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STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto

MOKYKLINĖS PSICHOLOGIJOS PROGRAMOS (valstybinis kodas 621S18003, 62406S107) VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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EVALUATION REPORT

OF *SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY* (state code 621S18003, 62406S107)

STUDY PROGRAMME

at Vytautas Magnus University

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Doc. dr. Lena Adamson
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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	*Mokyklinė psichologija*
Valstybinis kodas	621S18003, 62406S107
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Psichologija
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (2), ištęstinė (2,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Psichologijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19; Įsak. Nr. 565; perregistruota: 2001-08-02, Nr.1187; perregistruota: 2007-02-19, Nr. ISAK – 225; perregistruota: 2010-02-22, Nr. SR-16-01-8

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INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	*School psychology*
State code	621S18003, 62406S107
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Psychology
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Level of studies	second
Study mode (length in years)	full time (2), part time (2,5)
Scope of the study programme in credits	120 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Psychology
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-19 Order 565; renewed registration: 2001-08-02, No.1187; renewed registration: 2007-02-19, No. ISAK – 225; renewed registration: 2010-02-22, No. SR-16-01-8

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study programme of School Psychology second cycle is implemented by the Department of Theoretical Psychology of the Social Science Faculty at Kaunas University. It was first registered in 1997. Lithuanian experts performed an external evaluation in 2002 resulting in full accreditation. Due to financial reasons, the next accreditation due in 2008 was not performed until 2011.

The main aim of the School Psychology Study programme is, according to the self-assessment report, to prepare qualified school psychologists who, following ethical and legal norms, will be able to assess and use psychological methods to solve the psychological problems arising in educational processes, evaluate the possibilities of psychological correction, independently perform evaluative and scientific research, promote psychosocial functioning of participants in educational processes and develop the educational system.

The programme graduates are awarded a Master's degree and should then be able to demonstrate expertise to work in education, social care and other educational institutions, as well as to continue studies in third cycle programs in the field of Social Sciences. A thorough description of the need for school psychologists in Lithuania is provided in the self-evaluation.

This assessment report has been produced in the following way: the expert group received the report in June 2011. All members of the assessment group were individually read the self-assessment reports and prepared draft reports. After the visit, the expert group held a meeting in which the contents of the evaluation were discussed and modified to represent the opinion of the whole group.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. *Programme aims and learning outcomes*

Programme aims and learning outcomes as described in the self-assessment and annexes 8 and 9 are very well defined and clear. The programme has a strong focus on learners/learning, on the promotion of mental health and psychological well-being, on intervention methods and the definition of their effectiveness, on enhancing professional competencies in working both individually and in teams, and also on the needs of the educational setting itself, providing the future psychologist with important knowledge about the context (s)he will be working within.

Learning outcomes on both overarching (programme) level and specified (course/module) level are excellently formulated and show clear evidence of teachers' understanding of the European changes in Higher Education moving from teacher driven provision to student centred teaching and learning, transforming education from just providing knowledge to also foster competencies. The site visit showed that knowledge and understanding of a student centred approach was truly integrated among both staff and students.

The programme is definitely based on both academic and professional requirements, public needs and also needs of the labour market. It is also consistent with the type and level of the qualification that is offered.

Learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other. Information about the programme is published and periodically updated at a number of different websites.

In sum, the programme is clearly student-centred. Both students and teachers are well aware of the learning outcome paradigm. Teachers have an interactive rather than authoritarian relationship with students, the hallmark of student-centred learning. The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible. The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market and also consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. Employers' comments

were that graduates from the programme were seen as theoretically knowledgeable as well as creative, able to find solutions to problems, and work independently.
The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, contents and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

2. Curriculum design

The programme is designed in compliance with national regulations for Master's programs and local regulations at Kaunas University.

There is a logical structure of study subjects' layout in the curriculum, going from the general to the more specific, and also with a clear research-based nature. The programme has also been updated to include adolescence in addition to just childhood, prevention aspects and to include a research project "to improve research and practice skills by applying psychological interventions based on theoretical models in practice and testing the effectiveness of modules using research methods." Organisational aspects of the school setting (including knowledge and understanding of the teachers' work) are included. Teachers work primarily with groups of individuals, the psychologist with individuals. This is a very important aspect to acknowledge in order to assist the two professions to collaborate in the best possible way. The staff expressed full awareness of this at the site visit. All this is commendable.

Altogether the programme seems to be both appropriate and sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes. There is also an existing close collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Black Hills State University. However the site visit showed that this so far was more focused on staff collaboration and research activities and had not yet become truly integrated in the teaching activities. Students raised the issue of wanting more lectures especially by international lectures and this could of course be quite easily remedied within this already existing relation.

When it comes to labour market needs and employability aspects, this programme definitely serves the needs of Lithuania. The programme focuses on school settings not educational settings in general, which is an active choice of the programme developers. However, to avoid unnecessary future critique this should probably be made very clear to both students and employers. Our impression during site visits was that the need for psychologists altogether in this country is so large that at many places, employers will hire any type of psychologist regardless of specialisation. This may result in unrealistic expectations and demands on the competences of these students, and in the long run lead to unjust criticism of the programme

In sum, the content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies. The content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. The programme has a clear focus on school settings which should be clearly communicated to both students and employers. Students express their wish for more international lecturers, which could easily be provided via the existing collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Black Hills State University.

3. Staff

The programme meets legal requirements in that all teachers hold scientific degrees and sufficient parts of the study field are taught by professors. Teachers also have practical experiences of working as psychologists together with long teaching experience and seem satisfied with the number of hours they are allocated to teaching and supervision of theses work.

Teachers are engaged in varies research activities and also in international collaborations (mobility activities within the Erasmus teacher exchange program, the already mentioned collaboration with

University of Nebraska at Kearney and Black Hills State University and others). However, their research could be more focused on areas that correspond to the subjects they teach.

According to both surveys and meetings at the site visit students are highly satisfied with their teachers and staff altogether at the department. The relationship between teachers and students in this programme seem unusually good and the staff's approach is fully student centred. Students expressed their high appreciation of having teachers so focused on their personal development, a truly important aspect of higher education that sometimes is neglected or hidden in favour of a singular focus on programme content.

Teacher turnover rate is low.

Staff has had training in the learning outcome paradigm by international experts which is clearly evidenced in programme and course/module descriptions and their student-centred approach. The site visit convinced the expert team that this was consolidated within the staff as a group and not applicable just to a few individuals.

The university provides good opportunities for the professional development of teachers necessary for the provision of the program. This applies especially to the work with the learning outcome paradigm and a student centred approach.

All legal requirements are fulfilled concerning teaching staff, number of staff and their qualifications are adequate and turnover rate is low. The conditions for Continuous Professional Development, both with respect to research and teaching competencies, are good. Bringing in international expertise in relation to working with the learning outcome paradigm shows very good results. Research could be more focused on areas that correspond to the subjects that are taught.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The lecture rooms are properly equipped. At present, the office and work space is rather limited. The existing laboratory room is unsuitable for modern experimental work and there are no facilities for observation practices. Computer facilities for statistics and demonstrations are available. However, as a promising and necessary project, psychology studies will soon be conducted in a new building, where proper laboratory space, observation rooms and offices will be available. At present in the faculty building a modern language laboratory is available, but psychology students told the evaluation team they hardly ever use it which seems a bit of a waste. In the library a considerable number of data bases (e.g. PSYCHARITCLES, MEDLINE) is available (including full texts), and other appropriate sources are available not just on campus, but to the university community from wherever they are. The number of modern textbooks is only moderate in the library.

In sum, a considerable development of work space is needed but new building projects will satisfy these needs within the immediate future. A better use of the sophisticated language laboratory is recommended to both students and staff. A considerable number of data bases are available both on and off campus for students and teachers. However, these could be complemented somewhat by additional resources. This also refers to printed journals and textbooks. However students expressed they were satisfied with resources.

5. Study process and student assessment

The requirement to be admitted to the programme is a Bachelor Degree in Psychology. The admission requirements are well founded. Student motivation and English language knowledge are taken into account. Dropout rates are OK.

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Students are encouraged to take part in conferences, and to become members in professional organisations. Students are highly motivated to participate in these activities, there are also many published articles and participation in conferences and altogether the amount of student research is impressive (students have been involved in the preparation and publishing of 28 scientific articles).

Student support has been evaluated. There is gathered information about learning recourses and facilities – 79 % are fully or partially satisfied with provision of learning facilities and 97% fully or partially positively assess the opportunities to use informational technologies. Also there are opportunities to get academic consultations in various ways. The average of grade points seems appropriate to get scholarship, and as pointed out in Annex 16, an average of exams varies from 8,4 to 9,03, which means everyone is capable of getting a scholarship. Students are constantly and systematically provided with psychological, sport, health and cultural support – with consultations and equipment.

When it comes to the assessment of students' achievements of learning outcomes the majority of course/module descriptions state that the evaluation of study results is performed via "tasks (that) are formulated in such a way that they enable assessing achievement of study outcomes". Fit for purpose assessment methods (i.e., fully aligned with the competencies the intended learning outcomes express) is the guarantee for students' achievements of intended learning outcomes. Our impression was that there might be room for improvement here since the majority of assessment tasks still is performed in the written format, not always the right way of assessing "understanding performances" instead of just "knowledge possession".

The assessment system of the university, seem clear and adequate. Students seem satisfied and especially mention that the cumulative system motivates their studying. Assessment is said to be criterion based (a necessity when working with learning outcomes) and students can find subject evaluation criteria on the website.

Students are encouraged to go abroad to other universities under the Erasmus Student Exchange Programme, but mobility figures are low and advice would be to interview students in order to understand why this is so.

The department has good knowledge of their alumni, both with regards to employment issues and also in regards to alumni satisfaction with the program. The results are very positive on both accounts. When it comes to graduates' abilities to find job placements within their professional field this is excellent; 83% of graduates work in their area.

One of the strengths of this programme is the feedback from students. However, some students expressed their wishes for changes in the schedule in order to make it easier to combine their studies with work.

In sum, admission requirements are well founded, students are fully or at least partially satisfied with provision of learning facilities and altogether student support systems are good. The amount of student research is impressive. Regarding assessment of students' achievements these are primarily done in the written format, not always the guarantee for students' achievements of the intended learning outcomes. This is an area where there is room for further development, as with mobility where figures are quite low. However the assessment system of the university is clear and adequate and subject evaluation criteria are available on the website. Professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers' expectations. 83% of graduates work in their field.

6. Programme management

The School Psychology Programme is administered by the school psychology study programme committee, the theoretical psychology department and the faculty council. The school psychology study programme committee is responsible for programme renewal; renewed programme is discussed and approved in the meetings of theoretical psychology department and the faculty council. The implementation of the programme and day-to-day administration is performed by the theoretical psychology department. The site visit convinced the expert team that this quite complex organisation worked well.

The internal QA system is thorough, including students' and teachers' opinions on teaching quality.

Communication between the department and stakeholders was apparently not functioning very well six years ago and a lot of work has been put into improving this. Evaluation and improvement processes now involve stakeholders. Employers of graduates from the programme were surveyed in 2007 and 2010 with good results. There is also a clear ambition to further improve stakeholder contacts.

The site visit showed that employers now in general are very satisfied with both the graduates from this programme and their contacts with the department. The department also arranges conferences to share their knowledge with stakeholders. One employer expressed the wish for more information in advance of students coming for practice; others suggested more competencies of graduates for working with children with disabilities. Suggestions were also made that employers could suggest topics for theses work and some would like help with developing standardised test instruments.

In sum, responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of programme implementation are clear. This process does involve stakeholders, and the outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. Graduates and stakeholders are in general very satisfied with the programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Develop the existing collaboration with the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Black Hills State University to be more visible for students and integrated in teaching activities.

3.2. Encourage both staff and students to use the very good possibilities to develop language skills at the language laboratory.

3.3. Continue the good work with developing student centred teaching and learning, learning outcomes and active learning, to also include true alignment of assessment methods with the intended learning outcomes.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *School psychology* (state code – 621S18003, 62406S107) is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	4
2.	Curriculum design	4
3.	Staff	3
4.	Material resources	3
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	4
	Total:	**21**

*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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