STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos Kauno fakulteto

STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *GRAFINIS DIZAINAS (621W20003)*

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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EVALUATION REPORT

OF GRAPHIC *DESIGN* (*621W20003*)

STUDY PROGRAMME

at Vilnius Academy of Arts Kaunas Faculty

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Grafinis dizainas
Valstybinis kodas	621W20003
Studijų sritis	Menai
Studijų kryptis	Dizainas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Diazaino magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-16, No. 565

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Graphic Design
State code	621W20003
Study area	Arts
Study field	Design
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (2)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Design
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-16, No. 565

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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.	
2.	

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

VAA Kaunas Faculty (subsequently VAA KF) is an indivisible structural part of Vilnius Academy of Arts and, therefore, equally uses the facilities and learning resources of the Academy. VAA KF continues and fosters the traditions of the pre-war art school in Kaunas (1922–1940). VAA KF Department of Design was established in 1959. The Department of Design, VAA KF, has been implementing the study programme *Graphic Design* of the study course of arts since 1996.

The specialisation of Graphic Design was separated from the course of industrial design in 2011; and there has been separate admission to the study programmes *Graphic Design* and *Design* since 2012.

Graduates of the two-year second-cycle study programme Graphic Design acquire the masters diploma of design. Graduates who have knowledge and skills on the masters level are ready to independently discover and creatively solve complicated problems related to the field of graphic design in a broad sociocultural context, apply the acquired interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in the process of decision-making and realisation, justify individual solution-related ideas with analytical-theoretical insights, competitively cooperate with specialists of graphic design and other spheres and understand and evaluate integrity of graphic design and other art and scientific areas, take responsibility for the quality of the creative process and the final product as well as convincingly and professionally present the artwork idea in a verbal and/or visual form to the specialist audience and the public. Graduates of the second-cycle studies are also ready to continue studies and deepen knowledge in doctoral studies of art, work in the sphere of their profession or supervise creative projects.

The aim of the MA in Graphic Design as defined in the SER is to prepare Graphic Design specialists who are educated to an accepted international level and can function as professional graphic designers either as sole traders or as part of a team in national and international contexts. The SER clearly identifies the difference between the BA level and the MA level in terms of learning outcomes and specifically identifies the ability to work independently and creatively in the field of Graphic Design as a key feature of the MA programme. Learning outcomes and academic requirements must relate to each other.

According to the recommendations of international experts (2012), contemporary topical issues in graphic design as well as changing demands of the market and culture, the structure of the study programme *Graphic Design* has been renewed.

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 *21.04.2015*

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1. **Mr. John O Connor (team leader),** *Dublin Institute of Technology, Director and Dean, College of Arts and Tourism, Ireland.*
2. **Dr. Hanna Karkku,** *Aalto University, Planning Officer, Finland.*
3. **Dr. Aija Freimane,** *Art Academy of Latvia, Assistant Professor, Latvia.*
4. **Ms. Ilona Gurjanova,** *Estonian Association of Designers, Chair, Estonia.*
5. **Mr. Andrius Ciplijauskas,** *Beepart Creative Workshop, Director, Lithuania.*
6. **Mr. Vytautas Karoblis,** *Student, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme committee of the *Graphic Design* studies and other teachers of the Department of Design have been continually collecting information about the need for the programme in the market. On the average, 4-6 graduates finish the masters study programme *Graphic Design* at VAA KF every year.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, publicly accessible and understandable. According to SER the aim of the masters study programme *Graphic Design* is to prepare professional graphic design specialists conforming to the international standards and the masters qualification, who are able to independently and responsibly carry out research, critically-analytically evaluate and interpret phenomena and processes of visual communication and graphic design in a broad local and global cultural context, use innovative problem-solution methods, understand complexity of graphic-design-related solutions and evaluate their integrity in other art and science fields, persuasively present ideas for the specialised audience and the public as well as professionally perform research-pedagogical activity in the field of design education, expediently develop professional creative activity in the leaders role both individually and in an interdisciplinary team, be competitive in the local and global markets and be ready to continue art studies in the third cycle.

After last evaluation in 2012 the main aim was to deepen student knowledge of graphic design to the level appropriate for master's programmes. The SWOT analysis made by the

program team helps to see the strengths and weaknesses and also shows that there is space for further improvement.

The aim of the programme and the learning outcomes are publicly available on the website of VAA KF and in the publications and events dedicated to inform those who want to study in the *Graphic Design* study programme. The website English version could be improved. The role of the graduate in the design industry could be updated and specified (senior designer, design manager, communication designer, AD etc).

The academic and professional requirements, public needs and needs of labour market have been considered while developing the programme. All graduates of VAA are employed 100% in the market. Still experts recommend on paying more attention to labour market needs and public needs. It seems that there is a slight identity problem. Students do not recognize themselves as 100% designers. If they want to become artist there would be probably other possibilities for the study. Therefore we recommend stressing in communication and in practical work the difference between artist and designer. To be better prepared for the labor market students should learn how to work with real clients, with brief. It is good that MA in Graphic Design will be able to undertake a PhD programme of studies in Design.

Referring to SER: recommendations of international experts (2012), contemporary topical issues in graphic design as well as changing demands of the market and culture, the structure of the study programme *Graphic Design* has been renewed and essential changes have been implemented; a broad profile interdisciplinary structural model of the masters study programme has been composed. Especially important is that the general university study subjects have been additionally supplemented with new elective study subjects: *Art and philosophy*, which analyses the associations between art and philosophy, and *Art of presentation*, which broadens the field of digital media and provides knowledge and skills of creative idea presentation. The panel still recommends deepening studies in Art and psychology and paying attention to design management besides art management. The panel finds it is positive that the obligatory subject *Visual art and context* has been supplemented with a list of individually chosen teachers. It is important to strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of the programme.

The speciality competences are well defined, though more attention could be paid to understanding the main business, legal, financial, and commercial principles (including information about fundraising), how to apply this knowledge in professional activity. The lectures, practical work and personal example should lead the students to clarify the identity – to make difference between an artist and designer by introducing design processes as learning outcomes: user involvement, design management, service design etc.

The name of the programme, Graphic design, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. The projects and briefs undertaken by students needed to be even more sophisticated. To develop an individual creative design practice students need beside contemporary graphic design, providing advanced problem-solving skills a lot of knowledge about the market. There could be more practical cooperation with potential clients.

The programme content is designed to achieve the main objectives of deepening knowledge of contemporary graphic design, providing advanced problem-solving skills while giving students a thorough grounding in research methodology and enabling them to develop an individual creative design practice.

The panel saw proof in final works that the concept of the study programme content has been purified and is being implemented, i.e. problems of graphic design are realized in the interdisciplinary context through expedient integration of creative decisions into different art, science and industrial spheres as well as evaluation and understanding of economic, ecological, political, social and cultural aspects. Still there is a recommendation that the students in their works should not only pose questions and visualize them but try to propose answers, solutions (Food project example).

Referring to SER: recommendations of international experts (2012), contemporary topical issues in graphic design as well as changing demands of the market and culture, the structure of the study programme *Graphic Design* has been renewed and essential changes have been implemented; panel points out some of them:

- the general university study subjects have been additionally supplemented with new elective study subjects: *Art and philosophy*, which analyses the associations between art and philosophy, and *Art of presentation*, which broadens the field of digital media and provides knowledge and skills of creative idea presentation;
- with respect to student needs and with the aim to strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of the programme, the obligatory subject *Visual art and context* has been supplemented with a list of individually chosen teachers;
- there is a possibility to choose selective studies and acquire the master's qualification of the study programme *Graphic Design* within a longer period of time; an individual study plan for a student is, in such a case, composed.

The requirements of academic studies and descriptions of professional courses, skills such as finding and analysing data/information/knowledge as well academic writing seem to be well-

covered, although more information on where the students go to continue their studies, would give a better idea of whether students are academically well-prepared for them.

The qualitative research of the needs of the job market should be done. The aim is to educate graphic design specialists and traders but the description reminds a lot of free art. The difference between a designer and artist should be more clear to the entrant. The graduates should be able to make difference which direction they would like to choose: art, research, advertising, graphic or communication design.

There should be more attention to global design trends and the way how to convert an idea or message into visual form. To prepare the students for the real life the difference between being a freelancer, hired or self-employed could be shown better. There could be more courses about entrepreneurship. There is a lot about art management and advertising theory but no information about design management, branding, visual identity.

2.2. Curriculum design

The study type, the cycle and the programme type: university-level second-cycle (masters) studies. The extent of the programme is 120 ECTS credits, i.e. 2 years of full-time studies. There is also a possibility of selective studies, i.e. students complete the whole programme (content and volume) of full-time studies and master knowledge in a longer period than 2 years.

There are two types of study subjects: obligatory and elective. Study subjects *Research work, Design* and other interdisciplinary subjects *Visual art and context* related to the degree project are obligatory.

The programme content provides conditions for the achievement of programme learning outcomes of master's studies and ensures sufficient amount of knowledge and skills necessary to raise the qualification. The content of the master's programme is compatible with the requirements of the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania for study programmes.

The modules are spread quite evenly but it is clear that academical/theoretical part is proportionally bigger. The outcome should demonstrate a close connection between the research and the practical project parts. Good communication between teachers, students and stuff helps to avoid interdisciplinary repetition, ensure knowledge continuity and develop complex thinking skills through professional and individual integration of various disciplines and skills in the creative process.

The contents of the study programme are closely related to the programme aim and the learning outcomes. The master's programme consists of deepening theoretical studies and artistic-practical studies encouraging individual expression and thinking (awareness) of the creator. In general the design of the curriculum in relation to the structure and sequencing of the core subjects is acceptable and the types of modules offered are appropriate to a programme at this level.

The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The skills and thinking needed for design profession is adequate but could be better. The structure needs to be clarified so as to explain the relationship between the theoretical and practical sections.

The Academy could consider adding some supplementary subjects to widen the design thinking approach. For social involvement the panel recommends studies on inclusive design (design for all/universal design), user interaction, user centred design, way finding, signage design. The knowledge about design processes including customer experience study is important for future communication designers. For commercial tendency we recommend to give more knowledge about branding, briefing and also basic knowledge about making a business plan to be ready to apply grants from funds. It could be also a matter for additional courses after graduating. More international workshops could be held. Learning by doing approach should be implemented.

The content of the program reflects the latest achievements in science, art and technologies but not too much in design specifically. The graduates should know how to work as a communication designer also in the field of service design, how to manage with customer journey mapping; how to be integrated into modern ITC fields. Deeper knowledge how to design user interface or app would be in accordance with global future tendencies. Knowledge about semiotics could be useful. This was also evident and articulated during the meeting with students of the programme.

2.3. Teaching staff

There are 19 teachers involved with this MA programme; 4 professors, 8 doctors, number of associated professors and lecturers. The lecturing staff meet the necessary legal requirements, the qualifications of staff are sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes and there is a sufficient number of qualified staff. Prof Edmundas Saladžius . Prof Juozas Palaima - both have 41 years of practical experience and over 20 years of pedagogical experience. Prof

Virgilijus Trakimavičius has 31 years of practical experience and 22 years of pedagogical experience; Vladas Oržekauskas has 28 years of experience-both in practical and pedagogical field. Asta Groblytė, media expert who is loved by students has 22 years practical experience and 3 years of pedagogical experience.

A key feature of many of the members of the lecturing team on the programme is the mix of professional design experience and practice with a solid grounding in educational practice and theory.

The main criteria when choosing and inviting teachers to teach in the study programme are the following: professional competence, scientific, pedagogical, and practical experience, individual creative activity, ability to communicate, and tolerance for other opinions. Since the majority of the teachers in the programme have been awarded pedagogical titles or academic degrees, their competence and practical professional activity is also revised during their assessment procedure. The teachers have at least 7 years of professional experience

The teachers panel saw were very dedicated. Still there could be more visiting lectures from abroad and if recourses allow it would be good to have international tutors.

Though there have been significant changes in the staff of the Department of Design, it seems there is a need for the further refreshment. It is essential to further maintain close connection with graduates of the Department of Design in order to achieve their voluntary integration into the study programme *Graphic Design* and Department of Design. Could be useful to engage younger tutors, alumnies. There could be problem of finding PhD level professors for graphic design in Lithuania. During the meeting with students it was their concern, meaning some fresh design thinking should be introduced with new teachers.

The teachers are allowed to continue their pedagogical activity if their activity of the last 5 years satisfies the requirements of certification. All the teachers also do methodical work, actively create and participate in art events, carry out other activities related to art education, in and outside the Faculty. For instance Prof. Virgilijus Trakimavičius won the competition with students NEU NOW FESTIVAL LIVE PORTO 2012 and AMSTERDAM 2013 (Ecological package; social advertising) and also have had personal exhibitions abroad. Prof. Juozas Palaima has written scientific monographs "Harmony in architecture. Proportions and scale" and Methodical measure 'Processing of interior design projects', prepared and used in the 2nd year student practice at the Department of Design. Saulius Juozas Jarašius has attended several international competitions and has written several methododical guidelines on design. Younger designers: Assoc. prof. Aurimas Švedas and Assoc. prof. Rita Brakauskaitė have been active in

practical and methodical fileds. they have participated in international competitions, won honourable mentions; written guidelines for visual identity, packaging, colour etc.

Their significant experience and collected knowledge directly affect the programme implementation and study process quality. They are also initiators and coordinators of national and international creative workshops and projects as well as organisers of exhibitions, members of the commissions of VAA KF bachelors and master's degree projects and admission exams to VAA as well as members of evaluation commissions of various competitions organised outside the framework of the Academy.

The teachers actively use the possibilities to raise their qualification in the fields of pedagogical, scientific, and practical activity as well as to renew or acquire new skills. Their qualification is improved through exchange programmes and through participation in the seminars and courses organised by VAA as well as in the activity of various associations and unions. Teachers working in the masters study programme Graphic Design are competent specialists of their fields. Professional development of teachers is regulated and encouraged by regular teacher assessment. At the end of each year, teachers write their reports concerning annual results of the artistic and scientific activity, which are made public in the report of the Rector. The teachers actively use the possibilities to raise their qualification in the fields of pedagogical, scientific, and practical activity as well as to renew or acquire new skills. Their qualification is improved through exchange programmes and through participation in the seminars and courses organised by VAA as well as in the activity of various associations and unions. The teachers are researchers or recognized artists. The panel recommends getting more international experience: to take more part in international conferences, workshops.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

Because of specializations and student numbers, the needs for premises used by the Department of Design have increased 4 times in the past few years. All the premises used for the study programmes of the Department of Design are comfortably arranged.

At the moment, the number, area, and quality of the main premises used by the Department of Design as well as the number of work places is good. All the premises where second-cycle studies students of Design Department work have been renovated and meet the hygienic and sanitary requirements. It is important that students have their own work places and can come and work after lectures or at weekends. Consultations, theoretical and practical lectures

take place here; students can work independently. The panel recommends to use a real life studio approach.

Kaunas Faculty does not possess a student dormitory; however, on the basis of the agreement with Aleksandras Stulginskis University, students have a possibility to live in the dormitories.

Professional internships are organised in enterprises and in VDA. A wide network of stakeholders provides a possibility to perform Internships in business companies. During their internships, students get acquainted with the performance of an institution and acquire practical skills. Graduates have practise mostly from advertising companies and publishing houses. Social partners are very happy of the locality. They support the MA education in Kaunas and they do not prefer to employ college graduates. Students also have access to the facilities of the NIDA art colony.

The panel saw the improved facilities and equipment including digital equipment - the new library premises of the Department of Design. Part of the methodical material used in lectures are stored in the methodical room. There are 8 work places, including one with the computer equipment. Some audio-visual lectures also take place in this room and teachers can use the multimedia upon demand. The methodical room is also used as a library by both lecturers and students. The panel recommends to enlarge the variety of design books and add fresh publications which cover design management, service design, design thinking, user centered design, design for all, typography, way finding etc.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Students' admission to the program is according to VDA rules. The order of admissions to master's studies is regulated by the *Rules of admission to Vilnius Academy of* Arts approved by the Senate of VAA. Starting with 2015, by the decision of the Senate of VAA, entrance exams will be organised in Kaunas, as it was done before 2010. The entrance exams to the masters studies *Graphic Design* are organised and the admission is conducted by the VAA commission assigned by the Rector. The candidates present:

- Documents indicated in the student admissions rules (e.g. a copy of the passport, a certificate of the bachelor studies, etc.);
- a diploma of higher university-level education and its supplements;
- portfolio of creative works and masters theses

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Only those individuals who have finished the first-cycle university-level studies of the same or very close study course (determined by the Board of the Faculty) can be admitted to the master's studies. Bachelors who have completed the studies in fine arts in various EU higher education art schools and have the necessary number of credits determined by the Department of Design of VAA can participate in the entrance exams; the insufficient credits can be completed by way of compensating studies. The Admission procedure has been updated and become more targeted and selective.

Artistic and applied research activity in *the Graphic design* master's programme is executed during the studies. When the degree project is prepared, scientific research is conducted the results of which allow substantiating the practical part of the work. Theoretical insights are closely related to practical activity. The panel recommends going through the research methodologies of the final project. The process should start from conceptualising the idea, then mapping, comparing, analysing the relevant information before starting write the thesis. Leave more time for collecting information from the field before writing. It is important that the theoretical part includes the description and analysis of the practical part, the design process. The thesis should be submitted together with practical work, not before it. The final work could be connected to real life. Panel stresses the importance of user engagement and guidance how to work with the brief of a client.

Students are encouraged to participate in workshops, arrange exhibitions (supported by transport), take part in international competitions. Every year, the best masters degree projects of the Design Department are demonstrated in the exhibition of degree projects „Meno celės"/ „Art cells" (VAA galleries „Akademija" and „Titanikas"). Another important phenomenon generalizing master's studies is preparation of research projects for publication. Usually, such methodical publications are prepared by students or graduates with the help of the supervisor of the degree project. The methodical material is planned to be expediently integrated into the study process. The realization of such research work of master students often encourages graduates to continue post-graduate art studies.

The most advanced students have a possibility to collect part of the credits needed to complete the programme by studying for 1 or 2 semesters in other European universities. Most frequently, students employ the possibilities of mobility offered by the ERASMUS+ programme. The majority of students are satisfied with the studies abroad; they broaden the professional viewpoint and have possibilities to use rich libraries and facilities of higher education university-level schools. The influence of student mobility on the study results is apparent: students acquire

experience and get acquainted with the peculiarities of the studies in other schools, thus, becoming more independent and self-critical and enriching their creative activity with new skills.

It seemed that there was not very much interest among students of second-cycle probably because of time limits and because of the study structure and continuous process of degree project design and theoretical part preparation, requiring consistency and communication with the supervisor. Therefore, it has been decided in the Academy to provide a possibility of studies abroad only to students of the 2nd semester (1st year) of studies in order not to limit possibilities of students to select studies on the intercultural scale and at the same time to maintain the consistency of the study process.

Topical news and changes in the schedule of classes are announced to students by e-mail and orally as well as on the notice board in the Department, which (like the Internet) is also used to announce about the possibilities of participation in exhibitions, competitions, etc. At the end of each exam session, a meeting with students is organised to discuss the programme course and quality as well as possible programme improvements. Dissemination of information is constant, timely, accurate, clear and available. The cooperation between students and teachers are very close and individual because of the small number of students. Panel would expect more interest from the top management about the careers of graduates.

The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate. Detailed descriptions of assessment criteria of each study subject, conforming to the learning outcomes of a corresponding subject, are presented in the descriptions of study subjects. At the beginning of the semester, the teachers inform students about the assessment of study results and explain the aims and the learning outcomes of the study subject, assessment structure, influence of tasks on the final grade, and assessment criteria of all the study results of the subject. Tasks are analyzed orally. In the final exam reviews, 2 commissions participate: at first, the commission of the Department and, later, the methodical commission of the Faculty. The grades are given in a cooperative setting: through discussions and voting. After the assessments of the Department are announced, students have a right to appeal to the appeals committee of the Faculty. Intermediate and final reviews in the Department are public, i.e. the students, the teachers of the Department of Design and invited teachers (often including social partners) participate. In the intermediate reviews, students are provided with the opinion and recommendations of the teachers of the Department of Design; public discussions of projects are organized. In the final reviews, students present.

The Department of Design collects data about achievements and creative activity of graduates, observes their level of placement. Studies demonstrate that the nature of professional

activity of graduates conforms to the goals of the study programme and skills acquired during studies are expediently applied in professional sphere.

Graduates of the master's study programme *Graphic Design* establish their individual companies, work as managers for creation in various advertising and design companies, and are freelance designers. Increasing e-business and technological possibilities expand the limits of local space and allow the graduates of the Department to work anywhere in the world online from their study places or home. The panel met social partners who work closely with students and graduates. They told that they were surprised of the creativity, analytical thinking and fresh approach of these young people. The panel was impressed that 100% of the graduates are employed or self-employed. Still the number of the candidates in the admission competitions has declined. The level at which graduates of the MA Graphic Design are initially employed should be investigated. According to the results of the research the focus should be even better defined.

2.6. Programme management

Administration of the study programme is a responsibility of the head of the Department and the coordinator. Student groups of the study programme have senior students elected, who moderate the group when decisions are being taken, obtain and disseminate information to the student union and administration, and organize various activities.

All information is collected in the database. Extensive internal critical feedback procedure is working well.

The internal and external evaluation of the programme is used to improve the programme. During programme realisation, the following data have been collected: statistics of student mobility, data of student advancement and dropping out; list of topics of degree projects and contact data of graduates; graduate placement statistics. Panel got proof that by considering results of various research studies, reacting to student opinion, comments of employers, and legal acts regulating the activity of design field, the committee evaluate the needs and possibilities of programme improvement and initiate common decisions related to changes in the programme.

The SER outlines in detail the involvement of the various stakeholders – students, graduates and employers – in the Quality Assurance process. Participation of external social stakeholders affects the study quality. The perspective of the programme partly depends on the results of surveys of employers, social partners and graduates. Social partners emphasized the importance of locality. Further they should develop more close cooperation with social partners by their greater integration into the study process during course project realization and degree project implementation.

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The panel recommends planning more collaboration among students across different MA programmes in VAA and internationalising. According to social partners remarks better knowledge on printing preparations and typographical skills could be added by additional lectures.

The committee of the masters study programme takes constant care of the quality of the coordinated study programme. The Regulation of Studies of VAA states that the quality of studies and art/research activity is ensured by the internal quality assurance system of the Academy, external study programme evaluation and accreditation, external evaluation of art/research activity as well as external evaluation and/or accreditation of research and study institutions.

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. Administration of the study programme shares a responsibility of the head of the Department and the coordinator. The study programme committee is a group composed in order to prepare and supervise a study programme, to evaluate its quality and improve it. The system ensures the quality of art activity, art and scientific research and studies. The group is composed of teachers of a special study course, students, graduates, and social partners. The committee is formed and annually renewed by the head of the study programme. VAA Study Group assesses one randomly chosen study programme every year. Such a system of assessment allows thorough evaluation of programme adequacy.

The panel got evidence that the conclusions presented by international experts of external evaluation and other actions implemented during the evaluation of the study quality directly conditioned the process of study programme renewal and quality assurance. The panel saw that changes in the programme have been implemented step by step following the results of the external evaluation 2012. Communication between students, administrative staff and teaching staff was good. As there are few MA students, there is very personal approach and students can always get answers to their concerns.

2.7. Examples of excellence *
The final work:
„Design for the development of sensory skills in pre-school children with sight disability".

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The lectures, practical work and personal example should lead the students to clarify the identity. Make difference between an artist and designer profession by introducing thoroughly design processes.

2. The thesis should be submitted together with practical work, not before it. The final work should be connected to real life. It is important to introduce user engagement and how to work with the brief of a client.

3. Go through the research methodologies of the final project. The process should start from conceptualising the idea, then mapping, comparing, analysing the relevant information before starting write the thesis.

4. The panel recommends planning more collaboration among students across MA programmes and internationalising. Develop awareness of global design trends and multicultural traditions through international study.

5. According to social partners remarks better knowledge on printing preparations and typographical skills could be added by additional lectures.

IV. SUMMARY

Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims are well formulated and the learning outcomes are improving. Students are not aware about their identity very clearly – are they future artists or designers. The role of the graduate in the design industry could be updated and specified (senior designer, design manager, AD etc). Important is to strengthen the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. This is not good tendency that the number of the candidates in the admission competitions has declined.

Curriculum design

The skills and thinking needed for design profession is adequate. The proportions between the theoretical and practical sections should be examined. Actual design trends like design thinking, user interaction, user focused design, design management should be introduced. Future communication designers need skills and knowledge about digital world: how to design app or user interface. In order to create innovative multidisciplinary designs, graduates have to be proficient in a wide range of media.

Teaching staff

The teachers are researchers or recognized artists, less than designers. Teachers with practical experience in advertising inspire students. Students have good relationships with the teaching stuff, especially with alumni.

Facilities and learning resources

All the premises used for the study programmes of the Department of Design are adequate and comfortably arranged. It is important that students have their own work places and can come and work after lectures or at weekends. There are new library premises and part of the methodical material used in lectures are stored in the methodical room. Fresh design publications could be added to the database.

Study process and students' performance assessment

The admission requirements are well founded. Students' admission to the program is according to VDA rules. The thesis should be submitted together with practical work, not before it.

It is wonderful that 100% of the graduates are employed or self-employed. Social partners emphasized the importance of locality.

Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

To maintain the consistency of the study process students cannot attend Erasmus exchange easily.

Programme management

The internal and external evaluation of the programme is used to improve the programme. Panel got proof that by considering results of various research studies, reacting to student opinion, comments of employers, and legal acts regulating the activity of design field, the committee evaluate the needs and possibilities of programme improvement and initiate common decisions related to changes in the programme.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Graphic Design* (state code – 621W20003) at Vilnius Academy of Arts Kaunas Faculty 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	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	**16**

*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:	Mr. John O Connor
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr . Hanna Karkku
	Dr. Aija Freimane
	Ms. Ilona Gurjanova
	Mr. Andrius Ciplijauskas
	Mr. Vytautas Karoblis

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Paskaitos, praktiniai darbai ir asmeninis pavyzdys turėtų padėti studentams apibrėžti savo tapatumą. Reikėtų atskirti menininko ir dizainerio profesijas nuodugniai pristatant dizaino procesus.

2. Baigiamasis rašto darbas turėtų būti pateikiamas kartu su praktiniu darbu, o ne anksčiau. Baigiamasis darbas turėtų būti susietas su realiu gyvenimu. Svarbu supažindinti su vartotojo dalyvavimu ir kaip dirbti su kliento dizaino užduoties santrauka.

3. Rekomenduojama peržiūrėti baigiamųjų projektų mokslinių tyrimų metodologiją. Prieš pradedant rašyti baigiamąjį darbą, reikėtų konceptualizuoti idėją, susidaryti planą, palyginti ir išanalizuoti susijusią informaciją.

4. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja numatyti didesnį magistrantūros programų studentų bendradarbiavimą ir didinti tarptautiškumą. Taip pat per tarptautines studijas plėsti žinias apie pasaulines dizaino tendencijas ir daugiakultūres tradicijas.

5. Atsižvelgiant į socialinių partnerių pastabas, papildomomis paskaitomis būtų galima pagilinti spaudos paruošimo žinias ir patobulinti tipografijos gebėjimus.

IV. SANTRAUKA

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai
Programos tikslai gerai suformuluoti, o studijų rezultatai tobulinami. Studentai neaiškiai suvokia savo tapatumą: ar jie būsimieji menininkai, ar dizaineriai. Būtų galima atnaujinti ir patikslinti absolventų vaidmenį dizaino pramonėje (ar jie taps vyresniaisiais dizaineriais, dizaino vadovais, reklamos dizaineriais ir pan.). Svarbu didinti programos tarptautiškumą. Stojančiųjų skaičiaus mažėjimas nėra gera tendencija.

Programos sandara
Dizaino profesijai reikalingi gebėjimai ir mąstymas tinkami. Reikėtų panagrinėti programos teorinės ir praktinės dalių proporcingumą. Derėtų įtraukti aktualias dizaino tendencijas, pvz.,

dizainerio mąstymą, vartotojų sąveiką, į vartotoją orientuotą dizainą, dizaino vadybą. Būsimieji komunikacijų dizaineriai turi įgyti gebėjimų ir žinių apie skaitmeninį pasaulį, kaip projektuoti išmaniųjų telefonų programėles ar vartotojo sąsajas. Norėdami kurti novatorišką įvairių sričių dizainą, absolventai turi gerai išmanyti įvairias medijas.

Personalas

Dėstytojai yra labiau dizaineriai nei tyrėjai ar pripažinti menininkai. Dėstytojai, turintys praktinės patirties reklamos srityje, įkvepia studentus. Studentai palaiko gerus santykius su dėstytojais ir ypač su alumnais.

Materialieji ištekliai

Dizaino katedros vykdomoms studijų programoms naudojamos patalpos yra tinkamos ir patogiai išdėstytos. Svarbu, kad studentai turėtų savo darbo vietas, kur galėtų ateiti padirbėti po paskaitų ar savaitgaliais. Bibliotekos patalpos naujos, o dalis paskaitose naudojamų metodinių priemonių laikomos metodiniame kabinete. Į duomenų bazę būtų galima įtraukti naujausius dizaino srities leidinius.

Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas

Priėmimo reikalavimai yra pagrįsti. Studentų priėmimas į programą vykdomas laikantis VDA taisyklių. Baigiamasis rašto darbas turėtų būti pateikiamas kartu su praktiniu darbu, o ne anksčiau.

Nuostabu tai, kad 100 % absolventų dirba pagal darbo sutartis arba savarankiškai. Socialiniai partneriai pabrėžė studijų vietos svarbą.

Siekiant išlaikyti studijų eigos nuoseklumą, studentams nėra paprasta dalyvauti „Erasmus" mainų programose.

Programos vadyba

Vidinio ir išorinio programos vertinimo rezultatai naudojami programai tobulinti. Ekspertų grupė įsitikino, kad atsižvelgdamas į įvairių tyrimų rezultatus, studentų nuomonę, darbdavių komentarus ir teisės aktus, kuriais reglamentuojama dizaino srities veikla, programos komitetas įvertina programos tobulinimo poreikius ir galimybes ir siūlo bendruosius sprendimus dėl programos keitimo.

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