aims to ensure greater clarity and consistency with the qualification "manager" awarded. A focus on the aptitude as a manager would also assist in providing greater clarity for the aims and learning outcomes. Currently there is no term "able to manage" applied. There are outcomes described as "…is able to define business processes", "...is able to ensure organization's activities", but none result in terms "able to manage" (SER, p. 8).

Learning outcomes content and qualifications are compatible with each other and it is commendable that the learning outcomes are well articulated to be able to provide the evidence of those outcomes through the assessment tasks and that as Annex 8 "Matrix of the study programme learning outcomes and study methods" demonstrates there is a clear relationship between the learning outcomes and the study methods deployed to achieve those outcomes. This relationship, for example, can be seen when considering the learning outcome "Knows and understands classical and modern marketing principles and market research methods". The demonstration of the teaching and learning strategy including lecture, repeating conversation, graphic assignments, tests, problem solution, and statistical calculation, indicates that the thought process of matching expected learning outcomes, content and methods applied is integrated throughout the study programme.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets the legal requirements for professional programmes of this cycle and the study programme is accessible to students on both a full-time and part-time basis. Study subjects are spread evenly throughout the study programme and whilst there may be considered to be a superficial repetition of the subjects this is only to the extent that "it is required to deepen and reflect on the context of the studies" (SER p.10). Whilst the content of the subjects is

largely consistent with the type and level of studies, the content of some subjects appears to be rather ambitious given the time constraints and limitations of academic hours assigned in the delivery. For example, within the Business Organisation subject the Application of Strategic Management and Entering New Markets and Exporting only 2 contact hours are allocated supported by an additional 4 individual learning hours for each topic. This is not sufficient to provide the necessary knowledge and insights into the concepts and the theoretical underpinning that would be required at this level. Similarly, Basics of Law (3 ECTS) has 3 hours for the topic Law of European Union and 2 additional hours for individual work. The content and its relevance and scope should be reconsidered while revising the content of the subjects. This would assist in adjusting the content to be within the expected learning outcomes of the programme, and the aims of the subject.

There is some misuse of the terminology where module and subject has been used as synonyms throughout the SER, but in academic practice it has different meanings. The panel noted that there was no consistency in the relative size of the subjects (modules) in terms of delivery hours and ECTS, with subject credits varying across 3 ECTS, 4 ECTS, and 5 ECTS to 9 ECTS. Whilst the panel recognised that there was a consistency in the allocated subject contact hours with the number of credits allocated, the inconsistency in the "value" of the subjects suggested that the curriculum design may be based around the subject rather than as an integrative whole. A rebalancing of the curriculum design including combining subjects into larger value subjects that are consistent across the curriculum would be a benefit to the learner and to the programme of studies. For example, Microeconomics carries a credit rating of 4 ECTS and is delivered in 42 contact hours currently, whilst Macroeconomics carries a credit rating of 5 ECTS and is delivered over 52 contact hours. A combined subject of Economics would then attract a credit rating of 9 ECTS and would demonstrate a more integrative approach at the same time as reducing the student's assessment load.

This rebalancing of the curriculum would also be consistent with the College's strategic aim to "Develop distinctive teaching and learning experiences in the environment". This was described in the discussions as to developing Project-based learning (PBL) with a closer integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills by addressing real-life problems. Closer cooperation and integration across subject areas would better reflect "real-life" where business problems are not presented within subject domains. Such an approach would also provide a degree of flexibility to be able to respond to the emerging trends in business management such as e-commerce, entrepreneurship and digital marketing. By engaging with the social partners in developing integrative projects the outcomes would be directly relevant to the industry and provide real world learning opportunities for the students. The College's strategic plan makes reference to "applying

the holistic approach towards teaching and learning practices that definitely will lead to a stronger self-confidence and an even better adaptability of our students in the labour market". These entirely laudable ambitions must be reflected throughout the curriculum in order to be achieved. It is this interdisciplinary approach that will also provide a unique positioning of the study programme especially in attracting international students.

The programme is prepared in a full-time and part-time study forms. The scope of the programme is 180 credits. Full-time studies take 3 years, part-time 4 years. The content of the programme is designed around general subjects (15 ECTS), the study field subjects (135 ECTS) and 30 ECTS for internships. This provides the necessary programme framework to achieve desired outcomes. There are diverse methods applied during the study process, which is presented in the learning outcomes and study methods' matrix (Annex 8). Based on a recommended matrix, the lecturer chooses the study methods to achieve the learning outcomes. Overall, the Review Team considers that the criteria for evaluation of the curriculum are met and that the programme in terms of scope, content and methods is sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes are achieved. In order to maintain the current state of methodology and ensure that the latest achievements in science and technologies are continued to be reflected in the programme the content and curriculum design should be maintained under ongoing monitoring and review.

The Review Team noted a small number of typographical errors in the English presentation of some of the subjects including mathematics and business. Whilst in themselves these could be considered to be insignificant they did detract from what otherwise were very comprehensive and well-presented subject outlines.

2.3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff contributing to the programme consists of 39 teachers, 11 with Ph.D's (28%), including 9 associate professors and 2 professors. Therefore, the programme meets the requirement that no less than 10% of study field subjects volume must be taught by scientists or recognised artists. The teaching staff comprises mainly professional practitioners whose work experience is directly related to the taught subjects. They account for approximately 72% of all teaching staff. Over 67% of teaching staff have more than 5 year experience in the field, ensuring that the programme meets the requirement that more than half of staff should have no less than 3 years practical experience matching to the subject they teach.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes are met in that the practical competence of the teaching staff is closely related to the learning outcomes to be achieved in their corresponding courses. The College employs a variety of part-time teachers

specialised in their area of competence and this is a commendable practice given the focused practical experience that the College provides its students with. It is recognised that the contribution that part-time teaching staff, who in themselves are professional practitioners,   make to the programme, enhances both the content and the students understanding. However, it was not quite clear from the SER and discussions how part-time staff pedagogical and research experience can also be enhanced for the benefit of the programme overall. The employment of teachers follows the established professional requirements as set out for the teaching staff at the professional bachelor programme level.

The number of the teaching staff is entirely adequate to ensure learning outcomes with a current staff-student ratio of 2,4 students per teacher. There are currently 39 teaching staff and 93 enrolled students on the programme. The number of students has been decreasing over the last 6 years whilst the teaching staff number has been maintained or increased. In 2009/2010 staff student ratio was 12.08 students per teacher. While this can provide for a customised approach to the student experience and provide significant academic and additional support to the students it is difficult to see how this position is sustainable in the medium to long term. This position is particularly highlighted in the SER Table 5 where the number of lecturers has significantly increased from 25 in 2009 to 39 in 2014/15 with a commensurate reduction in student numbers total from 302 to the current 93.

The programme has a stable core of professional and dedicated teaching staff that ensures a successful achievement of the learning outcomes. As with any staffing complement a degree of natural turnover is recognised and provides opportunity for new and emerging teachers. The efforts undertaken by the College to keep the most qualified staff with specific competences in their respective fields are commendable. The HRM strategy of focusing on the part-time staff with specific practical experience is understandable given the practical nature of the learning outcomes of the programme. The SER does not provide sufficiently convincing arguments to justify the increasing number of teaching staff and whilst it is recognised that the College would wish to retain experienced professional staff the assertion that the newly established Project-based learning required an increase in the number of lecturers" would be difficult to support. It has to be admitted that such approach is not borne out through international best practice. The panel's overall concerns of the sustainability of the programme must also be related to the efficiency and effectiveness of the staffing base in relation to the learning and teaching delivery.

The Review Team recognised that the College management has an initial focus on attracting and recruiting teaching staff who already have the required professional and academic skills to meet the needs of the study programme, but also that the College creates the conditions to encourage staff

development. Evidence presented in the SER and during the detailed discussions with the senior administration and the teaching staff confirmed that staff were able to participate in international internships (6 of the 13 staff who participated in the meeting had undertaken internships abroad within the last 5 years), and in service staff development programmes including introduction to the new pedagogical approach to Project-based learning as well as technical training and support on the Moodle system.

The College encourages joint research activities, involving the programme staff, through its own publication and the corresponding international conference hosted by the College: "Innovative information technologies for science, business and education". The Review Team recognised that the scientific output at the present stage is limited, but commended the initiative to increase the practical research outputs. However, with a limited number of teaching staff, the research profile of activities in applied research should be focused on the key areas of practical competence most related to the overall institutional profile of the College; this could include applied research activities in cooperation with the social partners.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises of VBC are well equipped and appropriate for the teaching and learning resources for this programme. The facilities and resources are well maintained, have recently been renovated and the classrooms (13) and are sufficient in both size and number. Attention to detail is given to creating the appropriate learning environment with a public space is available to encourage student interaction. The use of art works, colour and design enhances the attractiveness of the premises and contributes to the creative feel and professionalism of the environment.

The teaching and learning equipment and resources available for the delivery of this study programme include new and updated computing systems, Wi-Fi networks throughout the building, a new "graffiti wall" and classroom adapted for project work and creative innovation and projection facilities available in each room. Access to Moodle, the virtual learning environment (VLE), is available internally and externally to provide students 24-hour access and includes subject teaching materials and additional resources.

The internships and the development of professional practice is an integral and obligatory component for the students of the programme. Internships are mandatory for 2nd and 3rd year students. Tasks during the internship are agreed with the student, company and internship mentor. Graduates of the programme are willing to accept students for internships. This initiative needs to be maintained. The efforts to equip students with the knowledge, skills and necessary competences

has the effect of VBC, having one of the highest graduate employment records in Lithuanian private colleges (SER, p. 18).

During the discussions with the students it was also noted that all of the students were also engaged in part-time employment. Whilst this is not an obligatory component of the programme it does improve the students overall work experience and a better understanding of working within business organisations. Should students require additional support and assistance in obtaining suitable internships this is provided by the College. Discussions with the social partners confirmed that many were actively engaged with the College in providing internship opportunities. The value and opportunity the internships provide was commented on very positively by the current students and the alumni.

The Review Team, from the evidence of the SER and the visit, considered that the VBC library has a range of facilities that is adequate for the implementation of the study programme. Electronic access is provided for a range of academic journals and databases that would be expected for a programme of this type. Given the strategic intent to wider internationalisation, it will be necessary to widen the number of text available in English and other languages.

Overall, the Review Team were confident that the material and resources are at an adequate level and correspond to the needs of the students and the programme of the College.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The admission requirements onto the programme are well-founded and provide appropriate basis for entry onto a programme of this nature. The processes and policies are in place and for international students individual interviews to be undertaken using facilities such as Skype. Potential students are made aware of the admission requirements criteria, the detailed nature of the study programme they will be following and the related learning outcomes.

The organisation of the programme is sound and appropriate given the cohort size and ensures the appropriate opportunities for students to access the programme and to be able to achieve the desired learning outcomes. The Review Team did note, however, that it was not always possible for students to be able to access all of the elective choices as there were a number of timetabling (overlapping subjects) and planning constraints. This is unfortunate, but the Review Team recognise that the programme provided sufficient alternatives for the student experience not to be affected.

The students stated that they were encouraged to participate in the wider range of activities available through the College and they were able to attend a number of related conferences as well as being encouraged to participate in applied research activities. Such participation is to be

encouraged and would be a natural outcome through the adoption of the project based learning methodology.

Mobility programs including Erasmus + are encouraged and students confirmed that they were provided with all of the necessary information and were invited to participate. A number of students felt confident to be able to access and participate in international exchange programmes and additional information was provided on the website that also provided a number of database links for Erasmus internships. During the period of 2010-2014, 5 VBC Business management and marketing students successfully took advantage of the international ERASMUS mobility programme's opportunity to leave for studies or internships abroad. Within the Erasmus exchange programme, 3 students came to study on the programme and one of them continued studying in the second semester. According to Partner's Europanorat GmbH ongoing project Mobile in the European Job Market, 2 students from Germany were invited to do an internship at VBC (SER, p. 24). The obvious constraint to ensure wider participation in the Erasmus mobility was time allocation difficulties for students who combine studies and work, as well as insufficient language confidence. There is unreleased international mobility potential for students that will contribute to the overall studies experience. Continued encouragement for more students to use this opportunity would enhance the programme and the international dimension.

The website of the College provided clear information about the types of support in the process of application available to students. It was clear from the evidence and the meetings that students felt they had access to additional academic support and they demonstrated a high degree of satisfaction with communication with the lecturers and their ability to be able to consult them on a range of issues. They confirmed that they had immediate access to senior management within the college should there be any issues that they felt needed to be resolved.

Academic support is also provided for the students in terms of preparation for final thesis and any specific academic matter. Overall, the assessment strategies were clear, adequate and publicly available and the students were of the view that the assessment workload was appropriate for the programme.

From the evidence presented in the SER and in meeting with graduates and the social partners it was clear that programme provides the majority of graduates with the attributes to be able to access employment opportunities that meet the College expectations. Many of the existing students as well as the alumni highlighted the importance of the entrepreneurship components and the skills they developed in order to be able to start their own businesses. It was particularly noteworthy that the students and the social partners developed a strength and the relationship with the College that engendered pride both in the College and their own achievements.

2.6. Programme management

From the evidence of the SER and confirmed in discussions with senior management college, the organisational structures and reporting mechanisms are appropriate and in place for the management of the study programme. The decision-making is at the appropriate level and the reporting procedures are consistent with the expectations as outlined in the SER. The responsibilities for the monitoring and implementation of the programme are clearly allocated and that the programme is periodically reviewed by the study programme committee.

The College has implemented an internal VBC Quality Management System that is based on the appropriate quality assurance systems and international principles. This is clearly an appropriate process that with the accompanying systems and documentation clearly allocates responsibilities. The evidence obtained in the meetings confirmed the confidence of the Review Team that the internal quality assurance measures are appropriate and efficient and there was anecdotal evidence that any issues arising were promptly and effectively dealt with. The students and the social partners in particular commented on the willingness and ability of the director to be accessible to all and to facilitate and respond to any issue or to provide advice as required.

As is noted in the SER, the student intakes have been impacted by the recently introduced amendments in *Law on Higher Education and Research of the Public of Lithuania* (2015) which removed the previous opportunity for students going to non-governmental higher education schools to be in receipt of public scholarships. This has resulted in a general decrease in the average acceptance scores for students enrolling on the programme. The implications of this suggests that students will now require significantly more support then perhaps may have been required in the past. Clearly the importance of monitoring student performance, attendance and progression becomes imperative and the College has put a number of measures in place to provide relevant and timely information. Socialisation week is particularly relevant and important in establishing the appropriate learning culture, the study process and the values of College. The role of the administrative staff in monitoring attendance is particularly important but it is not clear from the evidence or the SER at what point this becomes a programme management matter. The high dropout rate from the programme is cited as being "low academic achievements" with the rate reaching 62% in some cohorts, with slightly less at 50% on the part-time programme.

It is recognised that the College maintains the appropriate academic standards on the programme, but given that the students are accepted onto the study programme, by the College, this would suggest that they are assessed as having the capability to meet the academic standards required during the acceptance of the admissions process. The College would benefit from a better understanding of the relationship between the overall admissions criteria and scores, students'

attendance and students' academic performance to establish if there is a thematic correlation that could better understand high dropout rate. Such a systematic approach would also support the overall quality improvement process rather than purely a quality systems process.

It was clear to the Review Team that there is a routine, systematic and monitored process for the collation and review of the results of student achievements and that data collected is used for the basis of informed decision-making. Whilst this is considered entirely appropriate as an internal system it may not be sufficient in itself to be able to identify the early indicators low academic achievements or to be able to present appropriate mitigation or remedial measures.

Both staff and students undertake regular feedback surveys which are important contributing part of the quality management system. The outcomes from the surveys made available to better inform the all of the relevant stakeholders including, social partners, alumni, management of the College as well as the students and staff.

The inclusion of the social partners in quality improvement process was recognised and commented on by the partners themselves. The social partners were enthusiastic and committed to the work of the College and welcomed any further opportunity to be able to participate in development discussions and the range of professional or research activities. The commitment of all of the stakeholders in seeking improvement in the programme was also exemplified by comments made during the meetings that included positive feedback on the motivation and attributes of the graduates and recommendations that the internationalisation could be improved through the delivery of certain subjects in a foreign language.

The evidence obtained in the meetings confirmed the Review Team's confidence that the internal quality assurance measures are appropriate and there was anecdotal evidence that any immediate issues arising were promptly and effectively dealt with. The students and the social partners in particular commented on the willingness and ability of the director to be accessible to all and to facilitate and respond to any issue or to provide advice as required.

The Review Team had the confidence that the programme is well managed, that the quality assurance processes are appropriate and efficient and that the wider inclusion of all the stakeholders significantly contributes to the overall development of the programme of study. However, given the circumstances of the high dropout rates, a systematic form of early recognition and intervention with students who may be considered at "risk" of low academic achievement would be beneficial.

2.7. Examples of excellence

The well-articulated and developed strategic vision for the College is recognised as an example of international good practice. The demonstrable commitment to defining strategic

objectives and the related key performance indicators provides confidence in the overall direction and management of the College as well as the guiding principles for further development.

The introduction of Project-based learning (PBL) as an integrating vehicle and as a focus for learning and teaching methodology is to be commended. This approach when developed across the curriculum provides valued interdisciplinary approach in meeting the programme aims and a learning tool that can significantly enhance the students' soft skills in addition to the knowledge of and understanding set in a "real-world" context.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The programme aims and learning outcomes should be reviewed and clarified to ensure they incorporate the strategic intent of further internationalisation of the programme and in facilitating an entrepreneurial approach and contribution to the national economy.

2. That the curriculum design is reviewed to facilitate the wider development of the Problem-based Learning pedagogy and to consider the further integration and equalisation of the subjects especially in terms of the credit values. This will also present a more coherent integrated curriculum and prevent fragmentation of the curriculum with small subjects.

3. That the staff development opportunities continue to promote international collaboration and exchanges, whilst providing opportunity to develop innovative new approaches in learning and teaching centered around Project-based Learning.

4. That the College and programme management allocate the appropriate resources to the recruitment and retention of students to ensure the sustainability of the programme in the longer term. This should include this review of the relationship between admissions, student attendance, academic achievement and retention.

5. That a system of early warning for students who may be considered at "risk" of low academic achievement be considered as one measure to mitigate the high dropout rates.

6. That the College considers ways to harness the enthusiasm of the students, alumni and the social partners in both developing the programme thus ensuring its long-term sustainability.

IV. SUMMARY

The Vilnius Business College (VBC) is well-founded, has a strategic vision and purpose and enjoys strong senior leadership. The *Business management and marketing* BA professional programme has seen a significant decline in the number of students despite this being the first and main programme that the College developed. The development of a Strategic Plan is a useful vehicle that should assist in developing a more strategic positioning of the programme that will include the stronger focus on entrepreneurship, the internationalisation of the programme and the opportunity to create a distinctive learning environment.

The programme has sound and distinctive features that meets the needs of the labour market and provides students with strong ambition and motivation to succeed. Through the evidence presented in the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and gathered during the visit, the Review Team considered and noted a number of strengths and weaknesses of the programme of study that are presented below. These are designed to assist the college and improving the programme and ensuring its long-term sustainability and meeting the future economic labour market needs.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the current academic and professional requirements however they could benefit from further review and amendment to better articulate the aim of the programme with the future management needs. Whilst currently fit for purpose, the curriculum would benefit from review and redesign to take advantage of the strategic thrusts of entrepreneurship and internationalisation and recognising the distinctive pedagogy being developed around problem-based learning. Such a review would also provide opportunity to ensure a better balance between the subjects in terms of ECTS at the same time offering flexibility and further interdisciplinary integrative approaches in the curriculum delivery.

The strong academic and social support the College provides was recognised by all the stakeholders as being a significant strength and the opportunity for almost constant and immediate feedback was a valued attribute of VBC. The students develop a sense of self-confidence and motivation and have a loyalty to the College that is demonstrated through the commitment of the alumni and the social partners. The achievement and employment opportunities of the students is recognised as being commensurate with the professional level of the programme and valued by graduates and employers alike.

The staffing base is entirely adequate for delivering the programme and the commitment of the College to the existing teaching staff terms of staff development opportunities and continued employment is commendable. However, the Review Team would observe that whilst the current

staff student ratios could be considered to be enhancing the student experience through academic and pastoral support it may not be sustainable in the medium to long term.

The Review Team recognised that the recruitment of students currently presents challenges and that repositioning of the programme including its internationalisation should provide for a more distinctive programme offering in the future. The longer term sustainability of the programme should be considered as a high priority for the College.

The facilities provided by VBC are entirely appropriate and the general ambience created within the public areas and the classrooms through art works, colour and design makes for an enhanced professional environment.

The Review Team observed that the programme management and quality assurance processes were appropriate and that the monitoring and review of the programme implementation was carried out in a systematic way. However, the implementation of an early warning system that would identify potential students at risk of low academic achievement would enhance the programme management and assist in mitigating the high dropout rates.

The SER was a detailed narrative document that highlighted compliance with the criteria and certain strengths of the programme. It would have benefited from a more critical analysis and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the programme that would have had the benefit of better informing the panel as well as the College in identifying the appropriate issues that needed to be addressed.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Business Management and Marketing* (state code – 653N11006) at Vilnius Business College is given **positive/negative** 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: **Prof. dr. Peter Jones**

Grupės nariai:
Team members: **Prof. dr. Tatjana Volkova**

Prof. dr. Wes Wierda

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Vaida Spūdytė

VILNIAUS VERSLO KOLEGIJOS PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
VERSLO VADYBA IR MARKETINGAS **(VALSTYBINIS KODAS –** *653N11006*) **2015-12-30**
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-369-2 IŠRAŠAS

<…>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus verslo kolegijos studijų programa *Verslo vadyba ir marketingas* (valstybinis kodas –
653N11006) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	**18**

* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)
2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)
3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)
4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<…>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Vilniaus verslo kolegija (VVK) yra tinkamai įsteigta, turi strateginę viziją, tikslą ir ryžtingus aukščiausio lygio vadovus. Labai sumažėjo profesinio bakalauro programos *Verslo vadyba ir marketingas* studentų skaičiaus, nors tai yra pirmoji ir pagrindinė kolegijos sukurta programa. Strateginio plano parengimas – naudinga varomoji priemonė, kuri turėtų padėti nustatyti labiau strateginę programos vietą, kur daugiau dėmesio būtų skirta verslumui, programos tarptautiškumui ir galimybei sukurti savitą mokymosi aplinką.

Programa pasižymi puikiomis ir išskirtinėmis savybėmis, kurios atitinka darbo rinkos poreikius ir skatina studentus būti ambicingais ir motyvuotais, siekiant tikslų. Remdamasi savianalizės suvestinėje ir vizito metu surinkta informacija, ekspertų grupė apsvarstė ir išskyrė keletą studijų programos stiprybių ir silpnybių, kurios išvardijamos toliau. Jos skirtos padėti

kolegijai patobulinti programą ir užtikrinti jos ilgalaikį tvarumą bei patenkinti būsimus darbo rinkos ekonomikos poreikius.

Studijų programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai grindžiami aktualiais akademiniais ir profesiniais reikalavimais, tačiau juos galima dar tobulinti patikslinus ir geriau suformulavus programos tikslą, atsižvelgiant į būsimus vadybos poreikius. Nors šiuo metu atitinka paskirtį, galima iš naujo apsvarstyti ir pertvarkyti studijų turinį atsižvelgus į verslumo ir tarptautiškumo strateginį uždavinį ir taikant problemų sprendimu grindžiamą mokymosi metodiką. Tokia peržiūra suteiktų galimybę užtikrinti geresnę dalykų pusiausvyrą, atsižvelgiant į ECTS, taip pat leistų garantuoti lankstumą ir taikyti tarpdalykinius integruotus metodus realizuojant studijų turinį.

Visi dalininkai pripažįsta stiprią akademinę ir socialinę pagalbą, kurią teikia kolegija. Tai neginčytina stiprybė ir galimybė nuolat ir nedelsiant teikti grįžtamąjį ryšį, o tai puikus VVK bruožas. Studentai ugdo pasitikėjimą savimi ir motyvaciją, jie yra lojalūs kolegijai, ką įrodė alumnai ir socialiniai partneriai. Studentų pasiekimų ir įsidarbinimo galimybės yra adekvačios atsižvelgiant į studijų programos profesinį lygį, jas vienodai vertina absolventai ir darbdaviai.

Personalo visiškai pakanka studijų programai vykdyti. Kolegiją reikia pagirti už esamą dėstytojų komandą, už suteiktas galimybes personalui tobulintis, užimtumo išlaikymą. Tačiau ekspertų grupė pastebėjo, kad dabartinis dėstytojų ir studentų santykis leidžia ugdyti studentus suteikiant jiems akademinę ir psichologinę pagalbą, tačiau to gali nepakakti vidutiniu ir ilguoju laikotarpiu.

Ekspertų grupė pripažino, kad studentų priėmimas šiuo metu kelia sunkumų, todėl reikėtų iš naujo apsvarstyti studijų programos poziciją, įskaitant jos tarptautiškumą, kuris leistų programai išsiskirti ateityje. Kolegija turėtų skirti ypatingą prioritetą programos ilgalaikiam tvarumui užtikrinti.

VVK materialieji ištekliai yra visiškai tinkami, bendra viešosiose vietose ir auditorijose sukurta atmosfera, nes meno kūriniai, spalvos ir dizainas leidžia užtikrinti gerą profesinę aplinką.

Ekspertų grupė pastebėjo, kad programos vadybos ir kokybės užtikrinimo procesai yra tinkami, programos stebėsena ir vertinimas atliekami sistemingai. Tačiau išankstinio perspėjimo sistema leistų nustatyti studentus, kuriems gali grėsti žemas akademinis įvertinimas, o tai leistų pagerinti programos vadybą ir padėtų sumažinti didelį iškritusių studentų skaičių.

Savianalizės suvestinė – išsamus pasakojamojo pobūdžio dokumentas, kuris pabrėžia atitiktį kriterijams ir tam tikras programos stiprybes. Būtų naudinga daugiau kritinė programos stiprybių ir silpnybių analizė ir vertinimas, tai padėtų ekspertų grupei ir kolegijai nustatyti atitinkamus klausimus, kuriuos reikia spręsti.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Iš naujo apsvarstyti ir aiškiau išdėstyti studijų programos tikslus ir studijų rezultatus siekiant užtikrinti, kad būtų įtrauktas strateginis siekis gerinti programos tarptautiškumą, verslumo požiūrį ir indėlį į šalies ekonomiką.

2. Peržiūrėti studijų programos sandarą, kad būtų galima plačiau taikyti problemų sprendimu grindžiamą mokymą, ir apsvarstyti, kaip toliau integruoti ir suvienodinti dalykus, ypač kalbant apie kreditų skaičių. Tai leistų sukurti aiškesnį integruotą studijų turinį ir išvengti studijų turinio suskaidymo į smulkius dalykus.

3. Suteikti dėstytojams tobulinimosi galimybes, kurios skatintų tarptautinį bendradarbiavimą ir mainus, numatyti galimybę plėtoti naujovišką požiūrį į mokymąsi ir dėstymą, kuris būtų orientuotas į projektais grindžiamą mokymąsi.

4. Siekdama užtikrinti programos tvarumą ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje, kolegija ir programos vadovybė turėtų skirti tinkamus išteklius dėl studentų priėmimo ir išsaugojimo. Reikėtų išanalizuoti, koks ryšys tarp studentų priėmimo, lankomumo, akademinių pasiekimų ir studentų neiškritimo.

5. Apsvarstyti išankstinio įspėjimo sistemą studentams, kurie patenka į rizikos grupę dėl mažų akademinių pasiekimų, kaip priemonę užkirsti kelią dideliam iškritusių studentų skaičių.

6. Kolegijai reikėtų apsvarstyti būdus, kaip paskatinti ir sutelkti studentus, alumnus ir socialinius partnerius tobulinti studijų programą ir taip pat užtikrinti jos ilgalaikį tvarumą.

<…>

2.7. Išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdžiai

Gerai ir aiškiai suformuluota ir parengta kolegijos strateginė vizija yra puikus tarptautinės gerosios praktikos pavyzdys. Akivaizdus įsipareigojimas apibrėžti strateginius tikslus ir susijusius pagrindinius veiklos rodiklius leidžia pasitikėti bendra kolegijos kryptimi ir valdymu, taip pat pagrindiniais tolesnės plėtros principais.

Reikia pagirti už projektais grindžiamo mokymosi metodo (PBL), kaip integruojančios priemonės ir mokymosi ir mokymo metodikos, taikymą. Kuomet naudojamas visame studijų turinyje, jis leidžia taikyti tarpdalykinį metodą studijų programos tikslams pasiekti. Tai puiki

mokymosi priemonė, kuri be žinių ir supratimo realaus pasaulio kontekste leidžia papildomai pagerinti studentų socialinius įgūdžius.

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

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)