

Summary of the Evaluation Visit

5 - 6 May, 2015

1. Vilnius University, Scandinavian Studies BA Programme (612R61001)

The evaluation visit to Vilnius University, during which the Expert team met with the administrative staff of the Faculty of Philology, the self-assessment team, teaching staff, students, graduates and social partners, took place on 05.05.2015. Overall, the visit was well organised and presented ample opportunity for the Expert Team to become acquainted with the day-to-day management of the Scandinavian Studies BA Programme, its curriculum design, staff and students.

The Team's consensual view is that the Scandinavian Studies BA Programme is of high quality. This is ensured by highly qualified, experienced and competent staff. Its main strength and unique selling point on the Lithuanian education market is the interdisciplinary focus, which is achieved by combining traditional philological content with essential cultural and society studies components. The high quality of learning resources and facilities is also a major asset of the Programme.

The volume, structure and content of the programme are closely linked with the learning aims and outcomes, and reflect staff research input. It is flexible and responds well to labour market needs. The student support system is excellent.

Overall, the programme ensures a good integration of theory and practice, although more attention should be paid to the theory of interpreting, and relevant up-to-date sources should be included in the literature lists.

The programme's main shortcomings stem from a very wide choice of optional modules and the lack of an adequate support system to monitor students' choices and self-study work. Although the employability of the graduates is very high, the introduction of other subject areas (for example, language teaching methodology and second language acquisition) into the curriculum would make graduates even more valuable on the current labour market and would strengthen the position of the programme further. This would also ensure a more distinct outline of the Programme's aims and outcomes, which are currently very similar to the aims and outcomes of the MA Study Programmes.

There are strong informal links with social partners, but the University may wish to consider developing more formal links with social partners and alumni at programme level to inform curriculum developments and student placements/scholarships.

Therefore, it was recommended that the choice of optional modules be streamlined, an introduction of teaching methodology and second language acquisition modules be considered, system of assessment feedback formalised, aims and learning outcomes in the BA programme should be clarified and more focused on students' professional and academic needs; involvement of social partners in programme delivery and monitoring be strengthened and formalized; promotional strategies reconsidered and expanded.

2. Vilnius University, Scandinavian Studies MA Programme (621R61001) & Scandinavian and European Studies MA Programme (621R61002)

The visit to Vilnius University took place on 06.05.2015. It was very well organised and thoroughly prepared. All meetings with relevant representatives of the programme took place on time and were highly professional.

The Team's consensual view is that both MA Programmes are solid and well delivered programmes. The staff, teaching on the programmes, should be commended for ensuring continuity from the BA Programme and excellent staff-student relations. Its main strength and unique selling point on the Lithuanian education market is the provision of a sound philological education in combination with socio-cultural skills. The high quality of learning resources and facilities is also a major asset of the Programmes. Other strengths of the Programmes are enthusiastic, well-qualified and motivated staff, an active and successful ERASMUS student mobility programme, and close contact between staff and students. However, in the case of the Scandinavian and European MA Programme, there seems to be little co-operation between the Centre and the IIRPS in terms of timetabling, assessment criteria comparability and staff-cooperation.

Although the employability of the graduates is fairly high, the introduction of another subject area (for example, sociolinguistics, multilingualism, contrastive linguistics, language policy) into the curriculum would make graduates even more valuable on the current labour market and would strengthen the position of the programme. This would also ensure a more distinct outline of the Programme's aims and outcomes, which are currently very similar to the aims and outcomes of the BA Study Programme.

The Centre currently promotes the programme via its website and Open Days, however, taking into account low numbers of students on the programme, it might be beneficial to change promotion strategies by including external and international marketing.

Therefore, it was recommended that aims and learning outcomes of the MA programmes should be clarified by creating a clearly discernible profile with reference to the BA programme, where emphasis on practical skills is more pronounced, whereas a deeper socio-philological focus is required for the MA programmes. It was also felt that a unified and transparent system of assessment feedback for both programmes, tighter co-operation between various departments involved in the delivery (for the Scandinavian and European Studies MA programmes) and inclusion of up-to-date sources (for both programmes) would strengthen them even further. Reconsideration of promotional strategies is also strongly advisable for both MA programmes.

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