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## **DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF SOCIOLOGY**

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Descriptor of the Study Field of Sociology (hereinafter referred to as the Descriptor) governs special requirements applied to the study programmes of the study field of sociology.
2. The Descriptor has been developed in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and Research the Republic of Lithuania, taking into account Resolution No 535 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 4 May 2010 “On the Approval of the Descriptor of Lithuanian Qualifications Framework”, Order No V-2212 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 21 November 2011 “On the Approval of the Descriptor of Study Cycles”, Order No V-501 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 9 April 2010 “On the Approval of the Descriptor of General Requirements for Degree-Awarding First Cycle and Integrated Study Programmes”, Order No V-826 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 3 June 2010 “On the Approval of the Descriptor of General Requirements for Master’s Study Programmes”, Order No V-2463 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 December 2011 “On Approval of Recommendations for Development of Descriptor of a Study Field or a Group of Study Fields”, Order No ISAK-1026 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 15 May 2009 “On the Approval of Recommendations for Developing the Descriptor of a Study Field or Study Fields”.
3. Study programmes of the study field of sociology can be conducted only as study programmes of the first and second cycle university studies.
4. The objectives of the Descriptor are the following:
  - 4.1. Assistance to higher education establishments in developing, implementing and updating study programmes of the study field of sociology;
  - 4.2. Provision of general guidelines to higher education establishments in order to ensure internal quality of study programmes of sociology;
  - 4.3. Provision of general guidelines to experts evaluating study programmes;
  - 4.4. Provision of information to students, employers and other interested parties about vocational training of sociologists and competences of sociologists.
5. The study field of sociology belongs to the area of social sciences.
6. The purpose of the studies of the study field of sociology is to train specialists that would gain knowledge about the theory and methodology of sociology, be able to think critically apply the knowledge creatively by researching the social behaviour of people, patterns of functioning and change of society or social institutions, identifying social problems; they should also be able to offer solutions on the basis of social research findings, create and develop social projects and programmes, understand social processes and events by taking into account a wide culture prospect, and contribute to the development of intercultural communication.
7. The studies of sociology can be either full-time or part-time. The first and second cycle studies of the study field of sociology may be also carried out as distance studies. Different forms of studies should offer the same composition of study programmes, scope, content and learning outcomes.

8. The first cycle studies of the study field of sociology may include study programmes the graduates of which receive an additional qualification degree of the principle study field of sociology or a minor study field.

9. The study programmes of the first cycle, the graduates of which receive a double qualification degree, may have sociology as a minor study field. The implementation requirements of the minor study field of the first cycle of studies shall be approved by a higher education establishment.

10. Persons with at least secondary education shall be admitted to first cycle study programmes of study field of sociology in an admission contest, taking into account their learning outcomes, entrance examinations or other criteria established by the higher education establishment. A higher education establishment shall set a list of contest subjects by the field of study and principles for the award of contest points, the lowest possible entrance grade and other criteria on the basis of the assessment of the students' representation, and publish them no later than 2 years preceding the start of the respective academic year.

11. It is recommended that admission to the studies of the second cycle of the study field of sociology would be open to the following persons:

11.1. graduates of the first cycle of university studies of the study field of sociology and complying with the requirements laid down by a higher education establishment;

11.2. graduates of the first cycle of university studies of another study field and additional or minor study programme of sociology. The list of additional study subject of the study field of sociology and the content of studies shall be determined by a higher education establishment.

12. A student's individual work of the second cycle of studies should account for at least 30 per cent of the scope of every subject.

13. Graduates of the studies of a study field of sociology shall be awarded the following qualification degrees:

13.1. Graduates of the first cycle of studies shall receive a Bachelor's degree in sociology attested by a Bachelor's diploma issued by the higher education establishment;

13.2. Graduates of the second cycle of studies shall receive a Master's degree in sociology attested by a Master's diploma issued by the higher education establishment;

14. A Bachelor's qualification degree in sociology corresponds to the sixth level and a Master's qualification degree in sociology corresponds to the seventh level of Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the European Qualification Framework for Life-Long Learning.

## **CHAPTER II CONCEPT OF SCOPE OF THE STUDY FIELD**

15. Sociology as an object of study covers relationships between individuals and groups, interactions between social actions and structures, biographies and stories, social institutions and the basics of social order, social inequalities and conflicts, various cultural practices, causes and consequences of a social change. A study field of sociology comprises various branches dealing with the theory of sociology, methodology of social research, social organisations, social change, demography and applied sociology.

16. Sociological knowledge links theoretical knowledge with empirical research. Sociology as a theoretical subject is linked to philosophy, psychology, political theory, history, social policy, economics and other social science disciplines.

17. While interpreting social processes sociology is based on theoretical sources and empirical research. Social studies should provide knowledge about various methods of social research and the ability to apply them. The application of social research methods should be linked with theoretical knowledge.

18. The studies of sociology should encourage taking a critical approach to the world and sociological knowledge as such. Social knowledge builds the basis of social policy and strategic planning for the public at large. Sociologists should understand the social role of sociology in a democracy and civic society.

19. Sociology relates to historical and cultural comparative studies revealing the changing forms of human life. The studies will seek to help students understand the reasons and the manner of existence of various societies, institutions and social practices, their ways of changing over time and their organisation.

20. The study programmes of the study field of sociology should include the following elements of content:

20.1. A theoretical package of sociology should include classical and modern theories of sociology and the basics of related sciences (for instance, philosophy, psychology, law, political sciences, economics and other sciences);

20.2. A package of empirical research should cover methods of quantitative and qualitative social research, statistical data analysis and issues of professional ethics;

20.3. A package of social structures should cover analysis of various social institutions and organisations (for example, family, town, mass media and other).

21. Sociologists may work in a variety of fields where they can use their knowledge about the social behaviour of people, functioning and change of society and where they can perform social research or use their social data analysis skills. Such fields may include the following, for instance: scientific social research, public opinion and market studies, public policy analysis, public relations and advertising, mass media, education, analysis of social issues and ways of solving them by drafting and implementing projects in a public and private sector.

22. Graduates of the study programme of the study field of sociology should be able to recognise the social dimension of people's activities and interactions in changing contexts.

### **CHAPTER III GENERAL AND SPECIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

23. The studies should offer an opportunity to integrate knowledge, its understanding and practical skills. A student of sociology should develop personal, social, research and special skills necessary to understand individual and group actions, functional patterns of society and social institutions and the patterns of their change, recognise social factors of social problems and offer solutions, create and develop social projects and programmes, understand social processes and events while having a wide cultural perspective and contributing to the development of intercultural communication.

24. Occupational activities of specialists trained during the study programmes of the first and the second cycle of the study field of sociology should be based on a combination of knowledge, abilities and values. However, the profiles of sociology specialists of Bachelor's and Master's studies should be different with respect to gained abilities and competences.

25. Completion of the first cycle studies of the study field of sociology should result in the following learning outcomes:

25.1. Knowledge and its application:

25.1.1. Understanding the place of sociology among different social sciences, knowledge about basic concepts and ideas of sociology, ability to formulate sociological problems, knowledge about classical and modern theories of sociology and ability to reason critically about them;

25.1.2. Describing and analysing sociologically the operation and development of social structures and institutions, recognising the sociological factors of their change against the historical background and the backdrop of other societies;

25.1.3. Identifying and examining social problems, analysing their reasons and consequences on the basis of sociological theories and methodologies;

25.1.4. Knowledge and application of knowledge of other sciences (for instance, philosophy, economics, psychology, mathematics and other) by identifying social phenomena and problems and performing scientific analysis.

25.2. Research skills:

25.2.1. Ability to understand characteristics of methodologies of qualitative and quantitative social research, links and application in the research of a concrete issue;

25.2.2. Ability to plan autonomously and, in compliance with ethical and legal requirements, formulate social research instructions to companies performing quantitative and qualitative social studies;

25.2.3. Ability to use methodologies of statistical analysis, interpret findings and provide data analysis results in writing and orally;

25.2.4. Ability to interpret findings of social research on the basis of social theories, make a link between the research findings and a wider social context and social programmes, propose recommendations addressing those issues.

25.3. Special abilities:

25.3.1. Ability to using statistical databases and archives of social research data;

25.3.2. Ability to analyse textual, graphical and digital information, use computer analysis software, make clear and quality-based presentation of findings of such analysis.

25.4. Social abilities:

25.4.1. Ability to using appropriate national language and at least one foreign language to communicate with non-professionals in a professional field;

25.4.2. Ability to understanding intercultural differences, in particular those relating different values, perceptions and behaviour with respect to race, ethnic origin, religion and gender;

25.4.3. Ability to engage in teamwork, plan and organise individual and group activities;

25.4.4. Ability to initiate, develop and implement various social and other work projects.

25.5. Personal abilities:

25.5.1. Ability to think and act creatively, systemically and critically by taking a responsible approach to the principles of sustainable development;

25.5.2. Ability to understand the importance of independent life-long learning and planning personal professional growth;

25.5.3. Having IT literacy skills and using state-of-the-art information technologies;

25.5.4. Knowledge about and compliance with the main principles of ethics, scientific validity and objectivity in conducting research.

26. Completion of the second-cycle studies of the study field of sociology should result in the following learning outcomes:

26.1. Knowledge and its application:

26.1.1. Knowledge, analysis and critical assessment of modern social theories, their reasoned choice in studying a scientific issue, understanding the links between modern and classical theories;

26.1.2. Description and analysis of social phenomena and processes on the micro, meso and macro level relating to concrete social structures and institutions against the local and global background, using social theories and methodologies appropriate for the goals and objectives of the analysis;

26.1.3. Recognising and examining complex social issues on the local and global scale, identifying their links with concrete social structures and institutions, using sociological theories to analyse the causes and consequences of such issues.

26.2. Research skills:

26.2.1. Ability to assessing methodology of social research, recognise issues of modern social research, independent selection and justification of research methodology appropriate for the examined issue;

26.2.2. In compliance with ethical and legal requirements of conducting social research, ability to organise and conduct scientific and applied social studies, develop technical specifications for the tasks of social research, collect social data and perform analysis of such data by applying modern methods of analysis, interpretation of findings and offering solutions of social issues;

26.2.3. Ability to present findings of scientific and applied social studies orally, in writing and by using state-of-the-art technologies in a professional and non-professional environment and public space.

26.3. Special abilities:

26.3.1. Ability to understand intercultural differences, in particular related to the differences of values, perception and behaviour with regard to race, ethnic origin, religion and gender; ability to reflect one's theoretical and practical position, by taking social diversity into consideration;

26.3.2. Ability to understand the structure of a social organisation and the change of social relations in an organisation;

26.3.3. Ability to understand special features of sociological work in public, private and non-governmental sectors.

26.4. Social abilities:

26.4.1. Ability to communicate and co-operate in national and/or international groups, develop projects and manage them;

26.4.2. Ability to represent the academic community, using appropriate national language and/or one of foreign languages to communicate orally and in writing with the specialists of one's field and the people who are not experts in the professional field; ability to initiate and actively engage in public discussions.

26.5. Personal abilities:

26.5.1. Ability to find the necessary information and gain knowledge relevant for the theory and practice of sociology;

26.5.2. Ability to think critically and apply analytical skills in practice and at work;

26.5.3. Having experience of research work and strategic thinking abilities to perform an independent professional activity and scientific research;

26.5.4. Having IT literacy skills and using state-of-the-art information technologies;

26.5.5. Ability to develop and manage projects.

## **CHAPTER IV TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

27. A combination of teaching, learning and assessment methods should ensure the necessary learning outcomes (of a study programme, subject or module).

28. The studies should be based on the synthesis of teaching and individual studies.

29. Teaching should be based on fundamental knowledge of the science of sociology and newest achievements. It should help widen students' understanding of scientific concepts of sociology, ensure an opportunity for students to improve their methodological knowledge and abilities.

30. The concept of life-long learning requires promotion of life-long learning development during studies. The study programme, its content and a didactic system should motivate students to gain the abilities to learn. Students should be taught and encouraged to be responsible for their process of life-long learning and their learning outcomes. Studying should be linked to scientific research and its dissemination in practice. This can be achieved by such forms as practical seminars, social studies conducted by students, final papers presented by graduates, joint publications of

students, teachers and practitioners and their presentation in scientific conferences, involvement of students into project activities.

31. The didactic concept of teaching and learning should include a flexible application of various methods of teaching and studying by looking for integrated didactic solutions and seeking to ensure that students gain knowledge and develop their abilities of application of sociological knowledge, performance of sociological research as well as their social and personal abilities. The methods of teaching and learning should be effective and diverse, motivating students and using the time of students and teachers as well as material resources (including library, equipment, etc.) rationally. The selection of teaching and learning methods should offer opportunities for students to gain knowledge and abilities of the study field of sociology. The studies of different cycles may use the same methods, yet the content of the task, the degree of difficulty and the expression of the student's independence should differ.

32. Reflection abilities should be developed by offering an opportunity to develop the link between theory and practice (theoretical courses combined with practical tasks), sharing of good practices should be encouraged (students should analyse and publicly present, during seminars and conferences, the projects they implemented, make proposals regarding the organisation of practical work, identify expectations and achievements; graduates share their professional experience, make proposals for the process of studies; sociologists and social partners are invited to take part in lectures, conferences and discussions about the content of professional activity).

33. Assessment methods should be co-ordinated with the learning outcomes and linked to teaching and learning methods. The assessment should comprise various assessment methods enabling to monitor students' achievements by taking into account the anticipated results and link theoretical knowledge with practical abilities. A higher education establishment should entitle the teacher to choose assessment methods. A number of different assessment methods of studies and learning achievements can be applied, for example, individual and group, classical and modern, oral and written.

34. The student's learning outcomes of a subject (knowledge, understanding, abilities) should be assessed according to the critical assessment scheme of ten marks. On the basis of them the higher education establishment should develop and adopt a detailed procedure for assessment of learning outcomes.

35. Students' feedback to teachers should enable a constant process of examination and reflection of efficiency of co-operation during the study process and offer an opportunity to improve the studying process. Effective feedback should ensure quality and continuity of the studying process as well as constant and regular learning by students.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES**

36. General requirements to university teachers:

36.1. Persons qualified to become teachers at all levels of the study field of sociology shall be those who have at least a Master's degree or an equivalent higher education qualification in the area of studies or science taught or those holding at least a Master's degree or equivalent higher education qualification and conducting scientific research in the area or field of studies of science taught, or holding at least a Bachelor's qualification degree or an equivalent higher education qualification and engaged in practical activities corresponding to the subject taught for a period of over three years;

36.2. At least half of the teachers engaged in the first cycle study programme of the study field of sociology must have an academic doctor's degree. Teachers should have publications and/or perform academic research and/or have practical experience in the area of the subject taught;

36.3. At least 80 per cent of the teachers engaged in the Master's programme of the study field of sociology must have an academic doctor's degree. At least 20 per cent of the teachers in the second cycle of the study field must be lecturers holding a professor's title. Teachers should have publications and/or perform academic research and/or have practical experience in the area of the subject taught.

37. Sociological studies of all cycles shall be completed with a final thesis (project).

38. A final thesis (project) of the first cycle of the study programme of sociology should be based on independent theoretical and empirical studies; graduates should demonstrate a level of knowledge and understanding corresponding to the requirements of the first cycle of studies, ability to analyse the selected theme, study autonomously and perform research in the field of sociology, provide clear and reasoned findings of research, describe the research conducted in compliance with the requirements approved by a higher education establishment.

39. A final thesis (project) of the second cycle of the study programme of sociology should be based on independent scientific research and applied studies; graduates should demonstrate a level of knowledge and understanding corresponding to the requirements of the second cycle of studies, ability to analyse the selected theme, study autonomously and perform research in the field of sociology, provide clear and reasoned findings of research, describe the research conducted in compliance with the requirements approved by a higher education establishment.

40. A final thesis (project) of the first and second cycle of the study field of sociology should be assessed by the commission. Depending on the content of the study cycle and programme, the commission should consist of teachers, academics and social partners. The commission should include at least five members, 50 per cent of which should hold a doctor's degree. At least one member should be from another institution (a representative of social partners, other higher educational establishment or a scientist from an academic body).

41. The material and methodological resources of a higher education establishment should be sufficient to ensure quality of the study programmes of the study field of sociology and achievement of the established study programmes outcomes.

42. The recommended material base should include following:

42.1. Classrooms should comply with requirements of hygiene and safety at work; they should be supplied with modern equipment and demonstration tools;

42.2. A sufficient number of computers with text, quantitative and qualitative data processing and analysis as well as other necessary software;

42.3. Libraries and reading rooms should have sufficient academic literature, manuals, methodological and other publications (printed or electronic) in the Lithuanian and/or foreign languages to be able to pursue a programme of social studies. Libraries should have computers with the Internet access to international databases.

43. Practical training shall constitute a constituent and mandatory part of the first cycle studies of sociology. Practical training is not mandatory for the second cycle of the study field of sociology, yet it is recommended to include it.

44. Requirements for practical training of the study programme of the study field of sociology shall be the following:

44.1. The scope of practical training during the first cycle study programme should be at least 15 credits;

44.2. Practical training shall be conducted in compliance with the procedure of organisation of practical training developed and established by a higher education establishment. Its goals should be to help achieve general and special learning outcomes;

44.3. Students of the study programmes of the study field of sociology may choose the place of practical training, yet it has to be approved by the persons responsible for the organisation of practical training;

44.4. After completion of practical training it is recommended that a division of a higher education establishment responsible for the study programme of a study field of sociology conduct a follow-up discussion of practical training.

45. Academic support to students:

45.1. The administration of a higher education establishment shall ensure favourable academic conditions and offer constant advice to students;

45.2. Teachers of the study programmes of sociology should encourage and motivate students to get involved in the academic activities of a higher education establishment, faculty, institute or a department;

45.3. Higher education establishments should offer advice on career management issues;

45.4. Higher education establishments should offer opportunities for students to organise cultural events in the premises of a higher education establishment, take part in extra-curricular activities, clubs and student organisations.

## **CHAPTER VI DESCRIPTOR OF THE LEVELS OF ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

46. A level of achieved learning outcomes corresponds to the knowledge and practical skills gained by the graduates that are linked to the achievement level of studies and the potential academic and/or professional activity. A level of the learning outcomes of the study field of sociology shows which knowledge of sociology, its understanding and practical skills should be achieved by the students to be evaluated satisfactory, good or excellent.

47. The learning outcomes of the graduates of the study field of sociology are divided into the following achievement levels:

47.1. Threshold achievement level (minimum requirements to be satisfied by a student willing to get a sociologist's qualification). Knowledge, understanding and practical abilities in the study field of sociology are basic. The graduate recognises the knowledge to be applied in a concrete situation, yet its application in practice may require assistance. The ability to engage in independent planning and conducting research is limited. With the external assistance provided, the graduate is able to apply certain methods of sociological research, collect, process, analyse, interpret, assess and submit data. The ability to work by conducting social research, applying information and communication technologies is limited. Personal and Social abilities are revealed in standard and concrete situations of professional activity. Requires assistance in independent professional activity to apply gained knowledge and abilities;

47.2. Standard achievement level (medium, standard requirements expected to be satisfied by the majority of graduates). Knowledge, understanding and practical abilities in the study field of sociology are good yet limited to the information gained during studies. The graduate recognises the knowledge to be applied in a concrete situation and is able to apply it in various fields of professional activity. Good knowledge and understanding of scientific literature. Graduates have the ability to validate the methodology of social research, plan and conduct it autonomously, have good knowledge of the methods of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, are able to collect, process, analyse, interpret, assess and present data autonomously. Graduates have the ability to work with the main information and communication technologies applied in social research. Personal and Social abilities are good and are widely used in everyday professional activities. Graduates have the ability to apply knowledge and skills in their professional activities autonomously. In some areas they may need some minor external assistance;

47.3. Excellent achievement level (students satisfying higher than medium requirements are ascribed to the highest category of graduates). Knowledge, understanding and practical abilities in the study field of sociology are comprehensive and above the information provided during the studies. Gained knowledge is applied creatively and with self-confidence both in standard and new,

changing situations. Excellent knowledge of academic literature, ability to analyse it critically. Ability to apply methodological knowledge of social research in a free, smooth and well-argued manner. Ability to plan and conduct research autonomously. Excellent knowledge of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, ability to collect, process, analyse, interpret and present data autonomously. Demonstrating original manner of reasoning in conducting research. Using a variety of information and communication technologies applied in social research. Demonstrating exceptional personal and social abilities. Ability to apply knowledge and abilities with self-confidence in independent professional activities.

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