



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "TARPTAUTINĖ PROJEKTŲ VADYBA"
(valstybinis kodas – 621N90006)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF "INTERNATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT" (state code –
621N90006)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

Review' team:

- 1. Prof. dr. Pandelis Ipsilandis (team leader) *academic,***
- 2. Prof. Jürgen Bruns, *academic,***
- 3. Dr. Craig Thompson, *academic,***
- 4. Mr Mantas Jonauskis, *representative of social partners'***
- 5. Ms Ugnė Jakubauskaitė, *students' representative.***

Evaluation coordinator -

Ms Kornelija Bukantaitė

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Tarptautinė projektų vadyba</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621N90006
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Verslas ir administravimas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Verslo ir administravimo magistro diplomas
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2010-12-02

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>International Project Management</i>
State code	621N90006
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Business and Administration
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (1,5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Business and Administration
Date of registration of the study programme	2010-12-02

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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	7
2.3. Teaching staff	9
2.4. Facilities and learning resources	11
2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment.....	11
2.6. Programme management	15
2.7. Examples of excellence *	Klaida! Žymelė neapibrėžta.
III. RECOMMENDATIONS*	17
IV. SUMMARY	18
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	20

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	Additional information on teaching staff (clarifications on data in pages 18, 19, 20 of SER)
2	Data on applications, admissions and graduates of IPM study programme
3	Explanations about “tutoring”
4	Data on participation of international students
5	Methodological guidelines for writing Master’s Theses

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

Vilnius University (VU) is the oldest (established in 1579) and the largest Higher Education Institution in Lithuania. VU is a state and public university with similar management structure to that of most European Universities.

The university is very strong in providing advanced (second and third cycle) studies with over 100 graduate study programmes, 30 areas of doctoral studies, and residents in over 50 residency study programmes, along with over 60 undergraduate and integrated study programmes, with an excellent overall student / staff ratio of about 17.1.

The VU Business School was established in 2016 as a result of the integration of the Vilnius University International Business School (VU IBS), an autonomous public entity established in 1989 by its sole stakeholder, Vilnius University, into the parent University academic and administrative structure.

During its more than 25 years of operation, the VU IBS had a significant contribution in promoting scientific research, education and executive training in Lithuania offering study programmes in the business and management fields.

The merge was initiated by the VU IBS, following the trend in Lithuania where Private Schools are integrated with large Public Schools.

The VU BS believes that the integration will not affect the profile of the School, and it will be beneficial in terms of sustainability, potential to attract research and development funds, employment opportunities for staff etc. Currently there are no changes in the study programmes and no students are affected by the merge.

The International Project Management was inaugurated in the academic year 2011-12 and the first cohort of students produced graduates in February 2013. The programme received a positive external review by SKVC in 2013 getting a three-year accreditation. Since then the programme has developed even further as it is described in detail in the following sections of this report.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 3/4/2017.

- 1. Prof. dr. Pandelis Ipsilandis (team leader),** *Professor in Technological Education Institute of Thessaly (Greece);*
- 2. Prof. Jürgen Bruns,** *professor in University of Applied Sciences Remagen (Germany);*
- 3. Dr. Craig Thompson,** *Head of Stenden Hotel Management School, Stenden University (The Netherlands);*
- 4. Mr Mantas Jonauskis,** *director of "ProBaltic Consulting" (Lithuania);*
- 5. Ms Ugnė Jakubauskaitė,** *student of ISM University of Management and Economics, study programme Economics and Politics (Lithuania).*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims to develop high – skilled managers who are able to manage projects, programmes and project portfolios in both business and public sectors. Its objectives focus on contemporary project management approaches, the application of modern theories and principles, and the application of research methods in the management of projects as a way of work within organisations. As project management becomes a new management model in global businesses, the programme sets the project management approach on an international business dimension. Within this framework, the programme tries to balance its objectives between providing a strong academic background, according to national and EU requirements for 2nd level postgraduate programmes, along with application skills needed by project managers in the local and international labour market.

The programme's aims and Learning Outcomes (hereinafter LOs) are publicly available to students and any interested person via the VU Business School webpage (<http://www.vm.vu.lt/international-project-management-2>), in the universities catalogue of study programmes (<http://www.vu.lt/en/studies/degree-students/degree-programmes/in-foreign-languages?id=4172>) and the Open Information and Consultation System – AIKOS (<http://www.aikos.smm.lt>). The programme is also promoted by annual VU publications and at several other events and online consultation is available.

The programme has developed a strong international profile over the last three years. Taught in English, enrolment of foreign students, participation of international lecturers, and international orientation in the content are acknowledged by students and graduates as its strong features that make the programme stand out from similar ones offered by other universities in Lithuania. The programme should also be commended for developing strong ties with the professional world of Project Management both at national and international level. Evidence of the labour market needs came from interviewed social partners, who indicated that there is a growing need for such programmes in Lithuania and students having the study fees paid by the companies they work for.

The Programme LOs are reviewed regularly to ensure their alignment to international professional standards and requirements. An extensive review of LOs occurred in 2014 to consider the recommendations of the external review team, while in 2016 LOs were further updated to reflect the guidelines and competence baseline of IPMA, a major international professional project management association.

Furthermore, a “*Roundtable tradition*” event is held annually where all relevant stakeholders (faculty, students, social partners, PM professionals) review and discuss the quality of the programme and suggest potential improvements

Still, as part of its continuous development, the programme would benefit from being benchmarked against similar programmes offered in EU and internationally.

The IPM programme is an asset for the Business School in the process of its integration into VU, and its current strategy “*to be recognised as the Business School of the Best University in Lithuania*”. It is believed that the integration will attract more undergraduate students from different disciplines (e.g. Economics, Business administration, Software engineering, etc.) who

already take one semester or short courses in project management to follow or return for pursuing a full postgraduate programme in the area of Project management.

The study programme aims at developing competencies corresponding to Level 7 (second cycle) studies in accordance with the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework. The alignment of the learning outcomes of the master study cycle with the learning outcomes of the study programme under review corresponds to the Order of the Minister of Education and Science on approval of the descriptor of study cycles (2011 No.V-2212) and it is presented clearly in Table 1 of the SER. LOs fully address the 5 different types of competencies – Knowledge acquisition and its application, Special competencies, Research skills, Social and Personal abilities.

The definition of the study programme LOs seem to follow the profile of the guidelines of international professional organizations in Project Management (PM), regarding knowledge areas and required competencies. Management and academic staff consider, and rightfully so, alignment with international PM standards and guidelines as one of the programme's strong points. In future reviews, consideration should be given to put more emphasis to high level LOs such as Project & programme evaluation – project strategies, Projects in EU economy, Managing by project –PMO instead of thematic areas (i.e. finance, HR, quality, etc.), which can be addressed at subject level LOs. In certain cases, LOs need to be sharpened and expressed more concisely, avoiding repetition of “*Demonstrate knowledge, comprehension and application ...*”. The LO statements in the Website should serve as an example.

The title of the programme, its aims and objective and the associated LOs are generally compatible with the offered qualification. The international dimension of the programme, whilst still requiring further development is justified as the programme is delivered in English language with the participation of foreign students (although declining) and involvement of foreign lecturers.

Overall the programme exhibits certain very strong points as its clear identity and international orientation that makes it a rather unique programme in Lithuania, offered by a reputable university, Its Aims and Learning Outcomes aligned to international professional project management standards and guidelines. Benchmarking against other similar programmes, internationally and review of Learning Outcomes to address more emphatically high-level competencies and career paths in the profession can certainly help the future development of the programme. The decline of foreign students' admission weakens the international character of the programme and should be addressed.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum structure conforms to the ECTS system, meets legal requirements and the programme complies with the General Requirements of Lithuanian regulations for Higher Education.

The total programme workload of 90 credits is allocated equally across 3 semesters. The first two semesters include 8 compulsory study courses (six of them of 5 ECTS credits each and three of 10 ECTS points each). The 10 credit courses comprise the core of Project Management

(Operational and Strategic respectively) and also a *Scientific Research Paper*” preparing students for their Master thesis. The final semester includes one compulsory and one elective course plus the writing of the Master thesis.

The study subjects follow a smooth progression in terms of building knowledge and competencies: First semester courses focus on operational aspects of project management and introduction of Qualitative research methods. During the second term students progress to study strategic aspects of project management and further enhance their research skills in preparation for writing their final thesis. In the final term students are exposed to the international dimension of project management and have the opportunity to select an elective, while at the same time they perform their research work on their final thesis.

An excellent job was done by the academic staff in developing well laid-out detailed descriptors for each of the subjects offered. The descriptors clearly state the learning outcomes of the corresponding subject and their association with the programme LOs.

The scope of the individual subjects is at the right breadth and the appropriate depth of knowledge for a second level degree, although the latter is not fully reflected in the way subject learning outcomes are expressed in some subject descriptors. In certain cases the learning outcomes should be re expressed in more appropriate terms for a second level programme and reflect more clearly what students should be able to do or produce based on their knowledge. LOs like “*Gain theoretical knowledge about ...*”, “*Understand the nature and purposes...*” should be restated to reflect the results of the knowledge, others like “*Be able to cooperate and communicate with peers and other stakeholders*” should be rephrased to reflect measurable and assessable results. For a second level programme more emphasis should be given to Analysis, Evaluation and Synthesis rather than Knowledge and Understanding.

The curriculum provides a solid process for progressive development of research skills, over the duration of the programme. In the first semester students study Research Methodologies, and follow by selecting their preliminary topic and an academic adviser is assigned to them. The study process is completed by the Master’s final thesis which confirms the knowledge and skills acquired by student and his professional qualification.

A plurality of teaching and learning activities targeted to course LOs are properly chosen and linked to suitable assessment methods.

Overall, the curriculum responds to contemporary theoretical aspects and practices of project management and is under continuous review and development, although in some cases the proposed bibliography is rather old. The international dimension of the programme, in terms of the curriculum is served by the content of various subjects (e.g. Agile PM, Strategy management, Scientific Research paper, etc.) as well as the special subject *International Project Management* to be renamed *Managing projects on a Global Scale*. While this may be sufficient in terms of providing project management skills, the notion of the emergence of an international projectized economy seems not to be addressed explicitly, specifically regarding the EU context (European Structural and Investment funds of 454 billion € will be invested in EU 27 projects in the period 2014-2020). In this sense, attention should be paid so that the area of management of public projects and programmes receives more consideration.

The content of the subjects corresponds to the contemporary views of project management, there is a need however to update the bibliography –in many subjects the proposed reading materials refer to 2010- 11 editions – and include recent articles from relevant business and scientific journals, in order to expose students to the state of the art in the field. The offering of elective subjects during the last semester, although limited to two, offer students the opportunity to contextualize their knowledge. A well designed and rigorous process for thesis writing ensure that students develop their research skills and are exposed to relevant scientific methodologies. The involvement of all of the programme stakeholders in a review and the device of a plan to improve the quality of student’s research and align it with real-life cases is surely commendable.

Overall, the curriculum is continuously developing and effort for improvements of the quality of student research is evident. The scope of the curriculum is well-structured and adheres to international standards for the project management profession. Well-designed subject descriptors reflect the scope and contain suitable learning approaches and assessment methods for each subject. However, in certain cases more emphasis is needed to Analysis, Evaluation and Synthesis rather than Knowledge and Understanding. Review of the curriculum should also address upgrading LOs regarding management of public projects, especially within the EU projectized economic environment and updating bibliography.

2.3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff involved in the delivery of the IPM Master programme are formed according to the-law of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. V – 826. A total of 17 academic staff members including 4 full professors, 3 associate professors, 3 lecturers with doctoral degree and 7 lecturers – practitioners. Share of credit points of subjects taught by professors accounted for 25%, followed by 19% of Associate professors and 28% of lecturers with a doctoral degree.

A twofold profile of the teaching staff serves well the aims and objectives of the programme: Academics with strong theoretical background and practitioners with solid work experience in the field. Many of teaching staff are members of international PM professional associations. Teaching in most subjects is provided by teaming academic lecturers with instructors – practitioners. Students praise this arrangement, considering the presence of practitioners as one of the very strong points of the programme, as it puts theory into the context of management of international projects. The participation of international lecturers in the delivery of the programme enhances its international character. Teachers seem to care a lot about the development of their subjects and according to students are very responsive, provide additional teaching and learning material and plenty of feedback focusing in the learning process.

Academic staff research activity over the last years shows that individual members of staff have their own research interest and pursue research activities accordingly. However, there is no evidence of a research strategy that will aim in creating teams of academic staff and students to focus on research and innovation themes, so that the programme develops a research identity. Currently only two of the academic staff members show any publications or participation in

international conferences in the area of project management and no evidence of student involvement in research, besides their thesis work. Furthermore, no evidence of presentation of students' research in relative conferences has been received.

The development of common research interest groups will increase team coherence, enhance the identity of the programme, enable staff to join research consortiums and exploit research funding that is available at European level, thus creating opportunities for the students.

All teachers teach one or part of a subject in their area of specialization and some of them are involved in the supervision of the final thesis. Given that class sizes are normally 15-16 students, there is an excellent student to teacher ratio that facilitates the interaction between students and teachers, teamwork, and an overall active learning environment. Working hours of lecturers under the IBS structure cover pedagogical, scientific, community and international activities. Management believes that the integration of the Business School within the VU structure will benefit the programme, as under VU structure a newly established position of *partnership professor* will attract highly qualified and experienced professionals from industry and will outweigh any loss of flexibility due to VU rules regarding the workload of teaching staff. Currently, two thirds of ITM programme lecturers are under 55 years with an average age of 47 years. The absence of almost any turnover of teaching during the last four years creates a stable environment that supports the development and the continuous improvement of the programme. As new regulations regarding teaching staff will apply after the merge, it important for the programme to maintain the current profile of teaching staff for this specific programme.

Staff care about their professional development with respect to their field of expertise, as well didactics and examples of staff development actions in both areas, supported by the BS, were reported during the visit. Participation in international exchanges in the form of short-term visits have also taking place at several partner universities. Over the 2012-2016, 19 such visits are reported but only 5 members of staff are involved.

Although staff development is seriously supported by the institution, within the framework of this programme, it seems to be narrowly focused to the academic interests of individual staff. Given the project management is a multi-disciplinary field, consideration should be given to contextualize staff development actions in a way that benefits the programme (i.e. participation in PM related conferences, incentives for applied research in PM related topics, etc.).

Overall, the sense of programme ownership is not as high, among teaching staff, as one would expect for a programme with such a distinct character. For example, only one of the teachers participated in the "Roundtable tradition" where programme development is discussed.

Formal evaluation of appointed staff members takes place at the end of the first two 5-year terms and includes their performance in teaching research course development as well as student feedback.

Consideration should be given to formalise a practice of introducing individual annual development plans, agreed between the management and the individual staff member. This could help in continuous monitoring and aligning staff development to the goals of the programme.

Overall, the programme is supported by well-qualified and dedicated staff, with the right professional and academic profile and who provide a strong basis for future development. It is

believed that the newly established positions of “partnership professor” will further help the programme attract high qualified professional from industry. Although staff is actively involved in professional development activities and continuous improvements of the content and teaching methods in their subjects, a holistic view of programme development along with a strong sense of programme ownership is missing, The development of a programme research strategy and the contextualization of research activities and staff development to the profile of the programme may help in that direction.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The facilities of the VU BS are used for the delivery of the programme are adequate and include: 14 auditoriums, equipped with multimedia equipment, microphones, and air conditioning systems, some equipped with interactive boards and one computer classroom with 22 computers. Additional VU BS facilities include canteen, cafeteria, staff recreation room, “idea room”, parking lot. Postgraduate students have dedicated lounge space with Wi-Fi, coffee / tea facilities that they can use for team work, networking etc. An Entrepreneurship HUB that was recently established on the premises could eventually add value to the programme.

VU BS students have also access to VU infrastructure, including state of the art Library, sports facilities and dormitories.

All facilities are fitted for the disabled who can access all relevant areas.

A local VU BS ICT infrastructure supports the intranet for sharing documents, calendar events, news, helpdesk) and provides other basic services to staff and faculty. The study process information system and depositories for Bachelor and Master Theses, as well as a plagiarism detection system are hosted at the VU Study Information System.

Student learning is supported by the virtual learning environment Moodle, while lectures can also be broadcast real time and stored so students can remotely access them at their own time.

Other learning resources available to students via VPN (Virtual Private Network) service include the Vilnius University Central and Faculty libraries and electronic resources of 54 databases including Academic Search Complete (EBSCO) Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Web of Science with full text access of major scientific journals. The electronic resources also include access to Thomson Gale Business & Company Resource Centre database, EUROSTAT, the European Central Bank, to Lithuanian Legislation, and other statistical and publications of research papers’ databases.

Recently, the BS moved to full Microsoft Cloud and Office 365 service for students, faculty and staff. Students can also access Statistical and Modelling software, as well as Project management software.

Overall, the premises and the facilities, including library and ICT services are excellent and provide a pleasant teaching and learning environment for the study process and research activities of academic staff and students.

2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment

The admission of students follows the regulations set by the Rules of Admission of VU, which are publicly available at the website of VU Business School. Potential students can also

find a detailed information on the Programme aims, learning outcomes, career opportunities and detailed course descriptions.

The programme seeks to admit high-qualified students and applies a rigorous admission process that requires students to write an essay, which is assessed by the admissions commission, take an English language test at B2 level, and undergo a motivational interview. Special attention is given to English language skills since the programme is taught entirely in English. Applicants must hold a university bachelor degree in Business and/or Economics. Bachelor graduates from other fields are required to have at least 20 credits in Management / Economics or at least one-years' experience in project management. Students who lack the proper background are required to take additional undergraduate courses as free movers before entering the IPM.

Overall, the programme has succeeded in safeguarding its quality and managed to curtail possible student dropouts because of academic failure.

The number of admitted students has stayed stable at 13 - 15 per year, over the last four years. Since 2014, the programme admits foreign students as well. In 2014 and 2015, foreign students accounted about 50% of the total cohort. During the last two years, the number of Lithuanian applicants stayed the same, while the number of foreign applicants has dropped almost by 50%. As the admission of foreign students adds significantly to the international profile of the programme, the declining trend in applicants and enrolments of foreign students raises serious concerns and should be investigated and reverted.

Student progression is rather smooth and the number of dropouts is moderate (15%) over a three-year period. The programme cares about maintaining an environment that facilitates students' progress through the programme without sacrifices in quality and should be commended for having taken specific actions in this direction. Indicatively: after 2014 the class schedule has adjusted to accommodate the needs for working students who travel from their workplaces to University and classes are held every second week on Thursday-Friday evenings and Saturday; upon the completion of their first semester students have an opportunity to study according to individual study plans; a review of the Master Thesis was initiated aimed at linking student's research to the real-life cases and improving the quality of research.. These provisions are expected to decrease dropout rates even further as the main reason for dropping out is reported to be time pressure to complete their studies.

The learning process is enhanced with project work, group or individual assignments, simulation games, role – playing exercises, self-assessment, etc. Consequently, a large part of the student assessment is based on project work and group or individual assignments, as it should be at a master's level. Student assessment for each subject is defined in each subject descriptors.

Especially with regard to the master thesis, an elaborate system of methodological guidelines, procedures are in place. There is a concern as to the level of personal consultation students receive by their supervisors, since some of the teaching staff supervise a large number of master thesis (e.g. in 2016, 8 out of 12 supervised by the same person– Appendix 5). The Expert Team would like to see a more even distribution of thesis supervision among the academic staff.

The list of master thesis of the students who successfully completed the programme shows that students have addressed very interesting topics relevant to their area of studies.

Students have the opportunity to participate in out-of-class activities offered by VU, which include using the facilities of the Health and Sports centre of VU and being members of various artistic groups (choir, drama, orchestra etc.) at the VU Centre of Culture. Students can also participate in the activities of the Students' Representation of the BS VU.

The programme should take the opportunity for exploiting the potential of its alumni through organization of events (e.g. small conferences, social events) that bring together faculty, alumni and current students.

To promote student mobility, the VU BS has designated an academic coordinator as administrator of international exchanges and a number of ERASMUS agreements have been in place that give students the opportunity to spend some time at another university abroad. So far student mobility is very limited (i.e. 2 student mobilities have been reported) mainly because the majority of students are already holding jobs. Incoming students can choose any module of the programmes offered at the BS VU and since the entire IPM programme is offered in English, incoming students from various disciplines can study IPM subjects that fit their study programmes.

Interviewed students and graduates put the enhancement of international study environment as a top priority for the programme. It is necessary for the programme to explore alternative ways to increase student mobility and internationalization of the programme. Since project management is an interdisciplinary field, the development of Intensive Erasmus Programmes (perhaps in the form of Summer Schools) could attract international students and give its own students more opportunities to interact in an international environment. Other alternatives may include cooperation with similar programmes in neighbouring countries.

Students receive proper academic support throughout their studies. That includes proper induction at the beginning of each semester by the teaching staff, the designation of an academic consultant, who is always available according to students' timetable to address study related issues, while support for matters related to learning outcomes, content, career opportunities etc. is provided by the programme manager. VU Students' Representative Office supports foreign students by assigning volunteer-tutors. Interviewed students were very satisfied about the support they received during their studies by the programme management team and the teachers, stating their openness and promptness in responding to their needs

Study regulations and rules are clear, transparent to students, and available to the academic community at the VU intranet.

Students may receive financial support in many forms: grants based either on merit or on social needs, state loans, allowances for students with disabilities, etc. Other forms of social support include accommodations for out of town students, subsidies for students with social needs or disabilities and consultations at the Psychological Training and Research Centre.

The programme, being taught in English, also benefits from the state scholarships to foreign students from certain other countries who want to study in Lithuania.

Another useful aspect of social support is the existence of an Internship Centre at BS VU, through which students can voluntarily take internships to gain real life experiences.

The VU *Procedure of Assessing Academic Progress*, and the *Regulations of the Appeal Commission for Assessing Progress in a Core Academic Unit of Vilnius University* describe in detail all aspects of student's assessment.

The programme employs tools to ensure that the assessment process verifies that subject LOs have been achieved. For example: Subject learning objectives are shown to be linked to the various assessment methods used, Exams are double monitored by the teaching lecturer and one additional supervisor, all exams and student written work is checked for plagiarism by special software.

It was substantiated during discussion with students and graduates that teachers adhere to procedures and during the first class meeting provide all relevant information about the study process, aims and LOs and assessment methods and criteria. The overall opinion of students and graduates is that the study process is well organized and meets their expectation.

One possible improvement that may be suggested is to include in each subject a guide that sets the standards of student achievements for different level of grades (i.e. pass, merit, distinction). These should be made clear to students, presented and explained to them during the first class meeting, and be always accessible electronically by students.

Failing students have a right for one re-take. If that one is failed, the student is considered as having an academic debt in a subject and has to repeat the course next year. Students drop-out of studies if they fail in 15 credits.

An Appeals Commission at the School level handles student complaints about the examination procedure or the results. The VU Dispute Tribunal can further handle the matter if it is an appeal against the examination procedure

According to a 2015 survey, 89% of the graduates work in the area of Project Management, in different context in both private and public sector. Interviews with alumni confirmed that graduates do use the competencies gained during studies in their current jobs. The Expert Team had the opportunity to meet a number of employed students during the interview, whose fees were paid by their companies.

According to alumni and social partners, the market for such a programme is increasing especially as businesses that are more corporate are coming into Lithuania, which supports the need to develop links with corporate social partners.

Overall, the study process is well designed and controlled. Continuous reviews and improvements to respond to student needs without sacrificing the quality of studies are evident. Clear admission criteria and a rigorous process aiming in admitting motivated, high calibre students, contribute to maintain the programme's quality standards. As the programme is taught in English, it aims to attract foreign students. The declining number of students, especially foreign students, presents a threat to the international character of the programme. The programme management team expects that their initiative for the integration of the Business School into Vilnius University will also help in inverting this trend.

2.6. Programme management

Arrangements, policies and operations regarding the management of the programme and quality assurance are clear and effective. According to evidence selected during the visit, the roles of the Study Programme Committee, the Second Cycle Study Programmes Committee, the Programme manager and the Academic coordinator are all defined clearly and functioning as described in the SER.

At the programme level the responsibility for the quality and academic standard of the programme lies primarily with the Study Programme Committee, which comprises academic staff, student and social partner representatives and is accountable to the BS Council. The Programme Manager has the main responsibility of the programme implementation and coordination, while the Academic coordinator is responsible for operations, staff recruitment and scheduling and faculty development.

According to the *QA Procedure of Ensuring Feedback to all involved in the Study process*, student feedback is formally collected and analysed twice a year at both course level and concerning the entire study process during the semester. Results regarding specific study subjects are discussed between programme manager and the lecturers, which can result in improvement measures. Students and graduates felt that their opinions count, are taken into consideration and result in specific improvement. Examples regarding the communication with teachers were reported.

Results regarding the entire study process are reviewed by the programme manager. For example, at the annual Roundtable of all stakeholders, the issue enhancing communication among lecturers of different subjects was discussed.

Other surveys performed by the BS of VU include alumni employment surveys. Relevant results were given in the SER and discussed in section 2.1. of this report.

An area that has not received much attention is programme admissions. For example, analysis of the reasons for the decline of applications, data regarding the qualifications or expectations of non-admitted applicants, marketing study concerning prospective applicants could provide valuable information and help develop a marketing strategy and actions to increase enrolment in a market, which according to social partners and alumni is growing.

The Expert Team sees that most of the effort during the past years was devoted to the development of the programme. Continuous quality enhancements took into consideration recommendations of external programme reviews. Several such improvements in the areas concerning the internationalization of the programme, the strengthening of its ties to the professional world in project management, the enhancement of coordination and increased communication between teachers are evident.

The programme maintains strong ties with the professional associations of project management, which have benefited the development of the programme a lot. Involvement of stakeholders is evident. For example, as a result of annual “roundtable discussions” with stakeholders, work groups are formed to review key programme areas such as: alignment with IPMA standards, upgrade the Master Thesis and link it with real case problems in PM, etc.

However, the Expert Team sees the need for intensifying the active involvement of all teaching staff in these processes as only one teacher mentioned that his participation in the last meeting.

Social partner participation is also seen as necessary in the development of a marketing strategy for the programme. According to social partners and alumni the market for qualified project managers grows and the programme should develop stronger links with the corporate world (e.g. international companies), as well as government agencies involved in projects and programmes.

An extensive internal QA system that covers all facets of Programme development, Study process regulations, Faculty selection and evaluation, etc. is in place at School level.

Programme management should aim at building a continuous quality enhancement process based on more intense communications and interaction among academic staff who deliver the content, so that issues related to curriculum design, content integration and delivery methods are addressed in a holistic way at programme level instead of dealing with them separately at study subject level.

The programme has been through a period of development but has not fully exploited opportunities for growth. According to the management, its strong point is that it is offered by the Business School of a very reputable University in Lithuania. Social partners believe that the market is growing. A proactive marketing strategy is desperately needed to place the programme in the market and exploit its potential.

The programme may consider establishing a Business Advisory Board, according to international standards, that will enhance its links with the corporate world. Valuable resources in this effort would be the programme's alumni who expressed their willingness and desire to join and help, and the links with the professional associations.

Overall, the programme management team has been focusing mostly on the continuous development of the programme since its last review. Social partners have been actively involved in this process and have a strong desire to continue supporting the future development of the programme. Being focused in programme development, the marketing of the programme received reduced attention and the potential of programme has not been fully exploited. Links with the corporate world, as well as public authorities need to be strengthened and teachers' involvement in programme development to be intensified.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS*

1. The programme must exploit its full potential. Project management is a growing area in both private and public sector and many opportunities for growth exist. The development of a programme marketing strategy, focusing on both the Lithuanian and International market needs to be established.
2. Intensify the sense of programme ownership among teachers by expanding their focus from their own subjects to the whole programme. Teaching staff involvement in programme development should be increased. Strategies for staff development actions and research activity, should be oriented towards the strengthening and promotion of the programme's identity.
3. Enhance the internationalization of the programme by exploring alternative actions fitted to the needs of working students, such as organization of summer courses, co-operation with similar programmes in neighbouring countries, etc.
4. As part of continuous review and improvement, perform a programme benchmarking against similar international programmes and review programme LOs to reflect the emergence of an international projectized economy.

IV. SUMMARY

The programme aims to develop high – skilled managers who are able to manage projects, programmes and project portfolios in both business and public sectors balancing its objectives between providing a strong academic background, according to national and EU requirements for 2nd level postgraduate programmes, along with application skills needed by project managers in the local and international labour market.

The programme, which has developed a strong international profile over the last three years, should be commended for developing strong ties with the professional world of Project Management both at national and international level. Taught in English, enrolment of foreign students, participation of international lecturers and international orientation in the content are acknowledged by students and graduates as its strong features that make the programme stand out from similar ones offered by other universities in Lithuania. Interviewed social partners indicated that there is a growing need for such programmes in Lithuania and suggested the development of links between the programme and the corporate world.

The definition of the programme LOs seem to follow the profile of the guidelines of international professional organizations in Project Management (PM), regarding knowledge areas and required competencies but consideration should be given to put more emphasis to high level LOs such as Project & programme evaluation – project strategies, Projects in EU economy, Managing by project – Project Management Offices.

Overall, the curriculum responds to contemporary theoretical aspects and practices of project management and is under continuous review and development, although in some cases the proposed bibliography is rather old. A plurality of teaching and learning activities targeted to course LOs are properly chosen and linked to suitable assessment methods. However, subject Learning Outcomes should focus more in competencies related to Analysis, Evaluation and Synthesis rather than Knowledge and Understanding. Aspects regarding management of public projects, and especially within the EU projectized economic environment should also be upgraded. A solid process for progressive development of research skills, over the duration of the programme is reflected in the design of the curriculum.

The programme is supported by teaching staff, which comprises academics with strong theoretical background and practitioners with solid work experience in the field, many of whom are members of international PM professional associations. Students find the teaching staff very responsive and supportive and considering the mix of practitioners and academics as one of the very strong points of the programme.

Although staff development is seriously supported by the institution, within the framework of this programme, it seems to be narrowly focused to the academic interests of individual staff. Consideration should be given to contextualize research activities and staff development actions in a way that directly benefits the further development programme. This could expect to enhance the sense of programme ownership among teaching staff, which is not as high as one would expect for a programme with such a distinct character.

The existing facilities are excellent and can fully support the study process and research activities of academic staff and students.

The programme seeks to admit high-qualified students and applies a rigorous admission process. Throughout their studies, students receive proper academic support. Student progression is rather smooth and the programme has managed to curtail possible student dropouts because of

academic failure. Overall, the programme cares about maintaining a learning environment that facilitates students' progress without sacrifices in quality and should be commended for having taken specific actions in this direction.

The declining number of students, especially foreign students, is currently a threat to the international character of the programme.

Arrangements, policies and operations regarding the management of the programme and quality assurance are clear and effective. The roles of the Study Programme Committee, the Second Cycle Study Programmes Committee, the Programme manager and the Academic coordinator are all defined clearly and fully functioning.

The programme has been through a period of development but has not fully exploited opportunities for growth. Its strong point is that it is offered by the Business School of the Best University in Lithuania. Social partners believe that the market is growing. A proactive marketing strategy is desperately needed to place the programme in the market and exploit its potential.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *International Project Management* (state code – 621N90006) at Vilnius University is given positive evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	19

*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:	Pandelis Ipsilandis
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Juergen Bruns
	Craig Thompson
	Mantas Jonauskis
	Ugnė Jakubauskaitė

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
TARPTAUTINĖ PROJEKTŲ VADYBA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 6211LX028,
621N90006) 2017-07-05 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-148 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Tarptautinė projektų vadyba* (valstybinis kodas – 6211LX028, 621N90006) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	19

* 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

Studijų programos tikslas – parengti aukštos kvalifikacijos specialistus, gebančius vadovauti projektams, programoms ir rengti projektų aprašymus verslo ir viešajame sektoriuose; derinti savo tikslus ir suteikti tvirtą akademinį išsilavinimą pagal šalies ir Europos Sąjungos reikalavimus antrosios pakopos magistro studijų programoms; kartu išugdyti įgūdžius, kurių reikia projektų vadovams vietos ir tarptautinėje darbo rinkose.

Studijų programa, kuri per pastaruosius trejus metus susikūrė stiprią tarptautinę reputaciją, turėtų būti pagirta už stiprius ryšius su profesionaliu projektų valdymo pasauliu tiek nacionaliniu, tiek tarptautiniu lygmeniu. Dėstoma anglų kalba, programą renkasi užsienio studentai, dalyvauja

užsienio dėstytojai, turinys orientuotas į tarptautiškumą – visa tai studentai ir absolventai pripažįsta kaip stiprybę, kuri studijų programą išskiria iš kitų universitetų panašių studijų programų. Apklausti socialiniai partneriai nurodė, kad poreikis tokioms studijų programoms Lietuvoje vis labiau auga, ir pasiūlė plėtoti ryšius tarp studijų programos ir verslo pasaulio.

Programos studijų rezultatai apibrėžti vadovaujantis tarptautinių profesinių projektų valdymo (PMV) organizacijų rekomendacijomis, kurios skirtos žinių sritims ir reikiamoms kompetencijoms, tačiau daugiau dėmesio reikėtų skirti aukšto lygio studijų rezultatams, pavyzdžiui, projektų ir programos įvertinimui: projektų strategijoms, projektams ES ekonomikoje, projektų valdymui – projektų valdymo biurams.

Apskritai, studijų turinys atitinka šiuolaikinius projektų valdymo teorijos ir praktikos aspektus, jis nuolat peržiūrimas ir tobulinamas, nors kartais siūloma literatūra yra gana pasenusi. Dauguma dėstymo ir mokymosi veiklos yra orientuota numatytiems dalykų studijų rezultatams, kurie yra tinkamai parinkti ir susieti su tinkamais vertinimo metodais, pasiekti. Tačiau dalykų studijų rezultatai turėtų būti labiau sutelkti į analizę, vertinimą ir sintezę, o ne į žinias ir supratimą. Reikėtų atnaujinti viešojo sektoriaus projektų valdymo ypatumus, ypač skirtuosius ES ekonominei aplinkai. Visos studijų programos metu numatytas tvirtas mokslinių tyrimų įgūdžių ugdymo procesas, kuris atsispindi studijų programos sandaroje.

Studijų programą vykdo dėstytojai, kurie yra akademikai, turintys tvirtus teorijos pagrindus, ir praktikai, turintys solidžią darbo patirtį šioje srityje. Daugelis jų yra tarptautinių projektų valdymo profesinių asociacijų nariai. Studentų nuomone, dėstytojai yra labai paslaugūs ir teikia paramą, o tai, kad dėstytojų komandą sudaro ir praktikai, ir akademikai, yra vienas iš svarbiausių studijų programos privalumų.

Nepaisant to, kad institucija rimtai remia personalo kvalifikacijos kėlimą, tačiau šios studijų programos atžvilgiu, atrodo, yra siaurai taikoma atskirų dėstytojų akademiniam interesams tenkinti. Reikėtų apvarstyti ir mokslinius tyrimus, personalo tobulinimosi veiklą orientuoti taip, kad būtų tiesiogiai naudinga tolesniam studijų programos plėtojimui. Taip būtų galima sustiprinti studijų programos dėstytojų kaip savininkų jausmą, kuris nėra toks stiprus, kokio būtų galima tikėtis tokios išskirtinės studijų programos atžvilgiu.

Materialioji bazė yra puiki, padeda vykdyti akademinio personalo ir studentų studijų procesą ir mokslinių tyrimų veiklą.

Siekama, kad į studijų programą būtų priimti aukštos kvalifikacijos studentai, todėl taikomas griežtas priėmimo procesas. Studijų metu studentai gauna tinkamą akademinę paramą. Studentų pažanga yra gana nuosekli, studijų programai pavyko apriboti galimą studentų nubyrežimą dėl akademinio nepažangumo. Apskritai, studijų programos vykdytojai rūpinasi

išlaikyti tokią mokymosi aplinką, kuri padėtų studentams tobulėti neaukojant studijų kokybės. Pagirtina, kad imtasi konkrečių veiksmų šiam klausimui spręsti.

Šiuo metu mažėjantis studentų, ypač užsienio, skaičius kelia grėsmę tarptautiniam programos pobūdžiui.

Studijų programos vadyba, susitarimai, politika ir kokybės užtikrinimas yra aiškūs ir veiksmingi. Studijų programos komiteto, Antrosios pakopos studijų programų komiteto, programos vadovo ir akademinio koordinatoriaus funkcijos yra aiškiai apibrėžtos ir visiškai vykdomos.

Studijų programa jau kurį laiką buvo tobulinama, tačiau dar ne iki galo išnaudotos augimo galimybės. Jos stiprybė ta, kad ją vykdo geriausio universiteto Lietuvoje verslo mokykla. Socialiniai partneriai mano, kad rinka auga ir būtina parengti iniciatyvią rinkodaros strategiją, kuri padėtų studijų programai įsitvirtinti rinkoje ir išnaudoti visas jos galimybes.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Ši studijų programa turėtų išnaudoti visą savo potencialą. Projektų valdymas – auganti sritis privačiame ir viešajame sektoriuose, todėl plėtros galimybių yra daug. Reikia parengti studijų programos rinkodaros strategiją, kuri būtų sutelkta tiek į Lietuvos, tiek į tarptautinės rinkos poreikius.
2. Stiprinti studijų programos dėstytojų kaip savininkų jausmą išplečiant jų akiratį, kad jie susitelktų ne tik į savo dėstomą dalyką, bet į visą studijų programą. Aktyviau įtraukti dėstytojus į studijų programos plėtojamą. Dėstytojų tobulinimosi strategijos turėtų stiprinti ir reklamuoti šios studijų programos tapatybę.
3. Stiprinti studijų programos tarptautiškumą išnaudojant alternatyvias veiklas, kurios atitiktų dirbančių studentų poreikius, pavyzdžiui, organizuoti vasaros kursus, bendradarbiauti su panašiomis studijų programomis kaimyninėse šalyse ir t. t.
4. Vykdamas nuolatinį studijų programos vertinimą ir ją tobulinant, rekomenduojama atlikti jos lyginamąją analizę su panašiomis tarptautinėmis programomis ir iš naujo apsvarstyti studijų rezultatus, kad juose atsispindėtų į tarptautinius poreikius orientuotos ekonomikos atsiradimas.