



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS SVEIKATOS PSICHOLOGIJA
(*valstybinis kodas – 621S13001, 6211JX061*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY (*state code - 621S13001, 6211JX061*)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vytautas Magnus University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

Vilnius
2017

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Sveikatos psichologija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621S13001, (6211JX061)
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų krypčių grupė	Psichologija
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2), iššęstinė (2,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Psichologijos magistras (Socialinių mokslų magistras)
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2000-08-30 Nr. 1082

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Health Psychology</i>
State code	621S13001, 6211JX061
Study area	Social Sciences
Group of Study field	Psychology
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2), part-time (2,5 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Psychology (Master of Social Sciences)
Date of registration of the study programme	30 th August 2000, No 1082

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

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

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

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

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit 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.	Master thesis
2.	Master project works No 1 and No 2
3.	Exams assignments examples

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

The second-cycle study programme “Health Psychology” is carried out at the Department of Theoretical Psychology of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). The Programme was launched on 30 August 2000, and since then 507 students successfully completed the Programme (SER, p. 4). The VMU is a classical university of Liberal Arts. The VMU is managed by two collegial bodies, the Council and the Senate, and the separate managerial body of the Rector (SER, p.4). Students’ interests are represented by a self-governing body, a Student Representative Council. There are 13 academic divisions and 10 faculties at VMU. The Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) is composed of 5 departments: Education Science, Social Work, Sociology, General Psychology, Theoretical Psychology, and Psychological Clinic. During the period of self-evaluation there were 3 Psychology subdivisions: Department of General Psychology, Department of Theoretical Psychology and Psychological Clinic. Since September 2016, the Department of General Psychology and the Department of Theoretical Psychology were restructured into one joint Department of Psychology (SER, p.4).

The FSS is headed by the Faculty Council and the Dean. The Dean, Vice-Deans and activity coordinators in the Departments constitutes the Faculty Dean’s office, which is in charge of day-to-day management of the Faculty. In addition, Committees of the Study Programmes play an important role in the study programme management (SER, p.4).

VMU provides 51 first-cycle programmes (5 in English), 58 second-cycle programmes (22 in English), integrated law studies, non-degree studies of pedagogy and 18 third-cycle study programmes (SER, p.4).

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 *11th October, 2017*.

1. **Prof. Dr. Phil Chantal Martin Sölch** (team leader), Professor in Clinical and Health Psychology, Department of Psychology, University Fribourg, Switzerland.
2. **Dr. Inga Millere** - Dean of the Faculty of Public Health and Social Welfare, Rīga Stradiņš University, Latvia.
3. **Prof. emeritus Vlasta Vizek Vidović**, Head of the Centre for Educational Research and Development, Institute for Social Research, Croatia.
4. **Žydrė Arlauskaitė**, assistant of Department of Development and Educational Psychology in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Lithuania.
5. **Meda Vaitonytė**, student of the Mykolas Romeris University, study programme *Psychology*, Lithuania.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

According to the self-evaluation report (SER), the general aim of the master programme in Health Psychology is

“to prepare specialists who are able to promote individual and public health-related, quality of life via recognizing and influencing psychological-behavioural and social factors related to health and disease in all stages of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of non-communicable diseases, participating in health policy formation process, ethically applying scientific research principles, psychological theories, methods of psychological assessment and interventions in health promotion, disease prevention and rehabilitation in interdisciplinary teams of healthcare specialists (SER; p.6)”.

The general aims are therefore very precisely specified and integrate the different application fields of Health Psychology, namely the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of non-communicable diseases; and the participation in health policy. They stress the importance of research and ethics; and they clearly indicate the focus of the programme on psychological contents (theories, methods,...) and on social and psychological factors.

These aims were defined in accordance with the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) definition of health (WHO, 1948), and with the definition of Health psychology from the American Psychology Associations (SER, p.5). The WHO’s definition of health is the international standard. The American Psychological Association is responsible for the definition of the different disciplines in Psychology at international level. The program defines 10 specific learning outcomes that correspond to the main areas of health psychologist professional activities as described by the American Psychological Association, and other professional associations in psychology (SER, p.5). The learning outcomes aim to fulfil academic, volational, and labour market requirements, and to prepare the graduate for their professional activity. The formulation of the learning outcomes is directly linked to the general aims of the programme, and the learning outcomes are very-well related to the national and international standards for Health Psychology. In addition, the learning outcomes are clearly formulated, well-communicated, and mainly formulated at high level definition, i.e. in a qualification framework for 8 out of 10 learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are defined in accordance with the relevant international (Bologna process, and Dublin descriptors, 2004) and local guidelines (requirements for second-cycle studies, descriptors of study cycles in Lithuania, and descriptors of the study field of psychology) and they are compatible with Level 7 of the National and European Qualifications Framework (SER, p.7). The aims and learning outcomes of the programme are

accessible publicly on several homepages, for instance on the homepage of the University¹ or on AIKOS, an open vocational information, counselling and guidance system². The learning outcomes and aims of the programme were known by the teachers, students, alumni and social partners as evidenced in the interviews during the site visit.

The aims of the programme and the learning outcomes are linked to the market and societal needs, in particular with regard to the coming changes in the practice regulation for medical psychologist. At the moment, the master in health psychology is one way to be recognized as medical psychologist (qualification code 263402), and to be able to work in healthcare environment. If the changes in regulation are approved, their position will be strengthened. Review Panel's interviews with the teachers and with the SER's team revealed that the learning outcomes had been carefully reviewed according to the new context of Health psychology by the study programme committee, with some members participating in the political discussions at national level. The need for specialists prepared by the programme is based on several international and national policies and reports. This includes among other the EU Health Programme (2014-2020), whose main aim is to improve the health of the Union citizens and reduce health inequalities. Another important reference document is the policy framework for the WHO European Region "Health for all in the XXI century", which focuses on health care and continuous preservation of various diseases, injury occurrence and morbidity reduction. At national level, the programme refers to the Lithuanian Health System Development Framework for 2011-2020, approved by the Lithuanian Parliament. One of the main areas of focus for this framework is health improvement and disease prevention. Finally the programme refers to the Lithuanian Health Strategy 2014-2025, that aims is to form healthy lifestyle and its culture to reduce consumption and accessibility of alcohol, tobacco, other psychotropic substances and illegal drugs, to promote healthy eating habits and to develop habits of optimal physical activity (SER, p.8). All these documents and other (for instance the national Law on the Health System and findings on public health's problems in Lithuania) served as basis for the development and formulation of the programme's aims and learning outcomes. Finally, the social partners reported that the interns and the graduates of the programme had the skills expected by the market. The alumni reported in majority having been well-prepared for their professional activities. All interviewed alumni had found a job rapidly after graduating. This is in line with students' and graduates' surveys showing that a large majority (up to 100% in 2015) evaluated that the programme was necessary, and that the speciality of Health Psychology was relevant in

¹ <http://smf.vdu.lt/studijos/studiju-programos/?/lt/study/program/show/114>

² https://www.aikos.smm.lt/paieska/_layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=PROG&f=Prog&key=4171&pt=of&ctx_sbfr=sbfr

the labour market (SER, p. 9). Taken together the link between programme objectives resp. intended learning outcomes and state, societal and labour market needs was evaluated as very good. The program aims and outcomes can be also seen as very well-linked with professional requirements.

With regard to the university mission, the aims of the programme were defined in agreement with the VMU statutes and strategy (SER, p. 7). This is in particular true for the orientation to a dynamic academic community, and the unity of science and studies. On the basis of the site visit, the Review Team could evidence the strong research emphasis of the programme and the importance given to the analyses of evaluation outcomes. Most teachers are involved in research, and involve the students in their research. This is also strength of the programme reported by the social partners.

The programme's aims and outcomes correspond to the type and cycle of studies. This is reflected by the content of the study programme. The courses taught at master clearly focus on the topic of Health Psychology, integrating methodological and interventional skills (Annex 1), two practices and a master thesis. The aims and learning outcomes of separate subjects are developed following the aim, and learning outcomes of the Programme (Annex 2). According to the social partners, the students of the master program in Health Psychology show a higher level of competences than bachelor students doing their practice in the same institutions. The learning outcomes, the content and the qualifications to be obtained are coherent and well-tuned with the name of the programme. In addition, the learning outcomes reflect the changes and improvements that have been implemented in the programme after the last evaluation, including more practices and a more systematic exchange with the social partner (Annex 8). Here, the very good reputation of the programme reported by students, alumni and the social partners must be acknowledged.

In summary, the programme's committee has given many efforts in the formulation and the content of the programme's aims and outcomes. They are based on international and national standards, in line with state, societal and labour market needs and requirements. The learning outcomes, the content of the courses and qualifications to be obtained are very-well interrelated, and correspond to the study level. Finally, the very good reputation of the programme was identified as an **area of excellence**. Review Panel evaluates therefore the criteria related to learning outcomes as very well fulfilled.

2.2. Curriculum design

The programme has been designed in accordance with the national legislation for the second cycle programme requirements (General Requirements for Master Degree Study Programme, Order No V-826, 2010) as well as in accordance to the national and international descriptors for the study field of psychology. The program has a total volume of 120 credits, encompassing 9 obligatory subjects in the study field that cover 54 credits. Out of these credits, 6 are research oriented and 3 practices oriented. The elective subjects cover 12 credits and students can choose one between from the list of specialty optional courses, and one elective from the list of inter-faculty optional courses. The programme also offers the possibility of part-time studies, which reflects the commitment to the idea of life-long learning. As the members of SER group critically reflect, one of the key improvements should be directed toward widening the list of specialty optional courses (SER; Annex 2). It should be also considered that the choice options of elective courses in specialty area could be raised at least to 2. In the curriculum design, the strong emphasis is put on research work, which is allocated 39 credits, with 21 credits assigned for preparing Master thesis. An important aspect of the research work is that the elaboration of the final thesis plan and methodology continually evolves from the first semester to the last. Specialty practice is assigned 15 credits in the last semester (minimum). As the course prepares professional practitioners, who will enter labour market and job without the possibility to strengthen acquired competencies through induction period common to many EU countries (communicated by teachers and students), the option of increasing practice credits/hours should be considered.

All courses (except thesis and practice) are evenly assigned 6 credits without quite clear explanation in the SER, how the workload has been equally distributed. In that view, an additional rechecking of the course workload might reveal space to increase the practice credits. Moreover, in communication with students, it was stated that they do not perceive the workload to be equal, in spite of equal number of credits assigned to each course.

A deeper insight into curriculum structure as presented in Annex 2 of the SER (*Description of study subjects*) clearly shows that it is based on a modern approach of curriculum design, applying the concept of constructive alignment to link program learning outcomes to subject learning outcomes, and further on to content, study/teaching methods and approaches to assessment. Also the learning outcomes are well formulated in line with the concept of SMART outcomes. They are in compliance with the requirements of Lithuanian Qualification Framework (LTQF), with a full achievement of level 7 (Annex 6). It was confirmed during the interview

with the senior management that special efforts were devoted to the staff training for developing competence-based study design in line with Bologna process recommendations (e.g. ECT user's guide 2009, 2015). Consistent improvement of the contents and subjects based on the recommendations of the previous external evaluation has been undertaken during the last years (e.g. a renewed list of elective specialty courses, as well as introduction of inter-faculty elective subjects based on the principles of liberal arts; SER, Annex 8). These changes were recognized and accepted both by stakeholders and alumni. In the description of the courses, the tables linking directly learning outcomes with content of each course contribute significantly to the transparency of the course logic (Annex 2).

The programme content and design corresponds to the type and cycle of studies and a lot of care was devoted to achieve curriculum coherence and to avoid overlapping of contents. Student-centred approach to teaching reflected in the variety of study methods (e.g. lectures, seminars, discussions, individual students work, work in groups, literature analysis, project planning and its presentations and review in a seminar, brainstorming, analysis of cases, self-reflection) and also in the variety of assessment techniques (e.g. exam (in written form), colloquium (in written form), homework and its presentation in a seminar, team work and the presentation of its results in class, reading and assessment of projects) (Annex 2) ensure that the intended learning outcomes will be achieved. Space for additional refinement of the program could be found in the increased use of study methods based on practical skills (such as classroom role playing), which might somewhat compensate for the lack of opportunity of skill development during practice. The scope of the program is well adjusted for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes with the need for aforementioned refinements. The program content and its way of delivery corresponds to the latest academic and professional achievements according to the requirements laid down in the Descriptors of Psychology Study Field (from SER, p.12). It is remarkable that some adjustments to the latest developments in the field were implemented due to the students' suggestions based on their experience from the practice. Altogether, the balance between theoretical, research and practice competences was constantly improved in the last years (from SER, p.12).

In summary, the criteria related to study curriculum design are well and mostly very well-fulfilled specially regarding the balance between theoretical, research and practical courses, the clear relation between subject learning outcomes and programme learning outcomes. Remarkable is the attention paid to the gradual development of students' complex research skills starting at the very beginning of the program with the early engagement in Master thesis planning. However, the most significant feature refers to the commitment of the curriculum designers to the strong orientation toward curriculum quality issues and continuous striving for

the curriculum improvements. In spite of the very good evaluation, the review team has to 2 suggestions to improve the already very good curriculum.

Suggestions:

- Integration of teaching methods allowing development of practical skills or more practice-oriented activities in the framework of the current study plan.
- Development of more specialty elective subjects as well as possibility to choose more than one specialty elective course.

2.3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff meets the legal requirements (according to the General requirements of Master degree study programmes approved by Order No V-826 of 3 June 2010 of the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania regulates) than „no less than 80% (or 60% where the study programme is oriented towards practical activities) of the teaching staff must have a scientific degree (or be recognised artists) (SER, p. 14). Indeed, 80% of VMU teachers have a scientific degree according to the SER (p. 14). In addition, 26.6% of teachers hold professor's position, what again fully correspond with regulation that no less than 20% of major study field subjects' volume has to be taught by teachers holding a Professors academic degree. Finally, 87% of field teachers are teachers with research activities related to the subject taught, which complies with the regulation that "no less than 60% of major study field teachers' exercised research activity has to comply with their taught study subjects"(SER, p.14).

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes: academic, scientific and communicative skills are very well developed. These conclusions are based on the evaluation of programme teachers' teaching, practical and scientific experience. The average teaching experience of the programme staff is 20,1 year. Some teachers have longer than 40 years teaching experience; teachers, who have less teaching experience, have 23 years of practical experience or 18 years of scientific experience in the field of subjects taught. Students of the Programme also value high qualifications of the Programme teachers as indicated by the results of a survey performed in 2016. 98.3% of students- respondents indicated satisfaction with the teachers' qualifications and 93.4% of them stressed importance of cooperation modus between teachers and students (SER, p.16).

The high level of qualifications is also evidenced by the Programme teachers' active involvement in expertise, organizational and educational activities in the academic institution, as well as in other state and public institutions in Lithuania and abroad. They are member of various professional groups and different professional associations. They actively participate as

educators of science promotion at national newspapers, radio and TV, also give public lectures for society (SER, 16).

The University provides possibilities to develop teachers' didactics competences. For young teachers, who often come from doctorate studies, it is obligatory to have courses in didactics. In addition, the Department of Educational Sciences and the Centre for Research and Studies at VMU offer large number of development courses in the field of teaching and study development. Didactic courses are not mandatory for the senior teaching staff, but the University provides incentives for the staff participating in the development of didactic skills. The Centre for Research and Studies offer, among other, courses in curriculum development that was followed by the members of the programme committee and by most teachers of the programme. This is reflected by the very good quality of the curriculum and of the learning outcomes as discussed in the previous sections.

Teachers could be described as active and productive collaborators: they are taking part in the creation of the curriculum, they develop and participate at numerous researches and projects. During the evaluation period, 12 programme teachers and 3 doctoral students assisting in the programme published 148 articles in peer-reviewed academic journals registered in international databases. 2 monographs and 3 study books were also published. The Programme teachers supervised, administered and participated at 23 different projects financed from various sources, including the Research council of Lithuania, European commission, EU foundations, Ministries of Health and Education and Science, Municipality and others (SER, p. 15). The teachers are very motivated and committed to the programme and to research. They even publish their own international peer-reviewed scientific journal in collaboration with an American University.

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. The adequacy of teachers and student's ratio is shown by the results of teachers' survey conducted in 2016. 78% of teachers – respondents stated that the number of students in lectures allows to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the subjects taught (SER, p.15). Throughout the analysis period, the ratio of teachers and students of full-time programme was 15 to 37. During the lectures and seminars there were on average 19 students (SER, p.15).

Requirement of teaching staff turnover for an adequate provision of the programme is met. During the evaluation period, 1 professor retired (Assistant Professor Ina Pilkauskienė) and one changed the working place (Assistant Professor Aistė Pranckevičienė). However, all the Programme subjects were taught by the same teachers with little changes made due to the exit of two teachers (SER, p.15). With regard to mobility, several programme teachers gave lectures in foreign universities during the evaluation period: 6 programme teachers delivered intensive courses and lectures at 7 Universities in Europe and America; 6 Programme teachers took part in

Erasmus teacher exchange programmes and left for part time teaching in universities of Warsaw, Riga, Tampere, Istanbul, Stirling. The Department as well invites high level scholars from other Lithuanian and foreign universities to give lectures and seminars for students (SER, p.16) Another possibility is to have common lectures and presentation with American Universities via video conferences.

The University provides enough development options for the teaching staff, in particular with regard to didactic skills, and provides incentive-based motivation for the teacher to use these development's options. The Programme follow the order of VMU Senate (2011), which requires University teachers and researches to be attested every 5 years (SER, 2017). During the interviews with the Review Team, the Senior management reported a yearly evaluation of the teaching staff, which involves criteria related to teaching development, research and outreach. The results of the evaluation influence salary. With regard to their scientific skills, all teaching staff regularly participates in national and international scientific conferences, seminars, courses and trainings as reported in SER (based on teaching staff CV, Annex 4). One additional major strength of the teachers is that they have very good understanding of where and how this programme could be used for the country purposes. Several of them participate in the political discussions at national level related to a currently discussed project of psychologist practice law that will strengthen the position of the psychologists, working in healthcare system as medical psychologists. If this legislation is approved, a master in Health Psychology or in Clinical Psychology will be required to work as medical psychologist in the healthcare system. The teachers maintain a very good, mature and supportive communication with the students as reported by students and alumni in the interviews. This was identified as an **area of excellence** by the Review Team (see section 2.5.).

In summary, Review Team evaluated the criteria related to teaching staff as very-well fulfilled and were evaluated as very good. Specific strengths include the high qualification of teaching staff, their strong scientific orientation, their active involvement to scientific and public life, the fulfilment of legal restrictions, and the good cooperation among students and social partners. This is based on the good conditions provided by the University for teacher development, and by the efficient use of these opportunities by the teachers. Another argument for the very good evaluation is related to the strong scientific orientation of the teachers and to their scientific output in terms of publication and obtained grants (at national and European level). Another strength is related to teacher mobility. The programme put a lot of efforts to make teachers mobility possible; and also they provide creative solutions, such as regular video conferences

with American Universities to foster mobility. Finally, the very good communication with students must be emphasized here again.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The facilities of the faculty are adequate in size of auditoriums and well-equipped according to modern standards, i.e. the facilities are newly build and arranged in convenient manner accordingly. The university offers 83 classrooms that can be used for the study process (SER, p. 18 section 4.1.1.) With regard to software licenses, students identified an issue in the number of licenses that are provided for the programme SPSS, saying that they would like to have more of them. The teaching staff at the meeting expressed their opinion in the opposite manner considering that there is enough licenses provided. Nevertheless, from the SER (p.19 section 4.1.10.), it is seen that the university is aware of the issue of lack of the licenses and the purchase is involved in the future plans. Laboratories are at disposal and provide the possibility for experimental research. They are equipped with various facilities allowing for a broad range of research works. They are used for teachers' and students' research projects. The library is located in the same building as the faculty, having a good accessibility to teaching materials needed for psychology students including textbooks, books, periodicals and databases. The latter is also easy accessible through VPN. Also, the quality of databases and the access to research instruments (such as questionnaires for instance) were emphasized by students as one of the reasons to choose this study programme. This is contributing to the strong reputation of the programme, and was identified as an area of excellence. The library is also very well-equipped for people with sensory or motor disabilities (evidenced at site visit and reported during the meetings).

Practice spaces are available in a range of institutions in different health care organizations, educational institutions, public institutions and nongovernmental organizations. Students have the possibility to choose the practice place from a practice institution list provided from faculty or independently.

The premises are very well-adjusted for people with various disabilities, and have also a very good integration in the municipality. For instance, a traffic light was installed by the municipality to make the accessibility from the bus stop to the faculty easier for disabled persons. Furthermore, the building itself is adjusted for visually and mobility impaired individuals. The classrooms for the semester are selected taking into account if there is any students with special needs. Moreover, these students are provided with chairs adjustable for height, with desks and special keyboards. Also, specific software for visually impaired people is

provided in the computers (SER p. 18 – 19, sections 4.1.4. and 4.1.5.). The very good facilities and databases were identified by the Review Team as **areas of excellence**.

In summary, the criteria related to the facilities and learning resources were evaluated as very well fulfilled. This evaluation is based on a) the amounts, size and equipment of the rooms and auditoriums, b) the satisfactory amount of software licenses and the good access to well-equipped research laboratories, c) the good accessibility to teaching and research resources, the excellent databases, and d) on the good access to facilities and resources for people with disabilities.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The entrance requirements are based on a formula described in the SER (p. 21), and on an individual interview. The entrance requirements are approved by the rector and are in line with the EuroPsy requirements. They are coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The admission is performed by the University Admission Committee. The numbers of state-funded places are determined by the government. Part-time studies places follow a similar selection procedure. Because of the limitation of places, the programme is very competitive. Most students engaged in the programme also succeed, with a low number of drop-outs (about 2% in the last 5 years (SER, p.21).

The organisation of the study process supports the implementation of the programme, and the assessment methods are clearly communicated, well organized and transparent. They are based on the University Statutes and Study Regulations. The duration of the programme is two academic years. Timetables are published no less than a week prior to registration and contain study subjects, class work forms, time, duration, language and teacher's name. Learning processes are implemented with various methods, including lectures, practical activities, workshops, seminars, individual tasks and group assignments. Particular attention is devoted to the student's intercollaboration and interaction with teachers. The number of contact hours between students and teachers, and the number of individual work hours of the students are clearly described and are adequate (SER, p. 22). Students' surveys show that a large majority of students is satisfied with the allocation of hours, with the study schedule and with the curriculum (SER, p.22). Examinations are taken at the end of each semester. Examination schedule is designed in compliance with student requests, and posted no later than 1 week before the start of the session announcement. Examinations are distributed equally throughout the whole period of the examination session, with a minimal interval of 2 days between exams. The evaluation of

students' achievement is based on defined criteria, and the failure and retake conditions are clearly described. Student's surveys as well as the interviews with the students during the site visit confirmed that students are satisfied and well informed about the evaluation of learning processes.

The students are clearly encouraged to take part in scientific activities, and the teaching staff is very active in research, reflected by the number of publications, the edition of their own international journal and the application for and acquisition of competitive funding. Teachers' surveys showed that most teachers invite advanced students to continue studies in doctoral programme, to participate in the activity of the Lithuanian Psychology Students Association, to present papers in national and international conferences, and take part in research projects (SER, p.23 and interviews with teachers and students during the site visit). During the evaluation period, the students of the programme along with teachers published 35 scientific articles (29 in Lithuanian, 6 in English), and presented their research in conferences (55 in Lithuania and 27 abroad) (SER, p.23). In addition, students can participate in international video conferences-symposia organised twice a year conjointly with Nebraska and Black Hills State Universities in the USA. However, it is possible for students to avoid an involvement in research activities (as reported by the students and alumni during the interviews), with exception of the master thesis that has to be empirical. This could be improved for instance with a formalisation of research activities in the study plans, or with the creation of incentives such as teacher's or student's excellence awards. Students are also provided with opportunities to gain practical experience in participating in voluntary activities.

Mobility is still an issue. Very few students participated in exchange programs. Although most teachers encourage students to participate in Erasmus studies and Erasmus practice (according to teacher's survey, SER p.23 and interviews with teachers), only three students of the programme participated in a mobility programme. The Psychology Department tried to provide more incentives by increasing the number of Erasmus academic exchange agreements (from 5 to 14). The University provides the necessary possibilities for language learning (with up to 24 different language classes) (SER, p.23). The reasons given by the students in the interviews for not participating in mobility programmes are mainly of private nature (work or family commitment), and related to language issues. This is especially important, because language is important in the practical abilities in the field of Health Psychology. Here again, the use of video conferences is a good way to compensate for small mobility, and shows good skills at creating networks, and creative ideas to deal with mobility issues. On the other hand, the number of incoming students has increased, with 13 international students studying subjects from the programme during the evaluation period.

The University provides good student's support, including regular and easily accessible communication on extracurricular and career activities (for instance using moodle, social media,...), free access to University intranet system, information by the senior management about the main information, individual consultations at the Dean's Office of the Faculty for administrative matters (upon demand). Students' surveys indicate that most students (more than 70%) reported receiving the necessary information from the administrative staff, and positively evaluated the different aspects of the information provided at the beginning of the studies. Scientific advisors for the master thesis are chosen by the students among the teaching staff with a doctoral degree. An internal Psychologist Professional Ethics Committee was established at the Department of Psychology. This committee gives the students recommendations regarding ethical issues in their research projects and internships. Finally, when a student cannot study according to the general study schedule (e.g. disabled students, exchange students, students returning from exchange programmes, etc.), opportunities are created to study according to an individual study schedule, approved by Rector and VMU Senate (SER, p. 24).

The professional abilities of the students correspond to the expectations of the social partners, who stress their initiative skills, strong commitment and research qualities. This is also reflected by the fact that alumni get quickly employed. Students wish more possibilities to develop practical competences; this was also expressed by some social partners, especially in the field of counselling. However, in one case the integration of a student in a practice lead to a change of methods in the institution, indicating the high level of competences of these students. The programme committee is aware of the descriptors for psychology professions and use this as a basis for the development of the curriculum. Despite of this and because of the future changes in the professional opportunities for health psychologists, the Review Team suggests the integration of more practical oriented courses to better fulfil the descriptors for psychology professions.

The formal fulfilling of the governmental needs for mental health is given by the particular subjects taught in the programme, which are based on the government's progress strategies and governmental Health program (SER, p. 27). The master thesis topics are relevant for society need. This is another way how the programme tries to fulfill societal requirements and increase the professional competences of the students. In this framework, the programme offers subjects related to addiction prevention, psychological health promotion, disease prevention models, healthy aging and mental health improvement as potential topics for master theses. Finally, the students can acquire practical professional skills through the practice. Practice places can be chosen in ambulatory, stationary, rehabilitation organizations, addiction centres, and retirement homes.

The students can complain. Their complains lead to changes in the programme in a dynamic way, as reflected in the interviews with students and teachers during the site visit and in the SER (annex 8). The University has clear appeal procedures and handling of plagiarism (SER, p.28-29). Students have the impression that they are heard and emphasize the very good relation and communication between teachers and students during the interviews. Finally, the facilities are fully accessible for students with reduced mobility and support students with special needs (see also section 2.4).

In summary, the criteria related to study processes and student's performance assessment were evaluated as very good. This is based on a) the clarity and transparency of the processes, b) the integration of governmental strategies at different levels of the programme, c) the open communication between the different levels of the programme, d) the good relationship with the social partners and the satisfaction of the social partners with the students and the graduates of the programme. Review Panel identified several **areas of excellence** in this domain, including the strong research focus, and the quality of the relationship with students, as well as the good and open communication.

Despite this very good evaluation in general, the Review Team also identified small areas that could be improved and formulated some suggestions.

Suggestions:

- Creation of incentive for students to participate in research, for instance students and teachers excellence awards and formalization of the integration of students' research activities in the study plan.
- Promotion of the advantages of participation in exchange programmes (for instance promote bilateral agreement, internships agreement, research-related internships)
- Increase the practical competences in accordance to the descriptors for psychology professions.

2.6. Programme management

The Psychology programmes belong to the Faculty of Social Sciences. The main management bodies of the Faculty of Social Sciences are the Faculty Council - the top self-governance body of the Faculty and the Dean (described in the SER, p.4).

The activities and responsibilities of the highest University management bodies are clearly defined in Vytautas Magnus University Statute. Quality assurance is integrated into the Vytautas

Magnus University 2012–2020 strategy. There is a Study Quality Unit, whose aim is to improve and develop the internal study quality assurance system with regard to national and international requirements for study quality (described in the SER, 29.p; verified at site visit).

During the assessment period, the Department of Theoretical Psychology was responsible for Master studies in Psychology, but since September of 2016, after restructuration Department of Psychology (described in the SER, 4.p., verified at site visit.).

The study programme committee plays an important role in the study programme management. The main responsibilities of the study programme committee include the coordination of the programme implementation with regard to the curriculum related questions and assurance of the programme quality. The study programme committee performs internal programme quality assessment and renewal; it is responsible for preparation and implementation of the programme quality improvement plans (described in the SER, 30.p. verified at site visit).

Study programme committee members are students, graduates, social partners and academics. Study programme committee meetings are organised twice a year. Each year, the quality improvement plans are made on the results of the programme analysis (information is described 30.p. as well as obtained and verified at site visit).

Study programme assessment (self-evaluation) is performed every 3 years, the program's strengths and weaknesses are identified, and their intended improvements are measured.

There is evidence that performed quality assurance measures are effective. Programme quality assessment is performed regularly. Collected information analysis and implementation of changes are made. The results of previous external evaluations are used for the improvement of the programme. Finally, changes in the programme were made according to the changes in the legislation and market needs (information obtained and verified at site visit during the interviews at different levels).

Constant relations with employers are maintained, good exchanges and exchanges possibilities with social partner were noted during the site visit, but more formalization could be done.

A good quality reputation was noticed, and interpreted as a good quality indicator. The information about the study programme, on the university's website is not easy to reach, and could be also accessible in English. So far, the online information on the University homepage is only in Lithuanian (see also 2.1.). However, an online information in English about the programme is provided by AIKOS (<https://www.aikos.smm.lt>).

The need for program visibility in English (on the University Website) is based on the need of students to participate in mobility programmes (SER p.23) and VMU emphasized attention to the development of internationality with the aim of more active student participation in academic

exchange and to provide not only outgoing but also incoming students with opportunities to participate in the international mobility.

In summary the criteria related to programme management were evaluated as very well fulfilled. This is justified by a) the two-levels of quality management (one at University level, the other one at programme committee level), b) the regular collection of data and the dynamic implementation of the results of quality management data, and c) by the clear distribution of the responsibilities between the different levels of management. Despite this very high level of quality management, the sees some improvement possibilities in the accessibility of the information about the study programme and in the formalisation of the relationships with the social partners.

2.7. Examples of excellence

- Strong research focus that is also noticed by social partners and reflected by the scientific output of staff.
- High reputation of the program reported by the social partners, students and alumni.
- Quality of the relationship with students, and the good and open communication.
- Very good facilities and databases.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Review team has no formal recommendations as the quality of the programme is very high in all evaluation areas, only suggestions are described below.

1. Integration of teaching methods allowing development of practical skills or more practice-oriented activities in the framework of the current study plan (suggestion).
2. Development of more specialty elective subjects (suggestion).
3. Creation of incentive for students to participate in research, for instance for students and teachers excellence awards and formalization of the integration of students' research activities in the study plan (suggestion).
4. Promotion of the advantages of participation in exchange programmes (for instance promote bilateral agreement, internships agreement, research-related internships) (suggestion).
5. Increase the practical competences in accordance to the descriptors for psychology professions (suggestion).

IV. SUMMARY

In summary, the programme is given a very good evaluation and each evaluation criteria was evaluated as very good. The Review Team identified several areas of excellence, and formulated some suggestions. The programme study committee has given many efforts in the formulation and the content of the programme's aims and outcomes. They are based on international and national standards, in line with state, societal and labour market needs and requirements. The learning outcomes, the content of the courses and qualifications to be obtained are very-well interrelated, and correspond to the study level. Finally, the very good reputation of the programme was identified as an area of excellence. With regard to the curriculum design, the programme was designed in accordance with the national legislation for the second cycle programme requirements and with the national and international descriptors for the study field of psychology. The curriculum structure is based on a modern approach of curriculum design, applying the concept of constructive alignment and a student-centered approach. A lot of care was devoted to achieve curriculum coherence and to avoid overlapping of contents. Some areas needing more improvement at the level of curriculum design include the integration of practice-oriented teaching methods and the development of more specialty elective subjects. Concerning the teaching staff, the Review Team emphasize the good conditions provided by the University for teacher development, and the fact that these development opportunities are regularly and efficiently used by the teachers. Another strength of the teaching staff is related to the strong scientific orientation of the teachers and to their scientific output in term of grants and publications. Finally, the very good communication with students was identified as an area of excellence. Specific strengths related to the facilities and learning resources include the adequate number, size and equipment of the teaching rooms and auditoriums, the satisfactory amount of software licenses and the access to research laboratories, the good accessibility to teaching and research resources, and the good access to facilities and resources for people with disabilities. The quality of the facilities and databases at disposal of the students was evidenced as an area of excellence, and was given as an argument for students to choose this study programme. Strengths related to the study processes and student's performance include a) clarity and transparency of the processes, b) the integration of governmental strategies at different levels of the programme, c) the open communication between the different levels of the programme, and d) the good relationship with the social partners and the satisfaction of the social partners with the students and the graduates of the programme. The Review Team identified several **areas of excellence** in this domain, including the strong research focus, and the quality of the relationship

with students, as well as the good and open communication. However, some areas could be improved, that are formulated as recommendations. This includes the creation of incentive for students to participate in research; a better promotion of the advantages of participation in exchange programmes, and an increase of the teaching of practical competences. Finally, concerning the programme management, the following strengths were identified: a) the two-levels of quality management (one at University level, the other one at programme committee level), b) the regular collection of data and the dynamic implementation of the results of quality management data, and c) by the clear distribution of the responsibilities between the different levels of management. Some improvement could be done in the accessibility of the information about the study programme and in the formalisation of the relationships with the social partners.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Health Psychology* (state code – 621S13001, 6211JX061) at Vytautas Magnus University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	4
2.	Curriculum design	4
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	4
6.	Programme management	4
	Total:	24

*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:	Chantal Martin Sölch
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Inga Millere
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**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS SVEIKATOS PSICHOLOGIJA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 6211JX061)
2018-01-02 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-271 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Sveikatos psichologija* (valstybinis kodas – 6211JX061) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	4
2.	Programos sandara	4
3.	Personalas	4
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	4
6.	Programos vadyba	4
	Iš viso:	24

* 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

Programa įvertinta labai gerai, kiekvienas vertinimo kriterijus įvertintas labai aukštu balu. Vertinimo grupė nustatė kelias išskirtinės kokybės sritis ir suformulavo kelis pasiūlymus. Programos studijų komitetas dėjo daug pastangų formuluodamas programos tikslų bei studijų rezultatų turinį. Jie sudaryti remiantis tarptautiniais ir nacionaliniais standartais, taip pat atsižvelgiant į valstybės, visuomenės bei darbo rinkos poreikius ir reikalavimus. Studijų

rezultatai, studijų dalykų turinys ir įgyjama kvalifikacija yra labai gerai susiję tarpusavyje, atitinka studijų lygį. Kaip išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdys buvo įvardyta puiki programos reputacija. Programa sudaryta remiantis antrosios studijų pakopos programos reikalavimais, nustatytais nacionaliniuose teisės aktuose ir nacionaliniuose bei užsienio šalių psichologijos studijų krypties aprašuose. Programos struktūra grindžiama moderniu požiūriu į programos sandarą, taikant konstruktyvaus reguliavimo koncepciją ir į studentus nukreiptą metodą. Labai stengtasi pasiekti programos sandaros darnos ir išvengti besikartojančio turinio. Sritis, kurias reikia labiau tobulinti programos sandaros lygmeniu: į praktiką nukreiptų dėstymo metodų integravimas ir labiau su specialybe susijusių pasirenkamųjų studijų dalykų sudarymas. Kalbant apie dėstantįjį personalą, vertinimo grupė pabrėžė universiteto teikiamas geras sąlygas dėstytojams tobulintis ir tai, kad dėstytojai reguliariai bei efektyviai šiomis galimybėmis naudojasi. Kita dėstančiojo personalo stiprybė yra stipri dėstytojų mokslinė orientacija ir jų moksliniai rezultatai, būtent dotacijos ir publikacijos. Galiausiai, kaip išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdys buvo įvardyta puiki komunikacija su studentais. Konkrečios stiprybės, susijusios su materialiaisiais ištekliais: reikiamas dėstymo klasių ir auditorijų skaičius, dydis bei įranga, reikiamas programinės įrangos licencijų skaičius ir prieiga prie mokslinių tyrimų laboratorijų, gera prieiga prie dėstymo ir mokslinių tyrimų išteklių, taip pat puiki prieiga prie patalpų ir išteklių sudaryta žmonėms su negalia. Studentų naudojamų patalpų ir duomenų bazių kokybė buvo įvertinta kaip išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdys ir kaip argumentas naudojama bendraujant su studentais norint, kad jie pasirinktų mokytis šioje programoje. Stiprybės, susijusios su studijų procesu bei studentų rezultatais, yra šios: a) aiškus ir skaidrus procesas, b) valstybinių strategijų integravimas į įvairius programos lygius, c) atvira komunikacija tarp skirtingų programos lygių ir d) geri santykiai su socialiniais partneriais, socialinių partnerių išreikštas pasitenkinimas studentais bei programos absolventais. Vertinimo grupė nustatė kelis **išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdžius** šioje srityje, įskaitant vykdomus mokslinius tyrimus ir santykių su studentais kokybę, puikią bei atvirą komunikaciją. Visgi kai kurias sritis rekomenduojama tobulinti. Siūloma kurti iniciatyvas studentams ir dėstytojams skatinti dalyvauti moksliniuose tyrimuose, aktyviau informuoti apie dalyvavimo mainų programose privalumus ir skatinti dėstyti daugiau praktinių kompetencijų suteikiančių dalykų. Išskirtos šios programos vadybos stiprybės: a) kokybės valdymas dviem lygiais (vienas – universiteto lygiu, antras – programos komiteto lygiu), b) reguliariai renkami duomenys ir dinamiškai įgyvendinami kokybės valdymo duomenų rezultatai ir c) skirtingo lygio vadovybei aiškiai paskirstytos atsakomybės. Būtų galima šiek tiek patobulinti informacijos apie studijų programą prieinamumą ir santykių su socialiniais partneriais formalizavimą.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

Kadangi programos kokybė visose vertintose srityse yra labai aukšta, vertinimo grupė neturi jokių oficialių rekomendacijų, toliau pateikiami tik pasiūlymai.

1. Integruoti dėstytojų metodus leidžiant studentams tobulinti praktinius įgūdžius arba labiau į praktiką orientuotą veiklą, vadovaujantis šiuo metu galiojančiu studijų planu (pasiūlymas).
2. Dėstyti labiau specialybei pritaikytus pasirenkamuosius dalykus (pasiūlymas).
3. Sukurti iniciatyvą studentams, skatinančią dalyvauti moksliniuose tyrimuose, pavyzdžiui, studentų ir dėstytojų kompetencijos apdovanojimus, ir formalizuoti studentų mokslinių tyrimų veiklos integravimą į studijų planą (pasiūlymas).
4. Skelbti dalyvavimo mainų programoje privalumus (pavyzdžiui, skatinti sudaryti dvišales sutartis, praktikos sutartis, su moksliniais tyrimais susijusias praktikas) (pasiūlymas).
5. Kelti praktinę kompetenciją pagal psichologijos profesijų aprašus (pasiūlymas).

<...>

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)