



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Lietuvos edukologijos universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "SOCIALINIS DARBAS"
(valstybinis kodas – 6211JX011)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF "SOCIAL WORK" (state code -6211JX011)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Lithuanian University of Education Sciences

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Socialinis darbas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	6211JX011
Studijų sritis (studijų krypčių grupė)*	Socialiniai mokslai (<i>Socialiniai mokslai</i>)*
Studijų kryptis	Socialinis darbas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Socialinio darbo magistras (socialinių mokslų magistras)*
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2003-07-04

* skliaustuose nurodomi nauji duomenys, kurie pasikeitė nuo 2017 m. sausio 1 d. įsigaliojus Studijų krypčių ir krypčių grupių, pagal kurias vyksta studijos aukštosiose mokyklose sąrašui bei Kvalifikacinių laipsnių sąrangai.

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Social work</i>
State code	6211JX011
Study area (Group of study field)*	Social sciences (<i>Social sciences</i>)*
Study field	Social work
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second (Master)
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time – 2 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of social work (Master of social sciences)*,
Date of registration of the study programme	04-07-2003

* in brackets new data provided, valid from 1 January, 2017 after List of study fields and groups of study fields Framework of qualification degrees came into force.

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONTENTS

- I. INTRODUCTION4**
 - 1.1. Background of the evaluation process 4
 - 1.2. General..... 4
 - 1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information..... 5
 - 1.4. The Review Team..... 6
- II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS 6**
 - 2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes 6
 - 2.2. Curriculum design 10
 - 2.3. Teaching staff..... 11
 - 2.4. Facilities and learning resources 14
 - 2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment 16
 - 2.6. Programme management..... 19
 - 2.7. Examples of excellence 21
- III. RECOMMENDATIONS 22**
- IV. SUMMARY 24**
- V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT 26**

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 December 20, 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 following main stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team to the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

Based on 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 is evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area is evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points). The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas is 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	Master Theses of students
2	Information about Quality Management Systems of LUES

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

The study programme is being implemented in a higher education institution, i.e. in Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LUES), which has been functioning since 1935. The study programme was registered following the Order of the Minister of Education and Science No. ISAK -986 of July 4, 2003 and launched in the Department of Social Pedagogy of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology on July 1, 2004. At present the efficiency of the study Programme is ensured by the **Faculty of Social Education** (hereinafter – FSE), a structural unit of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, which was established on February 1, 2014 following Decision No. 18 of the University Council (November 25, 2013) on joining the Institute of Social Communication and the Faculty of Social Sciences (SER p. 4).

The Masters’ study Programme is implemented by three departments and two centres of the Faculty of Social Education: Department of Social Work and Sociology; Department of Economics and Entrepreneurship Education; Department of Social Education; and two centres: Centre for Learning Resources and Information; Centre for Research on Social Inclusion and Entrepreneurship. Formally, the Master in Social Work Study Programme is located in the Department of Social Work and Sociology (SER p. 4).

The Self-Assessment team was formed to analyse the implementation of the Programme and to prepare the self-evaluation report.

The present review has been carried out under the guidelines and procedures of SKVC. Conducting evaluation of the Study Programme, the External Evaluation Team has acted in compliance with the “Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes” (Order No 1-01-162 of December 20, 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education) and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The initial stage included the preparation of the self-assessment report by the University. This was read and commented on by a team of experts, after which the team visited the University on 4th December 2017. During the visit, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the

Programme with faculty administrators, teaching staff, students, alumni and employers. The evaluators visited the library, offices, teaching spaces and facilities related to the programme.

After the visit, the expert group held a meeting for discussing and amending the content of the evaluation report to represent the opinion of the whole group. They subsequently communicated extensively during a protracted period using modern media to complete the Report, having considered the comments of the SKVC Commission. LUES did not make a submission about the draft Report.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was assembled according to the *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 4th December 2017.

1. **Mr. Damien Courtney (team leader)**, *Fellow Emeritus CIT, Former Head of Faculty, Business and Humanities, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland.*
2. **Prof. dr. Skaidrite Alma Gutmane**, *Professor, Rector, Latvian Christian Academy, Latvia.*
3. **Doc. dr. Marju Medar**, *Associate Professor, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia.*
4. **Mr Saulius Davainis**, *Head of Social Activity Department, Republican Hospital of Kaunas, Lithuania.*
5. **Ms. Evelina Kripaitė**, *Student, Sociology and Criminology Study Programme, Vilnius University, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The Master Study Programme of Social Work has been developed considering approaches to competencies and learning outcomes. The aims of the Programme and the learning outcomes are based on the Dublin Descriptors, the European Qualification Framework and the Lithuanian National Qualification Framework, academic and professional requirements and are linked to the EU documents on social development (SER p. 8).

The Study Programme has been developed considering the transformation of modern society and relevant development trends. The Study Programme takes into account, on one hand, the demand for social workers and social policy formation strategies and, on the other hand, the priorities of the European Union and Lithuania. The aims of the Programme and the learning outcomes are related to the Lithuanian state strategies, societal and labour market needs. The study programme has two specialisations – *Social Work Management; and Sociocultural Work* (SER p. 6-7; Annex 3.1.). Social partners have confirmed the demand for social workers in both specialisations during the peer-review visit (Meeting with social partners and alumni).

The aim and the learning outcomes of the Study Programme have been formulated based on the contemporary understanding of social work and competencies of a social worker. The Study Programme takes into account the international strategy for social work developments “*The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development*” (SER p. 7).

Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are well defined, clear, complement each other and are publicly accessible. Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes described in the evaluation report correspond to the mission, the operational objectives and to the strategy of the higher education institution. The organizational structure allows the planning, organization and control of the Study Programme implementation as well as achieving the intended learning outcomes. A student representative has been always included in the activities related to the Study Programme implementation at all levels (SER p. 33). These documents and related activities have been presented and discussed during the meetings with the administration, teaching staff, social partners and alumni. During the visit, teaching staff, students and alumni expressed a good understanding of the “learning outcomes” of the social work study Programme (Meetings with administration and teaching staff, students, social partners and alumni).

Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are linked with academic and professional requirements. The evaluation report describes clearly the aims of the Programme, and the intended learning outcomes define knowledge and its application necessary for a social worker with a masters’ degree - abilities to operate as a social worker at different levels of social work, to implement scientific research and to develop innovative

strategies of social support at society and community level (SER p. 8). The meetings with members of the teaching staff and alumni manifested a deep understanding of the academic and professional requirements related to social work (Meetings with members of the teaching staff and alumni).

Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes correspond to the type and cycle of studies and the level of qualifications. Learning outcomes comply with the requirements set for Masters' degree, are relevant for professional activities and are focused on achieving the aim of the Programme. The Department organises *scientific conferences* twice a year and supervises *the publication of two scientific journals*: a continuous collection of reviewed research papers '*Jaunujų sociologijos mokslininkų darbai*' (*Works of Young Researchers in Sociology*) since 2007 and '*Socialinio darbo tyrimai ir aktualijos*' (*Research on Scientific Work and Topical Issues*) since 2012 (SER p. 21). The Department of Social Work and Sociology has been a member of the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) and of the Lithuanian Association of Social Work Schools since 2015. The University has signed Erasmus agreements with different European universities (SER p. 5). Students and alumni gave a positive feedback to the objectives and intended learning outcomes of the Study Programme during the evaluation meetings. Alumni of the Study Programme are working at the top level in the social work field (Meeting with students and alumni).

The title of the programme, the intended learning outcomes, the content of the programme and the qualification are described in the documentation of the university and the monitoring of the programme is carried out by the administration. During the different meetings with members of administration, teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners it was confirmed that dissemination of information about the Programme aim and intended learning outcomes is carried out systematically according to the requirements of the university.

The aim and the intended learning outcomes of the Study Programme are announced publicly on the official web sites of institutions (Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System/ AIKOS), the Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for General Admission/ LAMA BPO, the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, and the Faculty of Social Education.

The teachers together with the students of the Study Programme disseminate information on the Study Programme, including its content, goal, and learning outcomes, to pupils from schools during their teaching practice, career days and meetings, with pupils and social workers in public spaces and exhibitions. General information on issues related to studies is available in specialised publications and in informal social networks. Additional information regarding studies is provided during individual face-to-face consultation, by email or by phone (Meetings with members of administration and teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners; SER p. 10).

The evaluation showed that the **Masters' Study Programme emphasizes the development of research skills as well as analytical, critical and creative thinking**. An important part of this Study Programme is the development and achievement of learning outcomes related to theoretical knowledge and practical skills of scientific research. In the Social Work Masters' Study programme, students have the possibility of participating in four different courses on the Methodology of Social Work Research – “Methodology of Social Research” (6 ECTS), “Writing of Master Paper” (6 ECTS), “Professional Scientific Research Practice” (8 ECTS), and “Writing of Master Paper” (24 ECTS) (SER p. 11-14; Annexes 3.1; 3.2.), but the level of students' Masters' theses is not very good. Teachers mentioned during the evaluation meeting that students have a good access to different databases. However, the level of Masters' theses is weak. This indicates there are weaknesses in the research competencies and the analysing skills of theoretical literature. The student's theses failed to include a thorough overview of theoretical approaches of social policy and social work, the references were insufficient or old, and abstracts were not informative enough (e.g. thorough description of research methodology was missing). In addition, the use of foreign language literature sources is scarce or non-existent. (Meetings with teaching staff; Review of students' term and final papers/projects)

The evaluation showed lack of English language skills. The Masters' Study programme has no courses for studying foreign languages (SER p. 11-14; Annex 3.1.), but students need to be able to communicate in English. This was apparent during the evaluation visit, when students, alumni and teachers needed the support of an interpreter. Only a few students and some of the teachers were able to communicate fluently in English. In addition, international scientific journals and other international literature was not used enough in students' Masters' theses to

ensure the quality of the theses (Meetings with students, alumni and teachers; review of students` term and final papers/projects).

The evaluation showed also lack of internationalization. The main reasons why students do not use this opportunity frequently are personal reasons, such as work and family related obligations. Students need support for going abroad.

The evaluation team concludes in the evaluation report that information regarding the outcomes and results of the Study Programme is not sufficiently disseminated and the statistical data from the Labour Exchange is not sufficiently used. Connections with a Labour Exchange specialist need to be more developed (SER p. 11).

2.2. Curriculum design

The Programme Structure is in line with and based on Lithuanian higher education legislative requirements. The Programme has been developed within the Lithuanian qualifications` framework and is in full agreement with the European Bologna process requirements.

Study Subjects (Modules): the Programme Curriculum prepares students for the labour market and research. The Curriculum, including values and concepts, is structured and developed in ways of connecting these thoughts to those that can be used in everyday life. The Curriculum incorporates real Social Work life concepts within the larger society and with European values in mind. It promotes the idea of learning from practical field experiences, thoughts and opinions. However, scientific research work of academic staff included in the implementation of the Curriculum testifies to insufficient relations with the study courses. Teaching staff research should be more related to professional Social Work as they are employed on the Masters` Programme._Teaching staff qualifications in English and other foreign languages must be improved for teaching at Master`s level.

Subjects content and study methods: Curriculum design goals are clear to students involved in the learning process. Goals are possible to accomplish during the study period. Skills are cumulative and built upon previous knowledge.

The scope of the programme is sufficient for this level of studies. The Programme emphasizes a strength-based approach by which all individuals optimize their resources. Social workers' role is to help to build upon a person's skills and support systems. It involves work with families, couples, groups, organizations and communities. Social work is dedicated to the pursuit of social justice through direct service and through advocacy at local, national and global levels.

The Social Work study Programme seeks to improve the quality of life for individuals and to effect system-wide change through the pursuit of social justice. Just like any helping profession Social Work seeks to help people to overcome some of life's most difficult challenges. Therefore, social workers having a Masters' degree not only consider individuals' internal struggles, they also work with people to examine their relationships, family structure, community environment, and systems and policies that impact on them in order to identify ways to help address their challenges.

The Programme Content: should be more multi-disciplinary in its strategy and more focused on systematic issues such as poverty reduction and social justice. It should also be more oriented towards the supervisory role of the profession.

2.3. Teaching staff

The members of the teaching staff of the Masters' study programme of Social work meet the requirements provided in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and in the requirements of the University. Professionalism of teachers implementing the Study Programme corresponds to the principles set out in the international document regulating social work - *Global Standards for the Education and Training of the Social Work Profession* (2005) (SER p. 19).

Teachers' qualifications comply with intended learning outcomes. The Masters' Study Programme of Social Work is implemented by a team of 13 professional teachers, out of whom 9 teachers have a doctorate, 4 teachers have acquired a Masters' degree or are in the third cycle of studies in Social Sciences. The teaching staff of the Study Programme deliver 19 study subjects; every teacher teaches two study subjects on average, a few teachers deliver

three study subjects. The Faculty conducts fundamental and applied scientific research, as well as implementing national and international projects. The age structure is balanced and trends are positive. Young specialists are acquiring experience while communicating with their senior colleagues and, thus, gradually experiencing change.

All the teachers implementing the Study Programme have experience of scientific research in the field of social sciences or professional activity in social work institutions and non-governmental organisations. The structure of their positions and their ages are presented in the evaluation report (SER p. 19).

The teaching and research experiences of the academic staff are sufficient for the attainment of learning outcomes. They are actively involved in research activities, develop their own professional qualifications and disseminate their research results. The teachers' experiences of pedagogical, scientific and practical activities are presented in the evaluation report and were demonstrated during the visit. Teachers working in the Study Programme have extensive pedagogical, research and practical experience and are able to convey high-quality knowledge and experience to students, as well as establish their connections with practical social work. During the review meetings teachers, students and alumni stated that they use Moodle in their teaching and students' learning. All study materials are available in Moodle (SER p. 19-20). Teachers are good supervisors and consult and advise their students individually. Students can contact teachers via phone, email and conduct private Skype meetings (Meetings with teachers, students and alumni).

Teachers' participation in scientific research complies with their scientific research areas. The teachers of the Study Programme are active participants in national and international conferences, study trips and members of editorial boards of numerous scientific journals. The academic staff of the Study Programme regularly improve their professional qualifications and actively participate in social projects initiated by the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Whilst teachers cooperate and establish relationships with the representatives of foreign universities, participate in different national and international projects and in the ERASMUS+ exchange programme it is insufficient. The results of teachers' scientific activities are regularly published in the journal of research papers "*Social Education*" and in the scientific journal '*Socialinio darbo tyrimai ir aktualijos*' (*Research on Scientific Work and Topical*

Issues). Systematic development of qualifications and research activities is financially supported at the level of the Department, Faculty and University. Information on qualifications' development programmes, projects, conferences, seminars and other events is stored, systematized and publicized on the University website (SER p. 21; Annexes 3.3, 3.4).

During the visit the teachers mentioned that they are a good team who are conducting research together in a positive atmosphere. Organisational culture is motivating the academic staff to develop more projects and collaboration with social partners. Students are not only included but are encouraged to participate. The teachers and students mentioned during the visit that when students get involved in larger projects they feel a moral satisfaction. Students and alumni stated in the evaluation meeting that teachers are high-level lecturers who are able to teach and supervise their MA thesis (Meetings with teaching staff, students, social partners and alumni).

The qualification of the academic staff of the Programme is ensured by applying the University systems of competition and assessment. All the candidates who take up the position of a teacher are admitted in accordance with a publicly announced competition. Teachers are elected for a period of 3 or 5 years, after which they have to complete a process of assessment at the Recruitment and Competition Commission in the Field of Social Sciences and Humanities at LUES. During the assessment, teachers' pedagogical and research activities are evaluated taking account of their research production, the results of students' surveys about teachers' abilities to teach a study subject, assessment by the chair and Department colleagues as well as the quality of their overall academic activity (SER p. 19-20).

The academic work of the Programme planned for teachers is in accordance with the principles of pedagogical workload of academic and research staff of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences approved by the Senate. Teachers plan their activities individually every year taking into account the volume of activities organized by the Head of the Department. **The ratio between the academic staff and students is low enough to give the teachers the opportunity to deal with students individually, and support students reaching their learning outcomes.** It is mentioned in the evaluation report that in the Masters' Programme the ratio is one student per one teacher on average (SER p. 20).

There are 108 students in the Social Work Programmes of whom 26 are Masters' students (April 2017) (SER p.4). The number of graduates has fallen a little: 19 in 2014; 15 in 2015; and 14 in 2016.

The teachers' professional development is discussed in the meetings of the Department: teachers share their experiences gained in study trips, seminars and conferences, as well as annual reports summarising teachers' working experience which are compiled by them and the Department at the end of each year. Social Work competencies of the Programme teachers are presented in the teachers' curriculum vitae (Meeting with teaching staff; SER p. 21).

The evaluation report stated that 95% of the academic staff members have a good knowledge of English (SER p. 21), but during the review visit, teachers needed the support of an interpreter. This shows the need for inviting foreign professors with different competencies and participating in different professional organisations and networks. More activities and communication with foreign colleagues should be encouraged to support the staff in their development of foreign languages skills.

The evaluation report also stated that the teachers of the Study Programme are not actively involved in the international sphere of social work (SER p. 21). The international mobility of teachers needs to be developed further, which engenders a common understanding of social work as a profession and the development of foreign language skills.

It was stated during the review visit that there are not any standards for supervisors. This needs to be developed in the future (Meeting with teaching staff).

Teachers also stated that they are working more than teachers are paid for. Teachers are dissatisfied with the low salary and seek changes in university and state level financing policy (Meeting with teaching staff).

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

Teachers and students have good facilities and equipment that are appropriate for the attainment of the learning outcomes of the programme. The Social Work Masters' study

Programme is implemented in the Faculty of Social Education in the Central Building of LUES. There are classrooms equipped with computers, software, overhead projectors, scanners, printers, smart boards, photocopiers, audio and video equipment. Lectures and practical tasks are most often organised in five classrooms. For students, consultation is carried out in smaller classrooms (SER p. 21-22). During the meeting, it was mentioned that furniture and facilities comply with the hygiene requirements (Meeting with administration staff).

Students have good learning conditions, suitable classrooms, laboratories, practice places. Students have access to the Study and Information Centre of the Faculty of Social Education, which stores scientific and methodological literature on social issues for students' independent work. The University has the Academic Information System (AIS) and virtual learning platform Moodle. However, the Moodle system is not fully used by students and teachers (SER p. 22, 25).

The Library and classrooms are equipped according to the required standard. The quantity, quality and relevance of reading materials matches the needs of students. Classrooms for students are equipped with computers together with software programmes (e.g. SPSS, Kokybis). Students have free access to the electronic databases of the LUES Library. The Study and Information Centre offers students' periodicals on social work in Lithuanian and in other languages (English, German and Russian). Teachers and students can access free Wi-Fi. The LUES Library in the Central LUES building provides free access to the databases. Students and teachers have the possibility to use more than 30 subscribed databases where they can read articles and electronic books. Students need more recent English language literature on Social Work theories and on Social Policy. It is important to mention that the construction of a new Library near the University has not been completed. (SER p. 23-24).

Students with disabilities receive social support from the University. There is a lift in the central building where the Faculty of Social Education is situated. On the first floor there is equipment for students who are visually impaired (video magnifier, braille printer) so the environment is customized for disabled students (SER p. 23-24).

Students trained in ‘learning to learn’ techniques, but this needs more attention in future. The Library stocks are constantly renewed using LUES and ISC funds. The Library regularly organises training courses for its users. An Academic Information System (AIS) and Moodle learning platform have been implemented at the University.

The review team are of the opinion that the teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are insufficient. A lot of Masters’ theses were reviewed which showed that these did not include a thorough enough overview of social policy and social work approaches, and the references used were old. The review of study courses showed that many studies have been carried out using Lithuanian literature but this is not enough at a Masters’ level of education. Strengthening of students scientific theses by using more foreign literature and scientific journals is necessary (Visiting libraries; Review of students` term and final papers/projects).

2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment

Entrance requirements are well founded, consistent and transparent. The criteria for the entrants to the Masters’ Study Programme of Social Work are developed and approved by the Study Programme Committee. Graduates of the university Bachelor studies in a different study field have opportunities to enter the Masters’ Study Programme of Social Work through additional conditions. Persons from the field of Social Sciences can apply for state funded places (SER p. 25).

University has a regulation for the admission to Social Work studies and specific criteria for the entrance of students. That consists of open access for persons, who have a first-cycle university education in Social Work or in a corresponding field of the Social Sciences – Sociology, Social Policy, Social Education, Psychology and Care; also for persons who have graduated from university Bachelor studies in a different study field; or have a corresponding non-university education. The University offers bridging courses (30 additional credits - 10 study subjects) from the first cycle Social Work studies that provide fundamental knowledge and are essential for a student to develop sufficient knowledge and skills for social work (SER p. 25).

Organization of the study process ensures the proper implementation of the programme and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The study process is organized according to the national description of 2015 Social Work study standards. The University uses a system of cumulative grading. Students can communicate and cooperate with the teaching staff throughout the study process. Students would like to add more psychology and law related courses to the Programme (SER p. 27; Meeting with student).

Students are encouraged to take part in scientific, artistic or applied activities. Students can choose a subject from the art therapy field throughout the entire study period (first semester – “Art Therapy Process”; second semester – “Art Therapy Methods”; third semester – “The application of Art Therapy”) (SER p. 26-27; Annex 3.1).

Students have the possibility to take part in mobility programmes. Students of the Masters’ Programme are mostly working and have families, so they do not participate in mobility programmes (SER p. 27-28). Most students do not speak foreign languages so the review team suggests that the University should promote mobility programmes by teaching more foreign languages.

The higher education institution ensures proper academic and social support. In the meeting with students, the experts noticed that some of the students take loans from the state to finance their studies (they have to repay these during the fifteen years after graduation). Some of them get a scholarship for good academic results – €38 (in a group of 10 students 2 received scholarships). In the first year of studies, all students were state funded and got a €19 scholarship for the half of the year. Students noted one positive thing – since 2017 those who pay for their studies can also receive a scholarship – €38 for good grades. Alumni noted that the University supports them by e-mails, phone, conferences and events that are counted towards their qualifications (Meetings with students and alumni).

Students receive social support from university through seven types of material-financial support (including scholarships, allowances and use of dormitories). The Masters’ study Programme students have the right to get accommodation in the students’ dormitory next to the Central Building of the University paying for it according to the Order of the Rector “The Procedure for Advance and Regular Payments for Hostel, Monthly Payments”. The students have access also to facilities for leisure and other entertainment. The students may take loans

to cover their living costs and tuition fees, they are also entitled to social, incentive scholarships and a one-time benefit (if the student's financial situation is bad) (SER p. 29-30).

The system of assessing student achievements is clear, made public and appropriate to assess the learning outcomes. 50% of the grade consists of the examinations and the other 50% forms the cumulated grade. Evaluations for independent work include assessment of visits, meetings in institutions, case studies and virtual platform activities (SER p. 26-28).

Professional activities of the majority of programme graduates correspond to the expectations of programme managers and employers. Employers and social partners noted that students are quite well prepared to consult their clients because they have had three internships throughout the years. Students from this University work most often with people with intellectual disabilities. They are better in this area in comparison with other Universities. LUES students' communication with the team and with the clients is different. Maybe because they used to study in a communication institute before (Meetings with social partners and alumni).

University has a good structure for marketing of the study programme. The monitoring of graduates' employability and careers is carried out at three levels: 1) the University level, accomplished by the Study Marketing and Career Office, 2) the Faculty / Department level, and 3) Study Programme Committee (SPC) level. The indicators of graduates' employability and career opportunities are included in the Strategic Plan of the University for 2012-2020.

Alumni and social partners are actively involved in the marketing process. The managers and employers of the Study Programme are satisfied with the professional activities of graduates from the Masters' Study Programme and carry out discussions in University meetings, conferences and other public events. The University Masters' Studies Fair is organised in May every year, where prospective Masters' students are introduced to the Masters' study programme and employment possibilities. Employers/social stakeholders express their opinions on the content of professional training, as well as seeking specialists in corresponding fields (SER p. 30; Meeting with alumni and social partners).

The programme corresponds to the state's future economic, social and cultural development needs. The Masters' Programme two specializations are sociocultural social

work and social management of social work. It was introduced to develop concepts and practice with the community. At the end of each year, faculty holds meetings with social partners and students to discuss changes and improvements that are needed. Students take new trends in society into account when considering career possibilities. The Study Programme Committee considers the need for new subjects. It tries to avoid overlapping areas. Discussions are held with social partners and students on what they need and want (Meetings with social partners and students).

Fair learning environment is ensured. Students noted that there are adequate materials, they have their personal e-mails, virtual library, and for part-time students teachers prepare materials and tasks via the Moodle or VMA. The Moodle System (virtual learning environment) should be developed taking students' expectations into account. The students have the opportunities to use foreign scientific materials for preparing Master theses. Although they have the possibility to use databases (EBSCO), the materials from there are not usually included in their theses (SER p. 24). After the review of students Final Master Theses, the evaluation team are of the opinion that there is a need to pay more attention to research methodology and analysis of the scientific sources in foreign languages. There is a lack of scientific discussion in the Masters' theses and weak English language summaries (Review of students' term and final papers/projects). **Students are provided with opportunities to make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures.**

2.6. Programme management

Study Programme assessment and quality assurance is regulated according to the European Common Quality Assurance Framework (2003), Dublin Qualifications Acts, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015) and the procedure for external evaluation and accreditation of study programmes and other legislation. The administration of the Programme is carried out in accordance with the University statute; the descriptor of the procedure for renewal of study programmes and quality assessment at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences; and the Code of academic ethics of Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences and other legislation (SER p. 30).

The responsibilities for decision making regarding the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme are clearly defined. The Study Programme is carried out at three levels: University, Faculty, and Social Work and Sociology Department, which combines their Programme quality activities with the Study Programme Committee. The Senate determines a scientific approach to quality assurance; it approves the University strategy for quality improvement and the internal system of academic quality assurance; and it determines accreditation and qualification requirements for lecturers and research staff who implement the titles of the University Programme management. At the Faculty level, the Council considers the proposals of the Study Programme Committee, the study subjects, and submits the titles and themes of Final Theses for the approval of the Senate. The Council considers issues related to the organization of the study process and academic evaluation, and solves issues related to the updating of the Programme (SER p. 31).

Internal quality assurance mechanisms are clear, effective and reviewed regularly. The Study Programme Committee (consisting of 5 members) is responsible for the quality of study programmes. Student and social partner representatives are always included and involved at all levels. This was confirmed during the visit of the peer review team. In principle, the Committee monitors the content and implementation of the Programme regarding its aims and learning outcomes, structure, study process and other aspects of the Programme management. The Department of Social Work and Sociology in cooperation with the Study Programme Committee is in charge of the necessary measures such as study tools, textbooks and methodological materials. The Department is also responsible for the preparation, development and updating of the Programme.

Feedback from stakeholders of study programme is regularly collected and analysed. Feedback is used to improve the programme. The Committee meetings are regular. It should be noted that students' confidential periodic surveys are carried out as one of the ways of ensuring the quality assurance of the Programme.

All stakeholders (teachers, students, social partners, alumni) **are involved in the appropriate aspects of programme management and administration.** The University has an Alumni Club. During the evaluation meetings social partners and alumni reported good communications between the management team, alumni and partners of the study programme (SER p. 31-32; Meetings with management staff, alumni, students and social partners).

A management weakness indicated in the evaluation report is that cooperation with corresponding departments and students of other universities is insufficient and that information technologies are not fully exploited in the study process (access passwords to Moodle, AIS and other sites are different). These need more attention in the future (SER p. 33).

2.7. Examples of excellence

Programme management and administration is very well organised. Staff have good relations with university management and policy makers, which is a good platform for the development of the study programme.

The study environment is very positive. Alumni and social partners have positive experiences of consultation and engagement with teachers and students. Inclusiveness and engagement with alumni and social partners is evident.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

For the further development of the programme, it is necessary to strengthen the following aspects:

- 1) This Masters' Programme needs to be more multi-disciplinary in its strategy and more focused on systematic issues such as poverty reduction and social justice. It should also be more oriented towards the supervisory role of the profession.
- 2) The teaching of social work research methods needs strengthening and the quality of students' final theses requires continuing attention.
- 3) Study Programme teachers are not sufficiently active in the international social work sphere. The international mobility of teachers and students needs to be developed which can support the development of a common understanding of social work and improve the language skills of teachers and students. The University needs a strategy for strengthening international cooperation with the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) and Erasmus partners.
- 4) It is necessary to pay more attention to external collaboration, the internationalization of study processes and the optimal use of Erasmus possibilities. It is necessary to evaluate the Erasmus student mobility programme and support students' opportunities to go abroad, and invite foreign students to participate in LUES Study Programmes.
- 5) A common vision of Social Work theories and new approaches to Social Policy need to be developed and communicated among the teaching staff. The students' knowledge of social work theories and social policy needs to be improved through teaching and learning.
- 6) During the evaluation visit teachers stated they are doing more than teachers are paid for. They are dissatisfied with low salaries and have advocated changes in financing policy at university and state level. A financing policy strategy should be developed at university level.
- 7) The review team examined teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) during the visit and found that they were insufficient. Students need more English language literature on Social Work theories and on Social Policy. Many studies have been carried out using Lithuanian literature, but this is insufficient at a Masters' level of education. More attention needs to be paid to the students'

abilities to use foreign literature and more appropriate references, including international scientific journals of social work.

- 8) Information technologies are not fully exploited in the study process. Access passwords to AIS and Moodle systems are not fully used by students and teachers. It is necessary to develop an AIS system that facilitates the administration of studies.
- 9) Cooperation with the corresponding departments and students of other universities is insufficient. It is necessary to develop and diversify forms of cooperation with partner universities and organisations.

IV. SUMMARY

Meetings with management, the administration team, teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners were very positive. The Programme seems to be highly valued as useful and inspiring among all groups. The labour market value experience is high and collaborative relations are good.

The Master of Social Work Programme is a well-functioning Programme with whom its stakeholders are highly satisfied. The objectives and intended learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly announced. The Programme is linked well to the state, societal and labour market needs and with the mission and vision of the University. The aim and learning outcomes correspond to the requirements of second cycle studies in Lithuania. The title of the Programme, intended learning outcomes, the content of the Programme and the qualification are in harmony.

The Programme structure consisting of 19 subjects and a Masters' thesis is in line with legislative requirements. An appropriate range of second-cycle study methods and assessment instruments are used during the Programme delivery. There are three mechanisms in place to ensure that Programme content corresponds to the latest academic, artistic or technological achievements: student comments and feedback; stakeholder and alumni feedback; and teaching staff input.

The Programme is delivered by thirteen professional teachers, of whom nine have a doctorate. The requirements regarding staff composition and qualifications are met. The age structure of teaching staff is favourable for the implementation and development of the Programme. Teachers of the Study Programme are highly qualified researchers and have extensive experience of pedagogical work. They are actively involved in research activity, develop their own professional qualifications and disseminate their research results. Motivation and enthusiasm among Programme staff is high. Staff of the Programme demonstrate outstanding professional pedagogical development, mobility, internal and external co-operation.

There are 26 Masters' students in 2017. The number of graduates has fallen a little: 19 in 2014; 15 in 2015; and 14 in 2016.

The Programme is currently supported by a wide range of high-quality resources including physical facilities, databases, software programmes, simulation licenses, subscription of case-study repositories and the like. The Library is well-developed and offers access to the majority of internationally well-known electronic databases. However, more English language literature on the topics of Social Work theories and Social Policy are needed for improvement in the quality of the Masters' theses.

The University cooperates well with policy makers and social partners which contributes to research and development activities involving teachers, students and partners.

The application procedure to the Programme is carried out online and all the information about the admission process and requirements is conveniently presented on the website. Students are provided with opportunities to make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures. The Programme is targeted to working professionals and it is reflected in the admission criteria, but teachers' workload and the financial system need more attention. During the visit teachers stated they are doing more than they are paid for. The downside of the Programme is low student mobility and the development of students' mobility and support for students in this area is needed. It is necessary to pay more attention to external collaboration, the internationalization of study processes and the optimal use of Erasmus possibilities.

A good connection to the labour market is a major strength of this programme, but it comes to some extent at the expense of the research side of the studies. The University needs to ensure proper academic support for students preparing their Masters' theses.

The Programme management meets the required standards. The processes of quality assurance, the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies, committees and positions are functioning well and described in detail. The University has implemented student feedback as part of the system of improvement. The overall student satisfaction is very high. It is commendable that the management is very proactive and brave in implementing changes for improving the operations and quality, and searching for new and innovative ways. It is recommended that the University should strengthen cooperation with partner universities and organisations, also with Erasmus partners in foreign countries.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The Master Study Programme Social Work (state code –6211JX011) at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences 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	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	18

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

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

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

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

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