



OVERVIEW REPORT FOR *OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY* STUDY FIELD

2015 Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the external quality evaluation of the following study programmes in the study field of *Occupational therapy* in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions: at *Klaipeda University - Occupational Therapy state code 612B32003*; *Kaunas College - Occupational Therapy state code 653B32002*; *Vilnius College - Occupational Therapy state code 653B30001*.

The external evaluations were organised by the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC).

The external evaluations were performed according to the evaluation areas and criteria: (1) Programme aims and learning outcomes, (2) Curriculum design, (3) Teaching staff, (4) Facilities and learning resources, (5) Study process and students' performance assessment, and (6) Programme management.

Comprehensive external evaluation reports including strengths and weaknesses and concluding with some recommendations were prepared for each evaluated programme and included evaluation marks. This overview focuses on the main findings of the external evaluation of the *Occupational Therapy field* from a general point of view.

All programmes received fairly *positive* evaluations. Three programmes received positive evaluation.

OVERVIEW BY EVALUATION AREAS

Aims: The three programmes evaluated showed that occupational therapy aims are on a solid scientific platform. The general recommendation is to develop these aims from their current biomedical perspective to a more biopsychosocial holistic perspective.

Curriculum: The curriculum is also by and large designed using the biomedical model. The programmes in general reflect the latest achievements in science and technology of the occupational therapy division. The colleges appeared to be more set up than the university for transfer of occupational therapy skills in simulated environments. The curriculum should embrace the recommendations of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and in doing so would enable Occupational therapy in Lithuania to embrace the biopsychosocial model as well as to benchmark its OT programmes with the rest of the world. It is encouraging to note that the President of the Lithuanian Association of OT based at Klaipeda University intends to

pursue this path.

Staff: the members of staff in all three institutions showed enthusiasm and professionalism. What is recommended is more support in terms of resources to assist them in language training, involvement in collaborative research projects, and greater participation in EU funded programmes.

Study process: The study process in general is good. It is adequate to the present needs of the OT bachelor programme and to the desired learning outcomes. At Klaipeda University, it is recommended that the five –day timetable is utilized. The students in general are well supported by their teachers both for OT skills as well as for research. More expertise is required to ensure a balance in mixed methodologies for research projects. The major change envisaged by Klaipeda University towards problem-based learning should be well supported to ensure a smooth transition.

Management: The Management of the three programmes is effective in running the three programmes efficiently. The three sites visited appeared enthusiastic to continue improving and this is a good sign that they are adopting the continuous professional development approach.

Facilities and learning resources: The three sites have reasonably well-prepared facilities, although, the colleges had better simulated environments than the University. More resources should be channelled on library facilities, subscription to online OT journals, as well as better IT resources.

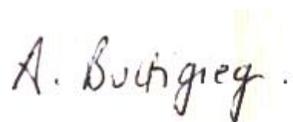
MAIN STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN *Occupational Therapy*

- **Strategic recommendations at institutional level (for Higher Education Institutions):** The following recommendations emerged from the site visits to Klaipeda University, Kaunas College and Vilnius College.
 - The departments should continue to build on their current state of the art in Occupational Therapy. More resources should be channelled for library, IT and Simulated environments for learning. Additionally, staff should be encouraged to participate more in European Exchanges for example Erasmus programmes. Staff should also be supported better to encourage them to do more research.
 - The programmes should shift from their current biomedical focus to a biopsychosocial model of learning. Additionally, it is recommended that the knowledge using the Model Of Human Occupation Model (MOHO) is consolidated.
 - Lines of communication between students and University should be clear, transparent
 - and open.
 - The Institutions should ensure that they employ adequate staff, preferably at PhD level to cover all areas of Occupational Therapy.
 - The Institutions should improve and nurture Occupational Therapy leadership so as to consolidate occupational therapy as an independent academic and professional entity.
 - The Institutions should aim to have their Bachelor programmes accredited and listed by the WFOT.

➤ **Strategic recommendations at national level (for the Ministry of Education and Science):**

- More resources and support to ensure that English Language skills are improved across all levels.
- More emphasis on ensuring learning based on biopsychosocial philosophy aimed towards developing integrated care pathways.
- Better support for teachers to participate widely in Erasmus Exchange as part of the European Funded Programmes.
- Better support for teachers to embark on more research that ensures the Institutions Visibility in the academic world of publications and Evidence-based practices.

Prepared by the leader of the Review Team:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Buttigieg." The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Professor Sandra C. Buttigieg, Malta