OVERVIEW REPORT FOR MEDICINE AND HEALTH STUDY FIELD

2016

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the external quality evaluation of the following study programmes in the study field of Medicine and Health - ART THERAPY (state code - 628B90001) at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and Vilnius Academy of Arts, Kaunas Faculty, LABORATORY MEDICAL BIOLOGY (state code - 621B91002) at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, MEDICAL BIOLOGY (state code - 621B91001) at Vilnius University, BEAUTY THERAPY (state code - 653B95006) at Panevėžys College, BEAUTY THERAPY (state code - 653B95007) at St. Ignatius Loyola College, COSMETOLOGY (state code - 653B95003) at Kaunas College.

The external evaluation (-s) was/were 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.

OVERWIEV BY EVALUATION AREAS

This overview focuses on the main findings of the external evaluation of the Medicine and Health study field.

Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well written in all the reports and the improvement in the previous three year period was clearly visible. In general programmes in the field of Medical and Health are highly specific and aimed at a well-defined and clear set of student requirements, and are comparable with similar programmes in other countries. The content of the subjects is consistent with the type and level of the study

programmes and appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The name of the programmes, their learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. The programmes are orientated to the actual needs of the specialists as determined by surveys and other studies. Evaluated programmes are mostly orientated to practical activities and professional education.

Although learning outcomes themselves and their achievement during the year are discussed at the department and university levels and the link between the learning outcomes and the learning methodologies seems to be clearly set, the panels couldn't still notice the awareness of the link between the examinations (assessment) results and the achievement of learning outcomes. Once written, learning outcomes should undergo the process of adapting and changing and this process is dependable on the students' assessment results - in the areas where the assessment results are not good enough a body in charge for the teaching process should review the outcomes and see what else could be done to improve the success. These measures include the changes and/or adaptation of the learning outcomes themselves. In Sweden, for example, the test and examination results are reviewed every year on the state level and the recommendation in changes in quality process are given to the universities. Being aware that such measurement and review of the achievement of the learning outcomes may be a long-term process, still it must be noted that during the visits there were no signs that anyone from the teaching staff and the management has started to think in that direction, as if the learning outcomes were written mainly for the SER and evaluation purposes.

Curriculum design

The evaluated programmes clearly follow the legal acts and recommended standards of the EU and RL, as well as the standards of professional European federation. Each curriculum design meets legal requirements on approval of description for study cycles. The study programmes are mostly focused not only on basic diagnostic areas of laboratory medicine or laboratory work in healthcare institutions, but also on the work needed in research and training laboratories. The study programmes guarantee an assurance using different feedback mechanisms and questionnaires between all participating partners. Is it necessary to stress that very important is the institutional mechanisms and engagement to improve the study programme continuously and to incorporate the latest achievements in sciences, art and technologies.

Teaching staff

Almost all practice teachers have special licenses and have no less than 5-7 year professional experience in the subject they teach. Approximately half of the teachers are younger than 50-years, which indicate a good potential for the future especially in the "new curricula". Part of academic staff involved in the programmes is active in scientific work, demonstrate active research and reasonable number of publications in the leading national and/or international journals, but it is advised that the profile of the teaching staff could be improved by recruiting/inviting lecturers from among younger generation specialists from Lithuania and other countries (EU and USA).

Considering the teachers' research, the publication in the international journals as the condition for the promotions should be more standardized. University teachers should publish the exact number of articles in journals which fit in Thomson-Reuters (sci) list and have a significant impact factors (IFs). Teachers at the colleges may have exact number of articles published in journals which are registered in other databases, such as

MEDLINE/PubMed, CINAHL etc. The number of articles and participations in national journals, international and national conferences, published books, monographies and practicums, mentorships etc. must also be standardized.

No institution had a defined sabbatical policy, e.g. policy about sabbatical leaves for their teachers/researchers once in 4-5 years, in order to do research in other institutions and improve the quality of theirs' and institution's scientific research. This is the consequence of the situation where the teaching staff is overloaded with classical teaching hours, while only the small portion of working hours has been dedicated to research. Contrary to this practice, in some institutions in China, for example, the majority of teachers/researchers working time is dedicated to research, and the majority of students' training goes through the research activities instead through the classical lectures.

Facilities and learning resources

The quality of infrastructure of the buildings depends slightly on the departments, clinics and research institutes participating in the study programmes. Teaching and learning equipment is modern, in some Universities, more than adequate both in their size and quality. Most clinical laboratories are very well maintained, and already licensed according to clinical and medical law by the Republic of Lithuania. The biggest and the most modern library in the Baltic countries with computerised working places and Wi-Fi was established in one University. Despite the fact, that the library provides the very recent papers, textbooks, journals or access to the newest databases, the team found that the bibliographical sources cited in various papers for students were still mostly traditional books which were sometimes older than 3-5 years.

Study process and students' performance assessment

The evaluated programmes are proposed as a second step of the bachelor programmes as further studies. During these studies students get wider and deeper knowledge of laboratory diagnostics and application of some particular arts from the medical point of view. The study cycles usually begin with the theoretical material of a certain field of laboratory medicine and arts, master students acquire theoretical knowledge of testing methods and procedures reading descriptions and also watching how they are performed. Later the students perform tests themselves under the supervision of teachers and laboratory assistants. The assessment of students' knowledge consists of the evaluation of knowledge and skills, which is done during studies and after the completion of study course. The students mobility is still very low e.g. in the participation in exchange programs. The experts' team recognized that most of graduates of the MSc study programmes have been employed by hospitals clinics (private and public), research institutes, as well as academic institutions.

Students' research and students creative learning needs improvement. Students' independence should be further increased, and they should increasingly be put in the situations and solve problems which are expected from them once they completed their studies and begin to work in their respective areas, instead of just heading professors' directions. For example, in USA, we can often read about the students who are even able to make scientific discoveries, inventions and creative solutions, while in other countries master students are barely able to write a proper final thesis, which clearly depicts the differences between the educational systems.

Considering the final theses, they usually have the very abundant introductory (background) part, somewhat shorter methodology and results, while the discussion part is mostly completely missing. In this part of the thesis, the student should relate and compare his/her results with those achieved by the other colleagues worldwide, thus providing a wider overview of the results and preparing conclusions; it is absolutely crucial in learning how to write a good scientific work. Interestingly, the number of ECTS allocated for final thesis was always minimal (9) and every single institution preferred their students had excess of general subjects and theoretical lectures than allocating time and efforts to made a valuable final thesis possibly bearing a seed of future creative or innovative solutions in the area.

Programme management

Evaluated Institutions implement various procedures for ensuring the quality of studies, meaning that information and data on the implementation of the programmes are regularly collected and analyzed. The experts' team would like to point out that despite the fact that a formal student feedback system is established, in some High Schools, it is not providing reliable results as currently the participation in filling the questionnaires is low and teachers receive more detailed feedback via informal conversations with students. In such situations, the experts' team would recommend considering establishing a more formal link via an alumni network, including regular meetings with the staff and also with the final year students, who would benefit from meeting with alumni and learning of their achievements.

MAIN STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN STUDY FIELD OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH

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

1. Informatics in Biomedicine should be more practically oriented.
2. More (elective) courses addressing trans-cultural issues should be provided.
3. Establishing a more formal link via alumni is recommended.
4. Within the "ethics" modules some information about actual Medical Law should be provided.
5. Institutions should formulate and implement sabbatical policy for their teachers/researchers
6. More than minimum ECTS should be allocated to final thesis; final thesis should become more advanced research work thus influencing future students' professional orientation, research orientation and publishing activities.

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

1. The mobility of teachers should be promoted, and mechanisms for mobility promotion should be instituted. Also, visiting lectures should be engaged.

2. The profile of the teaching staff could be improved by recruiting/inviting lecturers from among younger generation specialists from Lithuania and other countries.

3. The criteria for the teachers'/researchers' promotions should be more standardized and contain the exact and detailed criteria on all levels. The research/teaching working hours' ratio should be increased and more of the students' training should go through the research instead of classical lecturing; this would also increase the learning efficiency, since the effectiveness of the classical lectures is shown to be quite low and less then 10-15% of matter provided this way is contained after a one-year period (http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/university-lectures-ineffective-learning-analysis-finds/0.

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