



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Šiaulių universiteto

**VERLSLO ADMINISTRAVIMO PROGRAMOS
(612N10004)**

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION* (612N10004)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Siauliai University**

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Verslo administravimas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612N10004
Studijų sritis	socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	verslas
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (4), iššęstinė (5,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	verslo bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1998-05-22

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Business administration</i>
State code	612N10004
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Business
Kind of the study programme	University study
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (4), Part-time (5,5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Business
Date of registration of the study programme	22-05-1998

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I. INTRODUCTION

Siauliai University is a classical University, comprising of 8 Faculties, the Continuing Studies Institute, the Europe Study Centre, 13 Science Centres, a Library, a Botanical Garden, an Art Gallery, a Language and Culture Centre, a Sports Club, the Students' Representative Office, and 8 Art Groups. Also established at the University are a Gymnasium, a Management Administration Centre and the Siauliai University Publishing Company.

The first cycle study programme *Business Administration* is implemented under the Social Sciences Faculty by the Department of Management. The international evaluation team of five experts visited Siauliai University on 26 February, 2013. Having worked through the required background information and the self-assessment review presented by the University, the panel members met with administrative and teaching staff, student representatives, alumni and social partners. The team agreed on the suggestions and recommendations outlined below. These are presented in this report in order to enhance further what is already a well-developed and established programme of studies.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes

The Bachelor degree programme in Business Administration has been developed in accordance with all legal requirements of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, and relates fully to the mission and vision of the University. The aims, learning outcomes, programme structure and content are integrated and in compliance with European and wider international standards.

This programme has an important role to play in both regional and national development. It offers to the labour market generalists and specialists in line with the needs of employers. According to the University's self-assessment report, approximately 85% of graduates, on average, gain employment, with 70% likely to be working in an area related to the qualification.

The main aim of the curriculum is to prepare students to manage small and medium-size enterprises effectively and responsibly. Graduates with this degree should also be capable of performing a wide range of duties in both the public and private sectors. Progression to further studies at Master's degree level represents another viable option for the award holder. The aims are similar to those of comparable Bachelor study programmes, and are related to the acquisition of both general and specific knowledge, skills and competences.

A key feature of the curriculum is the focus on ensuring that students develop practical problem-solving skills, as reflected by the syllabus content across a number of courses/subjects. There is a concentration on preparing the students for leadership roles and positions where the implementation of corporate social responsibility is of key importance. In order to ensure that teaching staff are equipped to deliver the programme in accordance with the stated aims and learning outcomes, the University places a strong emphasis on ongoing staff development, with a particular emphasis on pedagogy and didactics.

One example of a positive outcome from this approach has been the successful introduction of problem-based learning across the curriculum, combined with an increase in the volume of student group work. Staff enthusiasm for new ideas and approaches to curriculum delivery was evident during the site visit undertaken by the panel.

The curriculum is structured so that students acquire knowledge and develop skills on a progressive basis, as appropriate for a first cycle qualification in higher education. While the learning outcomes are generally well defined, some of the topics are not studied in any depth, and the outcome could be said to represent only the most basic level of understanding. Equally, the wording used to describe some of the learning outcomes could be strengthened to reflect the level and standard of the curriculum and, in the process, to distinguish this programme clearly from education and training opportunities at sub-degree level.

The aims and learning outcomes of the programme relate well to the needs of the labour market in Lithuania in general, and especially in the Siauliai Region. The University strives to ensure that the curriculum is kept up to date and revised regularly in accordance with published research and recent developments. This approach and the ongoing commitment to quality is in line with the overall determination to ensure that the graduate will have acquired the knowledge, developed the skills and cultivated the attitudes specified in the learning outcomes.

The communication which exists with alumni and social partners also helps to inform the Faculty and the Department about how the world of business is evolving, and serves to signpost changes which should be made to the curriculum. In this context, the introduction of an awards scheme whereby the outstanding achievements of particular alumni could be recognised should serve to strengthen further the existing positive relationship with stakeholders, and also help to promote the programme.

As evidence of the relevance of the programme recent studies have shown, and employers emphasised to the panel during the site visit, that there is a significant demand for qualified staff who have not only a critical understanding in areas such as law, economics, management and marketing but who are also capable of carrying out practical tasks such as information gathering, processing and analysis.

The title of the award is valid, and the aims, objectives and learning outcomes are generally in harmony with each other and with the curriculum delivered to students.

2. Curriculum Design

The curriculum has been designed to meet all legal requirements of the Republic of Lithuania and to comply with the guidelines set by the country's Ministry of Education and Science .The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure the attainment of the stated learning outcomes.

The curriculum content consists of general modules, subject-field modules, other field modules, and specialised modules. A feature of the content is the opportunity allowed for a student to concentrate in one of four areas:

- ▲ Finance Management
- ▲ Logistics Management
- ▲ Personnel Management
- ▲ Marketing Management.

The work practice or internship element helps the student to integrate theory and practice and thus become better prepared for opportunities in the labour market after graduation. During the internship, students are expected to apply their knowledge, to observe how the entity in which they are working operates, to reflect upon the learning experience and how it relates to their own strengths, and to identify areas where they may require further self development. Internship opportunities can be offered by the University, by relevant companies and organisations in Lithuania, and also abroad via the Erasmus internship framework.

The range of courses/subjects within the curriculum covers a wide area. There is no significant duplication of topics or redundant content. The curriculum structure seeks to reflect the latest trends in business management principles and practice. One of the impressive features is the inclusion of content on corporate social responsibility, environmental protection, and sustainable development. However, EU structures and policies are referred to sparsely, and almost exclusively within the law syllabus. A stronger focus on how the EU operates in the business arena and the implications for member countries such as Lithuania is necessary; as is a more expansive coverage of the various facets of business law in general. Business ethics should be given a more explicit reference within the curriculum, and the time allocated to topics such as health and safety at work could be expanded.

One of the threats identified by the panel from the review of the curriculum is that, in an attempt to cover as many topics as possible, the depth of coverage can be lacking. By way of examples, the syllabuses in areas such as social philosophy and law could be mentioned. A related factor

is the desirability of ensuring that such an undergraduate programme in Business Administration contains a sufficient emphasis on the application of theoretical content and research findings. A stronger focus on the practice, as well as the theory, of business management would enhance the learning experience of students in preparation for their future careers. Ensuring that students become involved with as many business-related subjects/courses as early as possible is also strongly recommended by the panel.

In terms of further improvement, an increased emphasis should be placed on the consistency of the curriculum and on involving a larger number of practitioners in the student learning process.

3. Teaching Staff

The composition of the academic staff associated with curriculum delivery meets all legal requirements of the Republic of Lithuania. More than fifty per cent of the 53 people involved possess a doctoral degree or higher. Additionally, some members of the academic staff also own or are engaged in private businesses, thereby gaining firsthand practical experience in the field which they are teaching. Therefore, the academic staffs are adequately qualified and possess the expertise necessary to help the students achieve the aims and learning outcomes associated with the qualification.

It is understood that, in general, their involvement with the University represents a formal full-time commitment for academic staff members. It is essential, therefore, that extra-university duties and responsibilities do not detract from pedagogic quality or the time which teachers can make available for consultation with students.

The turnover of academic staff is comparatively low, and results mainly from career enhancement, such as gaining a Doctoral degree or the position of Assistant Professor. The majority of academic staff have worked in the Faculty and been involved with this particular programme over a long period. This has helped to ensure continuity and consistency of approach.

It is essential that the curriculum and the teaching methods deployed for programme delivery continue to be refreshed and, in this respect, the involvement of incoming/guest lecturers should

be expanded. Competence in the English language is partly lacking amongst some academic staff (especially in the case of the more experienced members of the teaching team). This situation can impact upon their capacity to acquire and share up-to-date knowledge. Also, the extent of other core academic activities amongst staff in general is rather low, as indicated by the relatively small number of publications, especially in international, but also in national journals.

Other aspects in terms of improvement include the involvement of academic staff in conference presentations and in international exchanges with other academics in the same field. It is understood by the panel that the policy of the University provides adequate opportunity for staff participation in academic research, personal development and pedagogical improvement.

4. Facilities and Learning Resources

The facilities and general learning environment are appropriate and suitable for this programme. The total area of the Social Science Faculty has been expanded since the last expert panel review. Included in the physical infrastructure are different auditoriums, equipped with computers and technological aids, and separate computer laboratories. The computer stock has increased significantly over the past five years. In terms of curriculum delivery, the panel suggests that further scope exists for the utilisation of a system such as Moodle to its full potential across a wider range of subjects/courses.

The Faculty has licensed software available e.g. accounting, business management and statistics packages. The majority of students surveyed by the University have expressed satisfaction with the quality and accessibility of the learning facilities and resources. Similar sentiments were expressed by current student representatives to the visiting panel on the occasion of the site visit.

Students may use both University and Faculty libraries. These contain a relatively high number of work places, with internet connections (the main library has wifi) and separate rooms for group work. The collection of books has been expanded over recent years, and there is the possibility of inter-library loans from cooperating Lithuanian and foreign Universities. The bulk of the literature used for teaching is in the native language. The Faculty subscribes to the majority of the most popular databases, thereby alleviating to an extent the problems caused by the limited nature of contemporary printed resources available within the learning environment.

Students of the Social Science Faculty have expressed only partial satisfaction with the library facilities, including the volume of books, periodical publications and access to databases. This may be explained by the availability of just one or two copies of some compulsory textbooks. As a potential step towards the solution of this dilemma, the University may wish to consider a more intensive usage of the Moodle system referred to above, whereby scanned copies of compulsory reading material could be uploaded to the extent allowable. As a priority, it is essential to expand the volume of updated textbooks available within the library for this programme, with particular reference to the range of such material available through the medium of the English language.

5. Study Process and Student Assessment

The admission requirements to the programme are in line with regulations of the common admission system for Lithuanian Universities. The study process facilitates the attainment of the learning outcomes, and there is a constant attempt to make the study process more practically based, as shown by the emphasis given to the work placement. However, as mentioned already, the superficial coverage of certain topics militates against an in-depth understanding of some of the material covered.

According to the data on final thesis results, the scores appear to be relatively high - e.g. over the period 2009-2012, approximately 25% of students gained a maximum mark of 10. This suggests that an over-generous approach is being adopted when marking this element of students' work. The sample of such theses inspected by the panel members would confirm such a conclusion.

Also in the general area of assessment, students are required to undertake a variety of assignments which are allocated many different weightings. In order to enrich the learning process, the introduction of a number of integrated assignments/tests covering more than one subject/course is strongly recommended, as is a review of the rationale behind the current volume of assessment tests and also the comparative weighting assigned to each, with special reference to the final examinations. The University is strongly encouraged to continue its efforts to eliminate plagiarism and to ensure that appropriate sanctions are in place to act as a deterrent against cheating in assessment tests.

While the participation of students in research and other related academic activities is growing steadily, there is scope for further improvement. Various conferences and other events are organised for and by students, and their involvement in such initiatives requires greater encouragement and incentives. Students have opportunities to participate in exchange studies under the provisions of the Erasmus scheme. The number availing of such possibilities is approximately 5% over recent years. While the site visit confirmed that students are provided with information about existing exchange schemes, stronger incentives and more assistance with the planning and organisation of studies abroad should improve the effectiveness of the outcome. An increase in the number and variety of practice-based opportunities and placement internships for students would also be highly desirable.

All of the main documents governing student assessment are readily available. However, it is essential that students are made fully aware of which learning outcomes are being measured by each assessment instrument being implemented. The descriptions provided for the evaluation criteria in some subjects, for example in Law, could be improved still further.

Students often take part in monitoring the conduct of examinations involving fellow students from other Faculties. This approach is adopted to increase their level of responsibility towards the integrity of the system, and to allow them to become more involved in the study process in general. Based on the discussions held during the site visit, it would appear that communication between staff and students is open, friendly and based upon mutual respect. Students can meet with members of the teaching staff during office hours and also communicate further via email.

It is understood that some members of the academic staff can be involved in supervising up to 16 different theses. For a teacher with a full workload, plus other duties and responsibilities, this could be excessive and lead to a decrease in the quality of academic support and personal attention which can be provided to the individual student.

The University monitors carefully the drop-out rate from the programme, which is relatively high at around 20%. In this context, the structure of the curriculum is very important in helping to ensure that students focus on core business-related courses/subjects at an early stage of their participation within the programme. A survey amongst students who have left could be helpful in identifying the real reasons for their departure. The timing of such research can be significant, and it is recommended that the information be gathered when the former student is in a better position to provide accurate, meaningful answers.

In some higher education institutions study programmes, such as this Bachelor degree, include a module which is entitled 'Learning to Learn', or similar. The aim is to enable the student to acquire knowledge and develop skills related to topics such as: different learning styles, note taking at lectures, time management, effective study skills, stress management, and how to prepare for and complete assessment tests/examinations. As a result, the student can develop greater self-confidence, become more highly motivated and achieve a better overall academic performance.

Some additional positive features of the study process include: the possibility for the student to engage in project work involving more than one course, the availability of group consultations with lecturers, the provision of examinations in the form of conferences and group work, active curriculum development projects, the engagement of course coordinators, and the existence of a generally positive learning environment for students and staff.

The effectiveness of curriculum content and delivery is reflected both by the successful attainment of the learning outcomes, and the relevance of the qualification in terms of meeting the needs of employers who regularly express their high level of satisfaction with the quality of the graduates.

6. Programme Management

There are several teams responsible for different managerial aspects and for monitoring ongoing progress. The purpose of the management structure is to ensure that all aspects of programme development, implementation and review receive the required attention. In general, the responsibilities are comprehensive and have been allocated clearly, with each staff member being aware of his/her duties in relation to analysis and monitoring.

The University has managed to implement successfully a problem-based approach across different courses/subjects and to encourage staff to work on improving their teaching skills. The time and effort devoted to pedagogy and didactics should be maintained and supported.

Feedback from students is an important source of information in the general area of programme management. Suggestions from student surveys etc. are actively considered and have formed the

basis for improvements, such as a better library collection and more emphasis on the practical dimension of the curriculum.

Alumni and social partners also contribute significantly to the quality assurance and management processes. The feedback which these stakeholders provide helps to establish and maintain the benchmark against which the standard and relevance of learning outcomes and curriculum content may be measured. Employers of graduates are also in a position to adjudicate on the effectiveness of the learning process, and, as indicated above, they regularly comment favorably in this regard.

The suggestions above and recommendations below are presented by the panel to assist management in the ongoing evaluation and further development of this degree programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel's analysis of the programme has led to the following recommendations:

- ⤴ To examine further the sequencing of all courses/subjects within the curriculum. It is necessary that the first year should contain not just basic or general courses but also motivational “powering” business content in line with aims and objectives underlying the entire curriculum.
- ⤴ To expand the coverage of law; and of the content related to the structure and functioning of the European Union, with a particular concentration on business development and management policies which affect countries such as Lithuania. Business ethics should be given a more explicit mention, as appropriate, within programme content, while a more expansive reference to the coverage of topics such as health and safety at work is also seen by the panel as highly desirable.
- ⤴ To offer and encourage students to select a greater number of courses/subjects delivered through the medium of the English language. In this context, the involvement of more foreign visiting lecturers, the use of extra reading materials in English, and the provision

of incentives for students to communicate to a greater extent in the language are seen as particularly significant.

- ⤴ To provide additional incentives for academic staff to increase their involvement in activities other than teaching, for example, publications, conference participation, applied research opportunities, and international exchange schemes.
- ⤴ To place an increased emphasis on connecting students with entrepreneurs, and on having professional mentors available during their studies. An expanded use of case study material is also to be encouraged.
- ⤴ To develop and implement a comprehensive policy which will recognise both prior learning and prior experiential learning on the part of students and prospective students who have already attained some of the programme's learning outcomes. National and international systems already in place for this purpose can provide a strong basis for the work to be undertaken in this area. Where certain learning outcomes have already been achieved by the student or potential student, it is important to give due recognition to this fact, thereby shortening the official duration of that person's studies, for the benefit of all concerned.
- ⤴ To ensure that students are fully informed well in advance that not all specialisations may be available if there is an insufficient level of student interest in each of these. It could be disappointing for a student who has committed to a particular specialize to discover the reality of the situation at a late stage.

IV. SUMMARY

The Bachelor degree programme relates well to the mission and vision of the University and forms an integral part of the total suite of education opportunities provided for students.

The cooperation between the Faculty/Department and the stakeholders is strong, while the social interaction between academic staff and students appears to be open and positive. These factors contribute to the provision of an environment which is conducive to student development.

As a general comment, it appears that a more extensive use of the English language in communication between staff and students could enhance the learning process and improve the competence levels of graduates, while the involvement of an increased cohort of suitably focused, English-speaking visiting lecturers is also recommended.

The members of the visiting panel wish to thank the academic staff, students, alumni and representatives of the social partners for the courtesy and cooperation extended to us on the occasion of the site visit.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme Business administration (state code – 612N10004) at Siauliai University is given a positive evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
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)	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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Grupės nariai:

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ŠIAULIŲ UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *VERSLO ADMINISTRAVIMO* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 612N10004) 2013-05-27 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-157 IŠRAŠAS

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Šiaulių universiteto studijų programa *Verslo administravimas* (valstybinis kodas – 612N10004) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	18

* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

▲ **IV. SANTRAUKA**

Bakalauro laipsnio programa yra gerai susieta su universiteto misija bei vizija ir yra neatsiejama visų studentams teikiamų švietimo galimybių dalis.

Fakulteto / katedros ir socialinių dalininkų bendradarbiavimas stiprus, o socialinė sąveika tarp dėstytojų ir studentų yra atvira ir teigiama. Šie veiksniai padeda sukurti aplinką, kuri palanki studentų tobulėjimui.

Bendra pastaba yra ta, kad intensyvesnis anglų kalbos naudojimas dėstytojams bendraujant su studentais sustiprintų mokymosi procesą ir pagerintų absolventų kompetenciją, taip pat rekomenduojama pakviesti daugiau atitinkamos specializacijos anglakalbių lektorių.

Ekspertų grupės nariai norėtų padėti dėstytojams, studentams, absolventams ir socialinių partnerių atstovams už malonų sutikimą ir bendradarbiavimą vizito į aukštąją mokyklą metu.

▲ **III. REKOMENDACIJOS**

Išanalizavę programą ekspertai parengė šias rekomendacijas:

- ⤴ Toliau nagrinėti kursų / dalykų išdėstymą programoje. Pirmame kurse turėtų būti ne tik pagrindų ar bendrieji dalykai, tačiau ir motyvuojantys verslo turinio dalykai, atitinkantys visos programos tikslus ir uždavinius.
- ⤴ Išplėsti teisės temų apimtį ir turinį, taip pat temų apie Europos Sąjungos struktūrą ir funkcionavimą, ypač orientuojantis į verslo plėtros ir vadybos politiką, turinčią poveikį tokioms šalims kaip Lietuva. Programos turinyje, kur reikia, turėtų būti detaliau išdėstyta verslo etika; ekspertai taip pat labai rekomenduoja, kad tokios temos kaip darbuotojų sauga ir sveikata būtų nagrinėjamos plačiau.
- ⤴ Pasiūlyti ir paskatinti studentus pasirinkti studijuoti daugiau dalykų anglų kalba. Į tai atsižvelgiant labai svarbu įtraukti daugiau kviestinių lektorių iš užsienio, naudoti papildomą metodinę medžiagą anglų kalba ir skatinti studentus kuo daugiau bendrauti anglų kalba.
- ⤴ Teikti papildomas paskatas dėstytojams, kad jie daugiau dalyvautų ne tik dėstyimo veikloje, o, pavyzdžiui, rengtų publikacijas, dalyvautų konferencijose, išnaudotų taikomųjų tyrimų galimybes ir tarptautinių mainų programas.
- ⤴ Didesnę dėmesį skirti kontaktams tarp studentų ir verslininkų užmegzti bei galimybėms studentams bendrauti su profesionaliais mentorais studijuojant. Taip pat turėtų būti skatinama plačiau naudoti atvejų analizes.
- ⤴ Parengti ir įgyvendinti išsamią tvarką, kuri padėtų pripažinti tiek esamų, tiek būsimų studentų, kurie jau yra pasiekę tam tikrus programos numatomus studijų rezultatus, ankstesnę mokymąsi / patirtį. Jau veikiančios tokio pobūdžio šalies ir tarptautinės sistemos gali praversti kaip stiprus pagrindas. Tais atvejais, kai esamas ar būsimas studentas yra pasiekęs tam tikrus numatomus studijų rezultatus, svarbu atitinkamai atsižvelgti į šį faktą, taip sutrumpinant oficialią studijų trukmę ir suteikiant naudos visoms suinteresuotosioms šalims.
- ⤴ Užtikrinti, kad studentai iš anksto žinotų, kad galbūt jie negalės rinktis kurios nors specializacijos, jei kuria nors iš jų nesusidomės pakankamas studentų skaičius. Tokios žinios, kai jos pateikiamos pavėluotai, gali nuvilti studentus, kurie buvo numatę rinktis konkrečią specializaciją.