



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos
PROGRAMOS *PASTATŲ ARCHITEKTŪRA*
(621K10002)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF STUDY PROGRAMME
BUILDING ARCHITECTURE (621K10002)
At Vilnius Academy of Arts

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2013

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Studijų programos pavadinimas | <i>Pastatų architektūra</i> |
| Valstybinis kodas | 621K10002 |
| Studijų sritis | menai |
| Studijų kryptis | architektūra |
| Studijų programos rūšis | universitetinės studijos |
| Studijų pakopa | antroji |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais) | nuolatinė (2) |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais | 120 |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Architektūros magistras, architektas |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data | 19 May 1997, No.565 |

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme | <i>Building Architecture</i> |
| State code | 621K10002 |
| Study area | arts |
| Study field | architecture |
| Kind of the study programme | university studies |
| Cycle of studies | second |
| Study mode (length in years) | full time (2) |
| Scope of the study programme in credits | 120 |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Master of Architecture, Architect |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 19 May 1997, No.565 |

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The expert team Members visited the Vilnius Academy of Arts, Vilnius Faculty on the 23rd of May 2013. During the visit the Team met administration, committee that prepared the self evaluation report, teaching staff and visited all the facilities and the exhibition of the student projects, taking particular notice of the more recent work. In addition the Team met with representatives of the students, as well as a number of alumni, employers and social partners. The Team was very pleased to see the significant improvements of the facilities and equipment with the addition of the new building used by the Architecture Department, situated opposite of the main Building of the Academy in Vilnius.

The Team members would like also to express their appreciation for the open and gracious reception by the faculty and students.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. *Programme aims and learning outcomes*

The Programme Analysis in the Self-evaluation Report states that it responds to all the relevant Laws of Lithuania and the EC Directives regarding recognition of the Professional Qualifications.

The programme aims and learning outcomes seem still to be influenced by past trends of placing emphasis on Art and the „artistic“ approach to architectural design as is stated in the Self Evaluation Report in the need and purpose of the programme, towards „...justify creative ideas and **create architectural objects of high artistic** quality and functional value“. Where as in 2.1.2 in the Self Evaluation Report it is stated correctly that the learning objective is „...to train MA architects of high professional level capable of performing **independent scientific research and using it to justify their practical activities**“. A contrast between the “artistic“ and a rational approach, although both rely on creativity.

Generally the curriculum of a Masters programme in “Architecture” ought to aim to expose and train people who have a first degree in Architecture to study in depth a certain type of buildings i.e educational facilities, hospital facilities etc, or deal with complexity of architectural issues and be capable to identify the key values issues, criteria and constrains of human needs that should be served by the architectural design.

The emphasis on the creativity through art courses deals more with the cultivation of invention through form and the appearance rather than the value system that leads to a concept that serves best human needs and functions.

The curriculum should clearly define the learning objectives for the students training from the core courses which form the skeleton, to the elective courses that support and enhance the various core courses.

The Team members studied the exhibition of students design projects and observed the following which indicate that allowances were made for the visual appearance (aesthetic reasons) of the designs against functional requirements:

- graphic presentation and models of the projects were very good
- the social organization concept of the layouts of some large scale projects was not apparent
- in some projects the context did not appear to be a critical design factor

- some plans and layouts were not very efficient
- and some other practical points as the orientation and natural lighting, or heat gains of the interior spaces in the Summer were in some cases sacrificed for formal design considerations, finally it was noticed that emergency exits or staircases were missing.

2. Curriculum design

The programme meets formal legal requirements, stated by the Ministry of Education and Science for the second cycle studies. The programme consists of 120 credits. The number of study courses per semester does not exceed 5. The required courses for the degree are 100 credits where the elective courses are 20 credits.

The curriculum however is advised to be more flexible, in order to accommodate to the interests of individual students that could be pursued and satisfied instead of a linear sequence of study courses.

In this case the "Building Architecture" and the "Research Project" should be offered every semester and all other core courses and elective courses could be available most semesters. The above mentioned two courses should be supported by two or three suitable Elective courses, for example from technical subjects could be "structures", "mechanical services" etc. or other courses relating to the research and design project.

The final projects of the students (given 30 credits) showed that the students could benefit from social analysis and better understanding of contemporary design ideas perhaps if "Modern Architecture and Design Theories" were included among the compulsory courses.

There seems to be an overlapping in the curriculum because in the first semester there is Scientific Research Methodology by prof. Glemža among compulsory subjects and Research Methods by dr. Narušyte among elective subjects, despite that the description of the last course appears to be very useful.

The content of the programme reflects a strong concern for the form and appearance of the building design. As opposed to satisfying human needs and other parameters which influence the buildings, such as convenience for the users, economy of maintenance, construction cost, structural systems, energy conservation, mechanical systems etc.

To achieve the programme objective as is listed in the Self Evaluation Report in 2.1.2. "...to train MA architects of high professional level; capable of performing independent scientific research and using it to justify their practical activities" is not at all clear how the curriculum supports this statement and particularly the learning outcomes that are listed in 2.1.3. are listed the following learning outcomes:

- .. (A) knowledge and understanding perception,
- (B) Applying knowledge and understanding,
- (C) Making informed judgements
- (D) Communication skills, and
- (E) Learning skills".

All the above are useful and appropriate. However the notions of **artistic, creativity, composition** are closely linked to aesthetics, which means visual perception and which is defined by contemporary psychology instead of relying solely on intuition or subjective comparative references of similar objects or images. Such a course dealing with human perception appears missing from the curriculum.

Finally it is mentioned that in the curriculum would be included to **”...make territorial management plans** easily using methods and software of modern computer design“ if this statement means using GIS ArcInfo in planning, these are fairly specialized software and a clearly of use more in planning that is more appropriate for someone specializing in these areas. Somehow, however useful and valid this direction, it is uneven to the options offered and the description of the direction of the curriculum.

3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff are qualified and exceed the minimum formal requirements stated by the Ministry of Education and Science. More than half of the staff teach the study field subjects and are professors, more than 70 percent of staff have advanced degrees or are recognized artists, who's professional activities are related to the taught subjects.

The senior faculty are seasoned professors and well recognized professional in Lithuania as undeed appear the younger faculty well qualified too.

It seems that there is no middle group age-wise, and when the more experienced faculty will retire there will be a gap of lesser people in the middle group..

The age groups are:

- 64% are over 51 years old
- 24% are between 41-50 years and
- 12% are under 40 years

It seems that in the future hiring new faculty should address this by opening more positions for the middle and younger age group that would attract people with more professional and or academic experience perhaps even part time professionals in Vilnius.

An other avenue is to bring through EC exchange programmes visiting faculty, or Fulbright Scholars and generally encourage international exchanges.

It appears that the number of faculty are sufficient to teach at the Masters Programme.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Facilities are ample and sufficient and the additional spaces and workshops at the new building oposite the main building of the Academy in Vilnius is an excellent addition.

Students have the opportunity to print A3 and A4 format blueprints and other necessary materials in the Architecture Department for free, students appreciate this.

According to the self evaluation report, which was confirmed during the visit, the textbooks and other study literature is adequate.

5. Study process and students' performace assessment

The admission requirements are appropriate. It may be helpful to ask the applicants to submit with their application a written statement of (a) their interest and (b) their expectations of the Masters Programme. A written statement of their interest and a portofolio are more useful for the screening of applicants than a verbal response at the interview.

Students field trips to visit architectural examples in Lithuania or abroad are not obligatory. Educational trips with faculty are useful and necessary.

Students mentioned that they do not have team-work exercises. This can be done during the Design Projects 1-3 semesters. Also perhaps by students choosing similar subjects for their thesis projects and collaborating to cover greater ground of research.

Student evaluation questionnaires are conducted regularly. Two types one dealing with teaching and the other with the general services for the students.

The questionnaires may need revision to avoid overlapping between the two types of questions. Generally the objective of the questionnaires is to get the students feed-back on the teaching, the course material/textbooks, and the services the students are provided. Information useful for the annual internal report leading to improvements.

6. Programme management

There seems no problem regarding the running of the programme. The adopted quality assurance procedures seem to work well, producing an annual report and conducting the student evaluation questionnaires.

The responsibilities to administer the programme are allocated clearly, students participate in the decision making process.

Previous evaluation report was analysed and actions taken to improve the programme according to the recommendations. However some points still needs to be adressed, as it is mentioned in this report, curriculum part mainly.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The key comment has to do with the curriculum, although it has underwent further improvements, and developments in the last 5 years. It still needs some adjustments and refinements in the clarification of the aim and the content of the curriculum of the Masters in Architecture, as mentioned in this report. The emphasis on “art/ artistic” and the resulting tendency to formalism by the students is not doing justice to the maturing process of an architect studying after his /her Bachelors degree. The statement regarding the aim of the programme should be rephrased, to be one more clear, consistent, and concise. This would then in effect reflect to curriculum improvements and to its implementation, and finally will as well be better understood by future students and potential applicants.

3.2. Efforts must be made to advertise in Lithuania or abroad in order to attract more applicants to the programme. The ratio of almost one to one is not allowing choices for selecting better qualified candidates to the programme.

3.3. The previous comment has to do with internationalization and building ties with options for student and faculty exchanges.

3.4. With reference to the previous 3.3 comment, also the Library must increase the subscription to foreign architectural publications.

IV. SUMMARY

The main points listed in the report and the key points mentioned in the recommendations summarize the most important issues to be addressed, which are analyzed in the appropriate sections of this report and are basically curriculum adjustments and refinements according to prevailing international practices in educating architects.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Building Architecture* (state code – 621K10002) of Vilnius Academy of Arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation Area in Points* |
|-----|--|----------------------------|
| 1. | Programme aims and learning outcomes | 3 |
| 2. | Curriculum design | 2 |
| 3. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 4. | Facilities and learning resources | 4 |
| 5. | Study process and students' performance assessment | 3 |
| 6. | Programme management | 3 |
| | Total: | 18 |

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

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<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Pagrindinės šiose išvadose nurodyti trūkumai ir rekomendacijose išvardyti dalykai apibendrina svarbiausius klausimus, kuriuos reikia spręsti, kurie yra analizuojami atitinkamuose šių išvadų skyriuose ir iš esmės yra susiję su studijų turinio pakeitimais ir patikslinimais, atsižvelgiant į plačiai paplitusią tarptautinę praktiką ruošiant architektus.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Pagrindinė pastaba yra susijusi su studijų programos turiniu, nors jis vėliau ir buvo tobulintas, ir per pastaruosius 5 metus keičiamas. Tačiau vis dar reikia šiek tiek pakoreguoti ir patobulinti architektūros magistrantūros tikslą ir studijų turinį, kad jie būtų aiškesni, kaip nurodyta šiose išvadose. Akcentuojami žodžiai *menas* ir *meniškumas*, ir dėl to atsiradęs studentų formalizmas nepateisina architekto brandos, kad ji pasiekama tęsiant studijas toliau po bakalauro laipsnio įgijimo. Programos tikslo formuluotė turėtų būti pakeista, kad ji būtų aiškesnė, labiau suderinta ir glaustesnė. Tuomet iš tikrųjų atspindėtų studijų turinio patobulinimai ir jo įgyvendinimas, o galiausiai jį geriau suprastų būsimi studentai ir pageidaujantys studijuoti.

2. Būtina reklama Lietuvoje arba užsienyje, siekiant pritraukti daugiau stojančiųjų į šią programą. Stojančiųjų santykis vienas prie vieno neleidžia pasirinkti geresnės kvalifikacijos kandidatų, kurie būtų priimti studijuoti šią programą.

3. Ankstesnis komentaras susijęs su tarptautiškumu ir tarptautinių ryšių sukūrimu, kad studentai ir fakulteto dėstytojai turėtų daugiau galimybių vykti į mainus.

4. Atsižvelgiant į ankstesnį 3. punkte pateiktą komentarą, biblioteka taip pat turi padidinti užsienio architektūros leidinių prenumeratos skaičių.

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