



LIETUVOS ŽEMĖS ŪKIO UNIVERSITETO

visuomenės sveikatos krypties
biosocialinio ūkio ir mitybos studijų programos
išorinio išsamiojo

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

Lithuanian University of Agriculture

study field of public health
external assessment of
biosocial environment and nutrition study programme

Final Report

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Team leader:

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Vilnius
2007

Profile of Public Health Study programme

Title of the study programme	Biosocial Environment and Nutrition
State code	61210B105
Kind of studies ¹	UP
Form ² and duration (years) of studies	D(4)
Volume of the programme in credits	160
The awarded degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor in Public Health
Date of the programme registration and order No./	June14th 2002, order of the minister od Education and Science No. 1093

Membership

Members of the group were invited by the Studiju Kokybes Vertinimo Centras to review the Public Health training programmes in Lithuania.

- Professor Juha Kinnunen – head of the Department of Health policy and Management, University of Kuopio, Finland
- Professor Roza Adany – Dean of the Faculty of Public Health, Medical and Health Science Centre, University of Debrecen, Hungary
- Professor Anita Villerusa – Dean of the Faculty of Public Health, Riga Stradins University, Riga, Latvia
- Jonas Bartlingas, Ministry of Health, Health Care Resources Management Division, Vilnius, Lithuania.

1. Introduction

The mission of the Lithuanian University of Agriculture (LUA) is to enrich and disseminate scientific knowledge, necessary for rational and sustainable exploitation of land, forest, water and environmental resources and production of quality products. The University has one undergraduate study programme in the field of public health “*Biosocial Environment and Nutrition*”, which is closely related with the implementation of the mission of LUA. The studies of this programme are organized and administrated by Agronomy faculty and implemented by all subdivisions of the University. The Faculty has 6 departments: Plant and Animal Science, Plant Protection, Botany, Soil Science and Agrochemistry, Horticulture and Market Gardening and Agriculture. This study programme is supervised by the department of Horticulture and Market Gardening. It could provided good preconditions for students to relate studies of public health with the processes of raw materials for food quality modeling and the whole of biosocial (surrounding human being) environment. The implementation of university undergraduate study programme *Biosocial Environment and Nutrition* was started in 2002, having reorganized former study programme Household Technologies. The Self-assessment group has been formed, which includes Dean of the Faculty, head and teachers of the department that supervises the programme, representatives of the faculty students and social partners.

In the introductory speech of the program director was emphasized that there were not similar programme running in the EU. This statement is completely in disagreement with reality in Public health nutrition training ongoing around the Europe. Taking into

account growing problems with healthy nutrition and food safety almost in all European countries are several programmes running in this field. Future harmonizing of the programme *Biosocial Environment and Nutrition* running by LUA with other programs is highly recommended. It will benefit for improvement of the content of the program and also for future student and teacher exchange.

2. Aims and goals of study programme

The history of the development of public health training in Lithuania University of Agriculture is quite new challenge. From the introductory presentation of the dean and program director was clear that Faculty of Agronomy have a plan for future improvement of public health nutrition policy by increasing number of qualified specialists in this field. The demand for Bachelors in Public Health, trained according to the *Biosocial Environment and Nutrition* study programme, has been stimulated by the changing attitude of society to health and by the provisions of Lithuanian Agricultural and Rural Development strategy and the Lithuanian Republic state food and nutrition strategy.

Evidence provided in the self analysis documentation indicated that the goals of the programme related to the aims of the programme. However it would have been useful to have had an identification of the clear expected learning outcomes for the programme.

Besides very general aim of the university based training in human development as more specific study programme aims were – to provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills, needed for the studies of specialized education and professional activity and to develop the abilities that are necessary to acquire the qualification of higher education in the field of public health. Although unsatisfied number of specific topics of public health are the weakest point of the curriculum.'

General emphases in the curriculum are delegated to food processing standards, safe nutrition and consumer rights; the importance of personal responsibility for own health promotion; usage of juridical documents in the field.

As expected value from the programme were mentioned knowledge in interaction between environment and human; the influence of recreation services on the quality of life; the importance of environmental protection, usage of natural resources for the improvement of biosocial environment. Graduates will be able to apply the environmental protection principles for health promotion; to form environment friendly attitude towards healthy nutrition to solve the problems of community health promotion.

In the field of Environment of plant raw materials quality modeling the Bachelor knows the systems of plant raw materials quality modeling; the importance of plant raw materials quality evaluation; can compare the plant raw material production systems; use plant raw materials evaluation standard; is able to propagate progressive systems of plant raw materials quality modelling to ensure food safety; to apply the quality regulating documents.

3. Analysis of programmes

3.1. Programme *Bachelor of Public Health*

3.1.1. Structure, contents and study methods

Duration of Bachelor studies – 4 years (8 semesters) full time studies. The volume of this study programme, including practical and professional activity training and research work is 160 credits. Bachelor study programme consists of three groups of subjects: general university education subjects (28 credits or 17,5%); subjects of basic studies of this programme (50 credits or 31,3%); subjects of specialized education in this study programme (65 credits or 40,6%); practical training – 4 credits (2,5%); final thesis – 4 credits (2,5%); elective study subjects – 9 credits (5,6%), what corresponds to the Regulations for Consecutive Studies in the Republic of Lithuania. Self-dependent study work makes 44%.

In the self-assessment document was stated, that the subjects of the field of Biomedical sciences, which are necessary to know the specific character of health promotion, make 22 credits or 14% of the total volume of this study programme, however in the detailed description of the specific course very important parts of the public health were missing.

Curriculum design is organized in subjects of three-component-parts: general university subjects and basic study field subjects running mostly in the first two study years, and special or professional oriented subjects offered for the third and fourth study year students.

Besides lectures, class time (seminars and practical work) is based on interactive and creative learning methods: student presentations, case studies, distance learning and class discussions.

- Final examination before graduation may be thesis or final exam, in order of student's choice. Taking into account that every student at bachelor level should have a certain research abilities expert team suggested considering theses as common way of final examination.
- Also practice in 4 credits is too short for obtaining good practical skills for undergraduate students. This problem appears during discussion with the students as well. Prolonging of public health related practice is highly recommended.
- Some parts from the general studies should be considered to reorganize and diminish for example: foreign language (8 CP), state and society development (3CP); or to increase credits valued for very broad course of psychology (now 2CP).
- In the basic training study subjects should more include human aspects, for example human anatomy and physiology; human biochemistry, nutrition related diseases.

- Instead of Higher mathematics Course of statistics and epidemiology is recommended;
- Content of general ecology should be turned more to environmental health, which is an important part of public health training.
- Microbiology should be delivered in light of microorganisms as source for human infection diseases.
- In the technology course should be teach industry based food technology aspects as well.
- Content of food sciences (9) and food sciences (9)
- In the Curriculum is missing some important parts of public health as epidemiology, food and nutrition related diseases, risk factors, prevention, general concepts of health promotion, community based program planning, implementation and evaluation, research methods used in PH, Organizing and management of Health care system, health education and pedagogical principles.
- Social psychology and social health promotion should be compulsory instead of elective specialization course.
- Specialization in field recreation and rural tourism should be reflect on taking into account that it is not a track of Public health sciences.
- Amount of agriculture related topics is recommended to decrease to give preference to some missing public health and health issue.

Students' knowledge and practical skills are assessed during the study course by writing control works, doing individual and group presentations. The final assessment form of the studied subject is written exam.

3.1.2. Execution of studies and support for students

In discussion with the students they indicate good distribution of the workload, competent lecturers and improving study surrounding. The main reason for entering this program was mentioned new and attractive study program. Motivation of the students was high. They will appreciate more practical training in the future.

The feedback on the curriculum and the quality of studies has been collected from the surveys of the students and graduates on an every year basis.

3.1.3. Variation in the number of students

The study programme *Biosocial Environment and Nutrition* is popular among entrants. The number of applicants significantly exceeded the number of places, planned by the Government. 76% of the admitted indicate the study programme *Biosocial Environment and Nutrition* within the first - sixth priorities in their applications. Majority or on entrants were women. At the moment there were students in the bachelor program of public health.

3.1.4. Teaching staff

Both the review team and the students have stressed the commitment of the teaching staff to the bachelor program and the students perceive their teachers as having a high level of competence. The study programme employs 6 professors, who teach specialized education subjects, 24 docents, 14 lecturers, of which 2 are doctors of sciences. And majority of them belong directly to the Faculty of Agriculture.

The structure of the staff corresponds to the program running at the moment but should be considered in process of increasing human based and public health, and public health nutrition related subjects. Future professional development of the faculty in field of nutrition and public health is recommended.

3.1.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the programme

Advantages

- High motivation of staff members and students
- good intellectual and technical capacity for agriculture, food, raw material study subjects
- large number of the contact hours in connection with self studies

Disadvantages

- lack of evidence of European Public Health nutrition perspective
- lack of human health, public health, health promotion and public health nutrition topics into curriculum;
- limited time devoted to practice
- the excessive number of staff involved in the programme
- large number of the contact hours in connection with self studies
- the usage of the confusing terminology (health educalogy, health ecology).
- the dual principle of the final examination

4. Material conditions

Classrooms were well equipped with technical means which corresponds to modern requirements and stimulates the study process. For self studies there were computer classes available for students.

Quality of teaching and learning is influenced by students' supply with textbooks, scientific and methodical literature, which is indicated in curriculum of all subjects. In some subjects teachers have prepared study materials for students electronically. Significant amount of the necessary literature is collected at the department of Horticulture and Market Gardening, which supervises this study programme. In the last 5 years teachers of the department have published the textbook *Agricultural Biotechnology*, 35 various methodical publications. However amount of public health and especially public health nutrition related literature and scientific journals should be improved and significant increased in the library.

5. External relations

The country and regional health authorities have been involved in program creating process from the beginning and have been very supportive to it. However employers do not recognize this new program very well. Therefore many of the graduates looking for continue Master level training in other universities. It will be useful to clarify the need and employment possibilities for such type of specialists with employers and policy makers at all levels of public health practice including Ministry of health.

Cooperation with similar training institution around the Europe is essentially needed.

6. Feedback

Almost all the students express willingness to continue their studies in Master level programme, it will improve job possibilities for them. Discussion with employers showed good relation Faculty of Agronomy and Scientific institute. Also other employers presented in discussion expressed high appreciation of the professional profile of the graduates. They see professional carrier of graduates in very different area, as producing of ecological products, food safety, food marketing, education of farmers, rural tourism, health promotion etc.

The alumni interviewed were very positive about their experience in the respective programme. However, they express very low recognition of the diploma in the job market. A master diploma is better recognized by employers. The practice in public health field was insufficient. They suggested diminishing of agriculture topics and increasing of human and public health studies in curriculum.

7. Internal assurance of study quality

Students' feed back operates on a regular basis after each study subject and every study year. Teachers make student opinion surveys to evaluate the quality of teaching and adjust the subject matter of their study subject and teaching methods on the basis of the students' expectations. The request of students for negotiations with the universities for crediting college studies has to be also seriously considered.

The survey of employers' opinion about the working graduates was also carried out.

8. General assessment of the programmes within the study field

During the visit we met hard working, motivated and talented people. Clearly there is a need in the society, especially in relation with administrative reforms in Public health services in the public sector. To create a new programme which are multidisciplinary, and cross-sectored are always very challenging. Particularly in the context which there is not clear tradition and existing resources have to reallocate new way. As we understood the programme is quite unique in the whole country. In the programme national and international co-operation is well organized. Everything seems to be well organized and managed.

8.1.Recommendations:

- Clarification of the aim and goal of the programme. We as external evaluators were not convinced about combination of biosocial environment and nutrition and rural tourism. Rural tourism is surely important subject but combination in the programme is not the best possible. Separation these two might be relevant decision.

- Benchmarking of the programme is highly necessary with the equivalent programmes in biosocial environment and nutrition in terms of content and also in purpose to improve recognition of the programme internationally and ensure students mobility.

- The curriculum is to some extent unbalanced. We highly recommend in the programme subjects such as epidemiology, human anatomy and physiology, human behaviour, communication and basic of education sciences. The changes in the programme mean also certain rotation in academic staff and involved teachers. In all, the content of the curriculum should emphasize more public health issues, including subjects and theoretical and methodology orientation in their theses.

- Practical learning should be strengthened. Arrangements of professional practices need to be systematized. All in all co-operation with public and private sector employers should be frequent in terms to ensure the continuous improvement, but also to increase employers knowledge of the potential of graduates.

- Learning environment such as library, textbooks, internet access is in reasonable level. However, we recommend that some basic material on public health and nutrition should be available both in paper copy and full text via the electronic data base. Many of

laboratories are under renovation. Because of the fast technological change the modernization of the learning labs is crucial to ensure for the students the very latest technological advantages.

- There might be good arguments to offer for the students also master degree programme. The risk is that bachelor level does not have enough relevance at the labour market and thus student will continue at master level studies on the other fields. In that case the creative new idea of this programme is "wasted".

8. 2. Proposal for accreditation

Study programme at Lithuanian University of Agriculture:

Undergraduate study programme *Biosocial Environment and Nutrition* (state registration 61210B105) is given **conditional accreditation**.

Head of the group Juha Erkki Kinnunen

Members Roza Adany

 Anita Villerusa

 Jonas Bartlingas

STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS EKSPERTŲ TARYBA

POSĖDŽIO PROTOKOLAS

2007-08-21 Nr. 7-6

Vilnius

Posėdis įvyko 2007 m. rugpjūčio 21 d.

Posėdžio vieta: Vilnius, Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

Posėdžio laikas: 14.00 – 17.00 val.

Posėdžio pirmininkas Giedrius Kuprevičius

Posėdžio sekretorės: Daiva Buivydienė ((darbotvarkės 1; 4; 6; 8-10 klausimai)

Dalia Jelinskienė (darbotvarkės 2; 3; 5; 7 klausimai)

Dalyvavo Tarybos pirmininkas Giedrius Kuprevičius; Tarybos nariai: Algirdas Eduardas Čižas, Gintaras Gavėnas (svarstant darbotvarkės 1-5 klausimus), Rimantas Jankauskas, Onutė Junevičienė, Justas Nugaras, Henrikas Mykolaitis, Juozas Kulys, Jonas Ruškus, Marijonas Rimantas Urbonavičius, Pranas Žiliukas.

Posėdyje taip pat dalyvavo: Studijų kokybės vertinimo centro Studijų vertinimo skyriaus vedėjas Almantas Šerpatauskas; svarstant pirmą darbotvarkės klausimą dalyvavo ekspertų grupės narys Jonas Bartlingas.

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DARBOTVARKĖ:

1. Visuomenės sveikatos krypties Lietuvos žemės ūkio universiteto pagrindinių studijų programos *Biosocialinis ūkis ir mityba* išorinio išsamiojo vertinimo išvadų pakartotinas svarstymas.

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1. SVARSTYTA: Lietuvos žemės ūkio universiteto visuomenės sveikatos krypties pagrindinių studijų programos *Biosocialinis ūkis ir mityba* išorinio išsamiojo vertinimo išvados.

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NUSPREŠTA:

1. Lietuvos žemės ūkio universiteto studijų programą programą *Biosocialinis ūkis ir mityba* (61210B105) akredituoti ribojamai. Nepritarti ekspertų grupės siūlymui studijų programą *Biosocialinis ūkis ir mityba* akredituoti lygtinai, nes programoje nepakankama sveikatos dalykų dalis, trūksta bazinių visuomenės sveikatos krypties dalykų, institucijoje iš esmės neatliekami visuomenės sveikatos krypties moksliniai tyrimai, nepakankamas bendradarbiavimas su visuomenės sveikatos institucijomis.

Už šį sprendimą balsavo 11 Tarybos narių (visi).

Tarybos pirmininkas

Giedrius Kuprevičius

Tarybos sekretorės:

Daiva Buivydienė

Dalia Jelinskienė