



OVERVIEW REPORT FOR THE ECONOMICS STUDY FIELD

2017

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the external quality evaluation of the following study programmes in the study field of Economics in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions: in Vytautas Magnus University – *Economics* (state code 6121JX034), *European economy and finance* (state code 6121JX035); *International economics* (state code 6211JX063); Kaunas Technological University - *Economics* (state code 6121JX030), *Economics* (state code 6211JX040); Aleksandras Stulginskis University – *Agricultural economics* (state code 6211JX067); Vilnius University (Kaunas Faculty) - *Economics and management* (state code 6121JX016).

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

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

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

All programmes received positive evaluation.

OVERVIEW BY EVALUATION AREAS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

Positive aspects: The LOs approach is introduced on study program and study courses level. In general, in the most cases, the programme aims and learning outcomes (LOs) are consistent with the type and level of studies and the qualification offered.

Areas for improvement: The misalignment of study Programme title and Programme aims was observed when Programme combines two academic disciplines Economics and Management which are not “natural partners”. More common combination is Economics and Finance, etc. The Descriptor of study field in Economics states that graduates are prepared to become economists, but not managers as it is envisaged for the study program Economics and Management. There is a necessary to develop shared understanding among management and academic staff how many LOs on the Programme level and study courses level have to be defined to avoid fragmentation of studies and LOs assessment.

2. Curriculum design

Positive aspects: The programme structure is in line with legislative requirements. A diverse range of teaching and learning methods are applied.

Areas for improvement: The study subject's titles have to be adjusted to international practice thus broadening international cooperation opportunities. The content of the programme has to be built on to the latest academic, artistic or technological achievements.

3. Teaching staff

Positive aspects: The strength of programmes is motivated teaching staff. The academic staff is qualified and has professional experience.

Areas for improvement: There is a need to increase awareness of teaching staff on the Descriptor of study field in Economics. There is a need to pay more attention to balance academic and research workload.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Positive aspects: The team had a very positive impression about facilities and learning resources as premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality in case of ASU, VMU, KTU.

Areas for improvement: More investments in infrastructure development is needed to ensure that more comfortable conditions of learning environment have to be ensured in case of VU Kaunas faculty. In case of VU Kaunas faculty the team became aware that architectural heritage limits meeting needs for modern facilities. This leads to not conveniently accessible lecturing rooms, as students have to pass narrow stairs and to be very accurate on the way. More comfortable furniture for students in lecturing rooms could be put in place. In some rooms, there is not enough air conditioning provided thus impacting the teaching and learning process. The access to disabled people is provided only on the first floor.

5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Positive aspects: Organisation of the study process ensures proper implementation of the programme and achievement of the intended LOs. Fair learning environment is assured. The student admission requirements and procedures are well formulated, publicly available and correspond to legal regulations. In general, supportive study environment and good relations of students with teachers and management have been established.

Areas for improvement: The practise of description of evaluation criteria towards the level of LOs achievement has to be developed.

6. Programme management

Positive aspects: The quality management systems are in place. The involvement of social partners in Programme design and delivering takes place.

Areas for improvement: The clear goals and KPIs for development of program have to be established thus helping to identify better areas for development aligned with the goals achievable. There is a need to make sure that future development plans of program and faculty are communicated with the students and teaching staff. Internationalization efforts should be accelerated further. To ensure that more structured approach in building and developing relationships with social partners is in place.

MAIN STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN BUSINESS AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT STUDY FIELD

➤ Strategic recommendations at institutional level (for Higher Education Institutions):

1. To include in SERs information about development goals and plans both at the University, faculty and study program levels;
2. To deliver SWOT analysis towards strategic development goals and Key performance indicators;
3. To encourage Universities to deliver more analytical reports by providing more visual tools to reflect trends, structure of data...not only in the form of tables;

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

1. Descriptors of the study field are too detailed. The main guidelines for the study program outcomes have to be linked to National Qualification Framework based on the European Qualification Framework;
2. 5 CP on undergraduate and 6 CP on graduate levels are constraints for creating broader modules.

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