



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO (KAUNO FAKULTETO)
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINIO VERSLO VADYBA*
(valstybinis kodas - 621N20006)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT*
(state code - 621N20006)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS UNIVERSITY (KAUNAS FACULTY)

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Tarptautinio verslo vadyba</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621N20006
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Vadyba
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės (2 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Vadybos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	24 th June, 1998; Nr. 13

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>International Business Management</i>
State code	621N20006
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Management
Type of the study programme	University Studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time studies, 2 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Management
Date of registration of the study programme	24/06/1998 No. 13

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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

On the basis of the external evaluation report of the study programme, SKVC takes a decision to accredit the 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.	Minutes from Department meetings

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

Vilnius University (VU) is a public higher school founded in 1579. It is the oldest and the largest higher education institution in Lithuania in terms of its staff, students, divisions and programmes. It provides 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle studies in the fields of humanities, social, natural, biomedical and technological sciences. Currently the university offers over 70 Bachelor's

(including integrated) study programmes and more than 100 Master's programmes as well as 30 areas of doctoral studies and over 50 residence study programmes.

Kaunas Faculty of Humanities (KFH) was established in 1964 and is presently composed of 7 departments (Business Economics and Management; Philosophy and Cultural Studies; Finance and Accounting; Informatics; Lithuanian Philology; Germanic Philology; Foreign Languages) and a Centre for Socio-Cultural Research. Currently, the Faculty offers 9 Bachelor's and 11 Master's study programmes as well as doctoral studies in different fields of Humanities and Social Sciences. The academic staff consists of 17 professors, 38 associate professors, 2 leading researchers, 2 chief research fellows, 28 lecturers with a PhD degree, 1 assistant lecturer and 46 administrators. Around 800 undergraduates and graduates as well as 34 PhD students pursue their studies at the Faculty of Humanities nowadays.

The *International Business Management* (IBM) study programme has been delivered by the Department of Business Economics and Management since 1998. The programme was externally assessed in 2005 and again in 2009 with a positive mark and accredited without conditions. It is offered in the Lithuanian language only. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) states that the programme has been gradually renewed since the last accreditation “with regard to the innovations of scientific research and the realities of employment market, the evolution of professional field” (p. 5, SER).

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according to the *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 10/04/2017.

Review team:

- 1. Prof. Dr. Georgi Apostolov (team leader)**, *Vice Rector of South West University “Neofit Rilski”, Associate Professor in Organisation and Management of Education and Science (Bulgarija);*
- 2. Prof. Dr. John Sae**, *Professor of International Business (IBWL), Management and Corporate Leadership at ESB Business School, Reutlingen University (Vokietija);*
- 3. Dr. Pedro Pablo Cardoso Castro**, *Course Leader/Lecturer - Strategic Management/ Innovation and Change at Leeds Metropolitan University (Jungtinė Karalystė);*
- 4. Mr. Gintautas Kučas**, *Managing Director at Lithuanian Marketing Association, Marketing and Business Development Consultant (Lietuva);*
- 5. Mr. Linas Misevičius**, *Student of Master Programme “International Marketing and Management” at ISM University (Lietuva);*

Evaluation coordinator: *Ms Gabriele Bajorinaitė*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The *International Business Management* (IBM) study programme aims to develop competencies corresponding to Level 7 (Second Cycle) studies in accordance with the Lithuanian Qualification Framework and addresses general market needs. It is similar to many other study programmes offered in Lithuania and worldwide (pp. 9-10, SER) although having certain specific features. Its main “purpose” is said to “prepare highly qualified specialists who would meet the needs of contemporary market and who would be able to work in international business companies as medium- and top-level management” (p. 6, SER). Furthermore, it aims to provide “knowledge of management, economics and other related knowledge and practical skills to people who are pursuing a career in international organizations” (ibid.). These are very broad and abstract definitions of the programme’s aim and objectives which neither represent its distinctive profile nor convey a clear message to potential applicants. Besides, there exists a certain contradiction relating to the fact that the programme is delivered only in Lithuanian while targeting international career prospects for its graduates. Furthermore, it seems that the level of English language backup is fairly low and this can be even perceived in the quality of the SER where the misuse of key terms (e.g. “aims”, “objectives”, “learning outcomes”, “competencies”, etc.) and improper wordings create confusing or inconsistent explanations. During the meeting with the SER group, the review team learned that the report had been originally written in Lithuanian and then translated into English without an expert check and appropriate revision. This could explain the comprehension difficulties and confusions. However, a number of critical inconsistencies are not due to linguistic reasons but to an obvious absence of a clear vision particularly about the programme’s profile itself. For example, on p. 10 of the SER it’s said that the IBM study programme has “more of a scientific nature”, but this very specific feature is entirely missing in (and partially contradicted by) the already mentioned “purpose” and “aim” (e.g. to provide also “practical skills”). Nevertheless, this dual nature of the programme still implicitly exists in Learning Outcomes (LOs) and subjects.

The study programme LOs address two kinds of competencies – generic and subject-specific. Overall, they fall within the field of International Business and have potential to equip graduates with necessary skills for successful professional performance. It might have been better if their setup follows (as mentioned on p. 9, SER) the standard structure, established by the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of Lithuania on the approval of the descriptor of study cycles (25/11/2011 No. V-2212), which encompasses five different types of competencies at the Master’s level – Knowledge acquisition and its application, Research skills, Special, Social and Personal abilities. The competencies are divided into 3 generic and 4 subject-specific sub-

groups, further specified respectively in 8 and 12 LOs (Table 1, SER, p. 6). Their definitions need to be revised since in many cases they are insufficiently clear or redundant. For instance, the LO 2.1 states that the graduate “*Will be able to formulate a scientific problem of management, to choose or to create a methodology of scientific research, to perform research independently*”. However, to perform independent scientific research implies by default the identification of a problem, the definition of a theoretical/conceptual framework and the design of a research methodology. Another example is the LO 4.1 – “*Will be familiar with the methods of international and national business environment analysis and will be able to apply them*”. Familiarity with general knowledge does not necessarily imply competence in the use of a certain method. At this level of study what is expected from a graduate is to MASTER the conceptual foundations, methodological approaches and technical methods in a particular field. The definitions of the LOs 1.2 and 5.2 are quite similar (“*Will be familiar with ...*”) and the LO 3.2 (“*Will know how to make successful business contacts – p. 6, SER*) is not indeed a typical “learning outcome”.

On the account of all these, it is strongly advisable to define competences and LOs as abilities of the graduate to apply relevant theories and methods rather than knowing or be familiar with them. Generally, the definitions of the LOs should avoid convoluted language and explanations. Moreover, a clear distinction between “learning outcomes” and “programme objectives” should be made. The best outcome will include a description of the conditions and the acceptable performance level. It should be self-evident and self-explanatory for the prospective applicants to the IBM study programme as well as to any other stakeholder.

Furthermore, there exist some ambiguities about how the LOs respond to concrete demands or professional standards of the contemporary global economy as they do not provide sufficient certainty about the qualities and professional capacity of the future graduate. The SER states that “*the competencies necessary for a future specialist are discussed and compared with the competencies and objectives of the IBM programme*” with social partners (p. 9 and subsequently on pp. 37 and 39, SER). However, this is not substantiated by appropriate justifications nor has it been confirmed sufficiently by social partners present at the meeting with the review team. In addition, definitions of some LOs don’t indicate that it has ever happened (i.e. regular meetings with social partners with a view of improving the LOs and ascertaining that they reflect real market needs). Overall, there is a need for a clearer conceptual framework within which well-defined and systematically arranged LOs provide the distinguishing profile of the IBM degree programme and demonstrate its value adding aspects.

There is an attempt to link the programme aim, competencies (mistakenly termed as “*learning objectives*”) with the taught subjects and generic skills (Table 2, SER, p. 7) but it gives

only a vague idea of the way the professional qualification is being attained. Table 5 (ibid., pp. 12-13) provides more detailed picture of the LOs (again incorrectly labelled as “*objectives of studies*”) and their relevance to particular subjects. However, it contains so many uncertain references and aspects that its use and value might be under question; it is seen without any analysis of the proper course contents (e.g. LO 3.1 is not linked with the “*Cross-Cultural Management*” although it directly refers to it, while its reference to “*Scientific Research Work II*” is not evident at all; LO 5.4 is linked with only 2 subjects none of which relate directly to “finances”, while it’s not linked with “*Technical Analysis in Financial Markets*” or “*International Finances*”; etc.). Overall, the table demonstrates a lack of clarity on how to achieve the LOs in a systematic manner.

The external evaluation team strongly supports this kind of programme presentation through alignment of its core elements (i.e. subjects, LOs, workload, credits; etc.) but recommends elaboration of a more precise matrix where the level of relevance (e.g. high, medium, low) of the individual LOs to particular subjects is essential, clearly visible and justifiable.

The LOs’ definitions of the individual subjects are of better quality, although certain weaknesses still can be identified. For example, extensively used terms like “*comprehension*”, “*ability to recognize*”, “*to creatively view*”, “*understanding*”, “*comprehensive knowledge*”, etc. are not appropriate for defining LOs (i.e. using verbs that describe an observable action has to be considered). Some LOs are quite vaguely presented that the level of their attainment cannot be assessed (e.g. “*to comply with the formal requirements*”, “*the ability to achieve TQM principles by developing international business relations*”, etc.). There are certain subjects within which LOs are mutually inconsistent or repetitive (e.g. “*to make a presentation of a work*” and immediately after this statement follows: “*to make an oral presentation of the work to the classroom*” – App. 1, p. 55). Moreover, repetitions of LOs exist even across disciplines (e.g. International Economics: “*the ability to launch and manage international business development projects*” and International Marketing: “*to be able to initiate and manage international business projects*”; etc.). Certain subjects’ LOs are not linked with appropriate learning activities, assessment methods and assessment criteria (e.g. the main focus is put on knowledge delivery and assessment rather than on skills and competencies development). Equally, it was established that assessment of LOs, as stipulated in their modules by staff, was at variance which was obviously unhelpful for a systematic quality assurance necessary for enhancement of the IBM programme. A weakness is also the existence of similar or identical texts in different module descriptions regarding educational activities, teaching methods, assessment methods and criteria, etc. which do disregarding the specificities of the individual disciplines. The extensive use of

simple tests (“*with open and closed questions of varying difficulty*” having “*four answer options, one – correct*”) in many disciplines is advised to be reconsidered and other assessment methods and strategies, appropriate for Master’s level of studies, should be increased and enhanced. Cognitive LOs are over-focused at the expense of practical ones despite the proclaimed business-oriented aims of the study programme. It was furthermore confirmed by students and alumni, who acknowledged that teaching and assessment were more directed towards knowledge acquisition rather than skills building.

Information about the programme aim, objectives, LOs, content, etc. is publicly accessible through the official websites of the VU and the Faculty of Humanities as well as the national AIKOS system. It is also distributed by printed promotional materials and electronic channels, during regular campaigns or ad hoc events.

2.2. Curriculum design

From a formal point of view, the curriculum design of the IBM study programme meets the legal requirements. The student workload amounts to 120 ECTS credits (permitted range is between 90 and 120 credits); the number of study subjects in one semester does not exceed 5; study field subjects make up 80 ECTS credits (min. 60 is required); the amount of independent (i.e. “self-study”) work is quite high (e.g. 61.5-85% in theoretical subjects and 85-96% in research ones) although suiting the standard (at least 30% of each study subject); the final paper makes up 35 credits (including two research disciplines) which is above the min. required 30 credits. It involves compulsory and optional disciplines from the fields of Economics, Business Management, Research and other related domains which, in general, provide diverse types of knowledge to students.

From an essential point of view, the identity of the programme is still very problematic, as it was in 2005 when a recommendation was made “*to develop a clear overall vision, profile and strategy*” and in 2009 when the review team again had “*not found a clear separation in the focus of the programme*” (ER, 2009, p. 3). On the one hand, the current offering aims to prepare its graduates for an international business career (as already mentioned in the previous section). On the other hand, the management told the review team that the curriculum design had been made with a strong focus on scientific research (mentioned during the meeting as its “*key competitive advantage*”). This core characteristic is also perceptible in (and confirmed by) the majority of subject descriptions (e.g. course objectives, LOs, topics, teaching methods, assignments, etc.) where theory and research elements definitely prevail over practical ones (e.g. there are twice as many lectures as seminars). At the same time, and quite contradictory, the teachers indicated that a quite big part of the programme is assigned to practical knowledge.

Furthermore, both the students and alumni asserted the need and importance of learning practical lessons, case-studies and examples of theoretical application to real business practice as well as attainment of practical skills. In this sense, they said they highly valued the participation of practitioners from the industry as guest lecturers. Moreover, alumni complained about the amount of theoretical assignments. They expressed that they would like to have had a more practical approach of the delivery of the programme with more opportunities to experience practical application of theories and concepts. Some of them even suggested “*a two-three months internship*” to be included. Meanwhile, the SER group is aware of this crucial weakness of the current programme design but no clear ideas for solutions has been given (SER, pp. 10, 16).

All these reveal a contradiction between the visions and intentions of the management and the expectations of the programme applicants. The statistics presented by the SER team (and somehow confirmed by the alumni), indicating that very few of the graduates opt for the continuation at a PhD level, do not provide strong support for the claims made in the presentation of the programme describing it as a pathway to doctoral studies. Alumni and students clearly stated that for most of them the priority after finishing their studies is to obtain a job in an international company. It is important also to highlight the fact that some students and alumni expressed plans to start their own business. This suggests the need to include content in (international) Entrepreneurship, perhaps also considering emerging trends like Social Entrepreneurship.

There is also an impression that the IBM programme seems to be oriented to serve practically regional needs (e.g. graduates work at international companies based in Lithuania). It was evident from the interview with the Management that this situation is creating another identity conflict affecting the definition of scope, purpose and clear identification of the real market for this programme.

Regarding the development of curriculum there were some recommendations, made in the previous evaluation, that have not been addressed: for example, a recommendation to “*include more subjects taught in English*”, “*invite foreign professors*” and attract “*more international students*” (ibid. pp. 4, 6) so as to create an appropriate international atmosphere, which was not acted upon (e.g. all courses are taught only in Lithuanian, no incoming foreign students, only one German guest lecturer, etc.).

The content of the programme (i.e. the contents of the individual modules) provide a vast pool of diverse knowledge which is appropriate for the professional preparation of the graduate. However, their overall setup could be an object for a methodological discussion because of the insufficiently justified sequence of some study subjects. For example, the programme starts with “*Innovation Management*” and “*Interpersonal and International Communication*” whereas a

more suitable introductory discipline like “*International Business and Internalizations of Companies*” is placed in the 2nd Semester. The order of the four economic disciplines “*Macroeconomic Business Environment*”, “*International Economics*”, “*Sustainable Development of EU and Baltic Regions*”, and “*Global Economic Processes*” is not grounded in a clear and sound pedagogical principle (the overall “*conceptual shift from theoretical to practical subjects*” presented by Fig. 1 “Interaction of modules” on p. 15 of SER is not substantiated by appropriate arguments and thus contains questionable arrangements).

There is an existence of compulsory modules not strictly and/or essentially related (in terms of their LOs) to the IBM study programme’s subject matter (e.g. “*Innovation Management*”; “*Sustainable Development of EU and Baltic Regions*” – the content of this latter discipline is, in the perceptions of alumni, outdated and not directly related to the professional practice) whereas other subjects (e.g. “*Leadership*”, “*International Logistics*”) are left optional despite their direct relevance for professional performance in the field of International Business Management.

Also, there are some inconsistencies between certain subjects’ LOs and their particular content (i.e. topics). An example of this is the discipline “*Innovative Management*” where, despite the topics related to “strategies” and the claim in the SER that this discipline “*integrates the key knowledge of strategic business planning*” (p. 14), there are no LOs connected with it. However, there exist a good number of positive examples, i.e. disciplines where the correspondence between subjects’ LOs and content is adequate and essential.

From a technical point of view, the quality of the subject descriptions varies although all teachers used the same nicely designed and appropriately structured template. There is an extensive use of similar texts, short and vague descriptions of activities and assignments (e.g. “*information search; literature analysis*”, “*reports presentation*”; etc.), teaching and learning methods, assessment criteria, etc. regardless of the specificities of individual topics. The topics themselves are presented also in quite diverse ways varying from very short titles (e.g. “*Leadership*” and “*International Finance*”) to a very detailed breakdown of themes. An established standard that is rigorously followed by all staff in preparing their subject descriptions would be a helpful tool here.

Most of the weaknesses could have been avoided if the IBM study programme had been benchmarked. It’s stated in the SER (p.5) that “*the objectives of the studies were compared to second cycle studies in*” a number of universities around the world (accurately named) but a substantiation by any concrete and justifiable information would be really helpful. During the interview with the Management, when asked about the criteria used to compare the programme with other similar ones, there were quite contradictory responses. One has mentioned that they

had to develop a strategy for improving the content of the programme learning from the best, while the other said that this study programme is not facing any competition given its uniqueness. Therefore, to further develop the programme design, it is advisable to compare the current curriculum with other similar programmes, particularly those offered abroad in order to select relevant benchmarks and keep up with them.

Interviewed graduates (5 present at the meeting with the panel) were generally satisfied with the IBM degree programme. However, they appreciated further enhancement through incorporation of industry internships and practical application of theoretical knowledge acquired in class. A similar recommendation was made about the inclusion of a module on IT as well as Business Psychology. Equally, some of them appreciated incorporation of specialized Business English classes and international negotiations skills in order for them to be able to work effectively in an international business context. Present students (4 at the interview) suggested that the inclusion of a foreign language (especially English but also another European language – they mentioned Spanish) would be desirable.

In conclusion, from reading the SER and subsequent interviews, the review team established that despite some weaknesses related to the nature, LOs and content, teaching and assessment methods, as well as the identified potential for improvements (reflected in the recommendations) the scope of the IBM degree programme is overall sufficient to ensure intended LOs. Furthermore, there is evidence that latest achievements of management science as well as of other related areas have been used to certain extent in the curricula.

2.3. Teaching staff

The IBM study programme is delivered by highly qualified staff, including 11 academics (9 from Vilnius University, 1 from Lithuanian Sports University and 1 from Kaunas University of Technology, Engineering Lyceum) of which 2 are professors, 6 associate professors, and 3 are lecturers with a doctoral degree. The practical experience of all lecturers working in the programme is 11 years, and the educational experience amounts to 16 years on average which is a valuable asset of the study programme. The composition of the teaching staff complies with the legal requirements set by Lithuanian regulations for second cycle study programmes (2010, No. V-826) and Regulations of Study Programmes of Vilnius University (VU). All teachers have academic degrees (“no less than 80%” is required) and around 50% of the course units in the study fields are taught by VU professors.

During the evaluation period (2011 – 2015) the number of professors decreased from 5 to 2 and of associate professors – from 10 to 6. It is explained “*by natural turnover of lecturers*” (SER, p. 18) but without providing any substantial justification about how it affects the quality of

teaching in the programme. This trend is perceived by management as a threat (p. 25, SER), though no appropriate improvement measures had been envisaged. However, the teaching staff provide an acceptable overall student-teacher ratio which is adequate to ensure LOs attainment, although at the risk of a “high cost” (ibid.). The average age of lecturers is 44 years which is very good prerequisite for the adequate provision of the IBM study programme.

The majority of staff members teach 1 or 2 disciplines and only one professor teaches 4 (one of which is optional) and this is a very positive feature. Additionally, the SER claims that the scientific fields of the lecturers involved in the programme delivery “*comply with course units they teach*” (p. 17). However, from a closer look at their CVs, this claim turns to be only partially true. There aren’t any publications related to 9 disciplines of the programme, and only 8 publications (4 of which from 2011 and 1 from 2012) refer to the remaining 8 study courses (i.e. only 1 per module). Moreover, it also becomes evident that, the largest portion of all the other publications listed in Appendix 3 is in the field of Economics (35), while that of Management is considerably smaller (9). This fact adds to the doubts about the problematic identity, focus and aim of the programme.

Of the teaching staff of the IBM study programme, mainly 6-7 members are active participants in national and international projects and their contribution is very strong. With regard to involvement in academic exchange programmes, it’s quite limited – only 6 outgoing mobilities of 5 lecturers had been implemented for the last 5 years. However, information is missing particularly in relation to hosting incoming (mobility) lecturers in this programme. Therefore, it is strongly advised that this be extended to all staff members and also to attracting incoming teachers in order to facilitate knowledge exchange which is particularly important, taking into account the international nature of the programme. A long list of foreign academics who visited the Department and delivered lectures is provided in SER (p. 24), which is highly commendable but concrete data relating specifically to the IBM study programme (i.e. title of lectures, number of students of the programme addressed, etc.) would be appreciated. Moreover, the interviewed students and alumni couldn’t confirm they had guest lecturers during their studies, except for one professor from Germany.

Faculty had produced a significant number of publications over the evaluation period (20 books, 38 journal articles, 14 conference papers, etc.) and also taken part in various national and international scientific conferences, seminars and other similar events. These seems to establish a solid scientific and methodological ground for the studies. However, it remains unclear how to distinguish the overall research activities from those focused on the programme-related fields (which is insignificant as already pointed out above) as well as the need of staff for ongoing

work-based experience (e.g. most of the international projects presented in Table 14 have no clear connection to IBM core topics or to real life business practice).

It is stated that “*during the analysed period all lecturers of the programme were raising their qualification by ... seminars, courses and trainings*” (p. 21, SER). However, it appears that these kinds of professional activities and participation (i.e. in teaching competences improvement) is very much seen as a voluntary activity and no statistics are kept since no concrete information is provided in the SER but only a reference to staff members’ CVs (ibid.). This indicates a problem which the management is probably insufficiently aware of and respectively engaged with. Therefore, it is recommended that a process where all staff members draw up their own professional development plan with specific targets, acts, timeframe, indicators of the level of achievement, reporting, etc. be established. An appropriate system for assessing the teaching competences should be also put in place.

The interview with the teaching staff provided evidence of knowledge about legal requirements and regulations governing the academic practice which is commendable. In general, the mood of the staff interviewed was positive toward their academic career and the work atmosphere at the Faculty. The review team found some evidence that the teaching team shares a feeling of joint purpose and is sufficiently involved in the programme planning and enhancement processes.

The standard practice for the provision of feedback to students is recommended. The procedure seems to be more informal than documented and subject to the individual preferences of each lecturer, mainly given on request of a student. This lack of uniformity could sometimes negatively affect the student experience and preparation. The same is applicable for marking of assignments (evidence collected in both, the interview with staff and students). In general, moderation of marks is not considered in the process to assess the work of students and validate final marks. Interviewed students priced the fact that lecturers are available and are keen to provide support when required. However, the form on how such response and support is provided is advised to be made more homogeneous. Some teachers restrict the attention to students to working hours whereas other members of staff respond to students’ requests at any time or day. This brings undesirable consequences to both, students’ expectations and perceptions of quality and consistency and to the work-life balance of the university staff in general

From the students and alumni feedback, review team learned that some of the learning materials were old (“*sometimes 15+ old*” was mentioned) and information outdated (particularly the course on “*Sustainable Development*” was given as an example). Moreover, the level of English language literacy of some teachers raises questions about the real use of foreign

literature in the disciplines they teach (all courses include compulsory and/or optional readings in English) as well as the quality of teaching in the field of International Business Management.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises for studies are adequate in size and acceptable in quality. The IBM study programme most frequently uses 6 classrooms equipped with multimedia, 5 computer classrooms with sufficient workstations, demonstration and interactive facilities, and 2 specialized laboratories. Wireless Internet connection is available throughout the campus via Eduroam. VU is a member of an academic alliance (MSDNAA), which ensures the legal use of all Microsoft products for the purposes of studies and research. It is also commendable that the Faculty of KHF invested more than 30 000 EUR in software during a 5-year period (2011-2015). Many of them are claimed to be used in the IBM study process (p. 27, SER). A new two-storey library centre was opened in 2015, providing access to 20 000 books and e-resources as well as diverse support services. The funds for purchasing new books, subscription of newspapers, journal and databases have been gradually rising for the last several years. Teachers and students can use services of national electronic libraries from their workplaces at KFH. More individual student work zones and leisure places have been created and renewed over the last several years.

During the visit, it was evident that considerable efforts have been made to update the teaching and learning infrastructure for studies, including the delivery of the content of the IBM modules. However, there might be a room for improvement. The review team was told that, during the last year, all the faculty were mandated to move from FTP to Moodle as the main platform for document and learning material exchange (it is also mentioned on p. 28 of the SER). Yet, there is no concrete information about the extent of its current use by students and staff. Students only commented that the Internet speed and the computers are quite slow. This might affect the adaptation of the Virtual Learning Environment and the online delivery of content.

Despite the very detailed descriptions (respectively availability) of appropriate material resources provided for studies (including the IBM programme), the review team has established certain inconsistencies undermining the notion of their real or effective use by students and staff. They relate to both key aspects of the programme – research and practice. First, from the visit to the library it became evident that some of the literature was relatively outdated. There were also an insufficient number of copies of the newest textbooks (it's also mentioned in the SER, p. 29), especially those in English. In fact, since the number of students is currently low, this is not a serious problem, but if the number of enrolments increases it might be an issue. The course descriptions of the individual modules could provide bigger variety of readings appropriate for Master's studies, especially given the research focus and substantial self-study workload (e.g.

“*Scientific Research Work II/IF*”, “*Master Final Theses*” where all readings, although few, are quite outdated). Moreover, in spite of the “international” profile of the programme, several subjects suggest only one source in English (e.g. “*Interpersonal and International Communication*”, “*Leadership*”, “*Sustainable Development of EU and Baltic Regions*”). Most of the recommended titles are ordinary textbooks generally covering the whole content of the module, while those, relating to specific themes (i.e. aiming at deepening comprehension of specific topics, enriching knowledge, etc.) are quite scarce. Third, from the Final Theses inspection, the review team formed an opinion that students use a quite limited range (in scope and size) of literature and that the available resources (printed and especially electronic) remain underutilized. Therefore, it is recommended to encourage/teach students to make appropriate use of them (especially when there is a great number of “scientific research” disciplines making up a total of 45 ECTS including those for the Master’s Thesis).

Fourth, with regard to the arrangements for students’ practice, there is none envisaged in the programme therefore review team considered if the programme aims to prepare “*qualified specialists ... able to work in international business companies*”. In fact, the Study Programme Committee had been well aware of it and recognizes the need to make adjustments, including more practical elements so as to “*meet maximum compliance with the needs of employment market*” (p. 10, SER).

2.5. Study process and students’ performance assessment

The admission to the Master’s programmes follows an established institutional procedure laid out in detail in a document titled “*Regulations of Admission to Vilnius University Graduate Study Programmes*”, approved by the University Senate. The document, as well as some other useful information, is readily accessible on the VU website (<http://www.ef.vu.lt/en/studies>). More specific details about admission requirements relating to the IBM study programme are available on the Kaunas Faculty of Humanities (KFH) webpage (<http://www.khf.vu.lt/studijos/magistranturos-studijos>). The programme is also promoted during open days, public lectures delivered by successful graduates (not confirmed by the interviewed alumni) as well as various other events organized by the Business Economics and Management Department (BEMD).

The admission requirements are well-founded. The entrance score is composed according to an established formula, which has changed during the period under review. Despite that change, the SER team claims that “*the general level of students admitted to the IBM programme did not change*” and also that it still “*admits students with high entrance scores as compared with other Master’s study programmes in KHF*” (p. 30, SER). During the period 2011-2015 all

the state-funded places (Vf) were occupied while the percentage of the students enrolled in non-funded places (Vnf) varied between 12.5 and 22.5 (4 in 2012 and only 1 in 2015). Nevertheless, a steep decrease in the admitted numbers over the period is clearly observable in Table 23 (Vf from 16 to 9 and Vnf from 4 to 1). It is said that “*the lecturers of the BEMD carry out systematical analysis of the causes*” being mainly “*determined by external factors such as emigration and decreasing number of graduates from schools, gymnasiums and bachelor studies*” (ibid.). However, this conclusion is not substantiated by any concrete evidence, resulting from official surveys or derived from well-documented outcomes of a “systematical analysis” previously mentioned. Usually, Master’s programmes are not so much affected by these kinds of reasons. Also, apart from the “external factors”, there are crucially important “internal” ones which need to be analyzed and acted upon. These might include inner contradictions in the programme’s profile, weaknesses of its design and delivery, quality assurance or management issues, existence of competitors, etc.

Meanwhile, the programme management is aware of the threat posed by decreasing student enrollment and as a response has developed a “*Programme Improvement Strategic Plan*” (Appendix 6). Nonetheless, it can’t serve the purpose being just a rough sketch (in only 2 pages) of general intentions mainly focused on the “Programme Promotion”. In this concern, the review team advises that: a) a thoroughgoing SWAT analysis of the programme be implemented; b) a detailed strategy then be elaborated based on the outcomes of the analysis; c) rigorous actions be taken to systematically implement the strategy; d) the whole process be appropriately documented so as to monitor the progress over time and make corrections if necessary. The drop-out rate (although considerably low) should also be included in the whole process of programme improvement (inclusive analysis of reasons and elaboration of measures to deal with the cases of students not finishing their studies).

Valuable information about different aspects of the studies is available at several levels – VU, KHF, Dean’s Office, Students’ Council, Study Programme (SP), etc. via websites, offices or provided by individuals (mentors, coordinators, counsellors, etc.).

The educational process is organized in a flexible way (appreciated by both students and alumni) so as to ensure an optimal reconciliation of work and studies (the classes are organized after 5 p.m.). However, the large portion of self-study in the programme (two-thirds of the entire time) might be challenging for the majority of students taking into account the complexity of all theoretical and research tasks and assignments. Accounting this, the evaluation team was searching for a reasonable student support system designed to tackle the challenges being caused by the strong scientific orientation of the IBM study programme. No evidence was found that such a system officially exists although the interviewed students didn’t complain regarding this

and said their teachers had supported them by providing additional information and appropriate guidance, answering emails, organizing consultations, etc. Nevertheless, it is recommended that an institutionalized support scheme be installed to help students easily cope with their studies.

Rules and procedures of student achievement assessment, including feedback provision and coping with academic debts, are clearly defined in the regulations, approved by the VU Senate Committee and publicly accessible through the university website. Through the interview with students and alumni, the existence of a standard academic practice in terms of provision of guidance and clear instructions to students about the aim, objectives, LOs and assessment of modules (including academic misconduct) during the introductory lecture became evident. At the same time, the review team established that no systematic and/or sufficient feedback had been provided to the students during the operation of the module. However, feedback is given to students following the exam (most often on request only) which is not helpful to their optimal learning outcome acquisition. Additionally, concerns were voiced about professors mostly using tests with closed and open questions (already mentioned above in the analysis of the course modules) which should be reconsidered and the variety of assessment methods increased.

Master's Thesis works, checked by the review team, overall correspond to the study field and the content of the IBM degree programme. However, as already mentioned above, the students use a quite limited range of literature despite the available resources (printed and electronic). Meanwhile, since the content of the Summary (written in English and placed at the end of the works) greatly varies, the experts advise that a standard be established which should involve compulsory information about the aim, objectives, methodology, structure and main findings of the research.

According to the SER, "*approximately 80% students of the Programme take part in scholarly activities*" (p. 33) organized at the KFH, some of them write scholarly publications and participate in national and international conferences. However, these have not been substantiated by concrete data neither undoubtedly confirmed by students and alumni during the interviews.

Various evidences were found related to the provision of information to and encouragement of students to participate in mobility programs. The KFH has 45 Erasmus+ exchange agreements and cooperates with 48 European HEIs. However, the student exchange in the programme is low (4 outgoing mobilities for the whole period of 5 years and none incoming). According to those who wrote the SER, there is a simple explanation about the reason which is "*not due to institutional limitations, but rather due to the fact that the majority of students have jobs...*" (p. 34). This explanation excludes the lecturers and management (of both programme and department) from the process, assigning to them only the passive role of ensuring opportunities. It is obvious, that this strategy seems not to work and since the international

exchange and atmosphere are very important for the students' professional and personal development (considering also the specific overall aim of the IBM programme), it is recommended to find a workable solution. The Management is well-aware of this need but they should devise and systematically apply concrete improvement measures.

VU provides its students with a wide range of academic, social, and financial support services (more beneficial to those residing in Vilnius). Students can consult the coordinator of studies or the programme coordinator and easily obtain information about the academic calendar, elective courses, assessment procedures, exam retaking, etc. from various sources. Variety of counselling services related to career opportunities, psychological support on the issues of personal life, family and studies are available. Students also have access to health and sports facilities as well as different artistic groups. Similarly, the KFH offers a great variety of services to its students. However, there is no concrete information about students of the IBM study programme who have benefited from all these opportunities having their jobs and studying from 5 p.m. every evening. The interviewed students and alumni confirmed the existence of social activities and support. Nevertheless, due to the nature of the studies and the fact that they work, no attention is given to these opportunities. In terms of financial support, VU provides different grants and loans. During the evaluated period 16 students benefited from the scholarship schemes – 14 for academic achievements, 1 for one time social scholarship and 1 for targeted support provided to disabled persons.

The information about professional activities of graduates from the programme is scarce in SER. It is only said that “*the graduates of the programme have a successful career*” (p. 36) and then summarized positions are listed (e.g. “*sales and marketing managers, advertising and marketing specialists, management and organization analysis,...*”, followed by names of international companies operating in Lithuania. Nonetheless, the evidence provided by the interviewed alumni (5 at the interview) suggests that the programme provides valuable knowledge and skills required to perform professional activities related to the field of study.

2.6. Programme management

The programme management arrangements are streamlined and a detailed description of policies, strategies and operations in relation to Quality Assurance (QA) of studies at the university and faculty level are provided in the SER. The roles and responsibilities of the different bodies, committees and positions are very well-presented. The roles of the VU Administration of Studies and the Quality Management Centre as well as the guidance and support they provide are also made clear.

At the programme level, the responsibility for the QA and maintenance of the academic standard lies primarily with the Study Programme Committee (SPC) but the Faculty Council also plays an important role. The main function of the SPC is to plan and develop a study programme and its subjects. The formal allocation of responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the study programme is very clear. Twice a year, at the end of each semester centralized student surveys are carried out by means of the VU e-survey system. Teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners are said to be actively involved in the development of the programme but this was not undoubtedly confirmed during the visit.

Despite the very detailed descriptions in the SER (pp. 36-39) about different aspects of the study programme management, they refer only to formal roles, responsibilities and procedures whereas the information related to specific IBM programme aspects is quite limited. Here, as well as in the whole report, the SPC claims to follow the established rules and procedures. However, through the analysis of the documents and the interviews during the visit, the review team discovered a great number of room for improvement (many of which already mentioned in the previous sections).

The SER contains evidence that suggests a descriptive rather than critical approach to the presentation of findings. A proof of this is the fact that the SER doesn't seem to demonstrate convincingly appropriate implementation of recommendations made in the previous evaluation of the programme. Most of them were not taken into account. These refer to (quoted from the previous Evaluation Report): *“relatively high proportion of self-study and strong orientation toward research”* and at the same time *“lack of an adequate study support to students”*; needs for *“more subjects taught in English ... more foreign professors”* as well as *“incoming foreign students”* since the *“internationalization of the classroom is still a problem”*; *“local library resources are limited in terms of number of copies of textbooks and periodicals in English language”*; *“a clear aim of the programme is needed”*; etc. Relating to these, the Management could not satisfactorily explain why they didn't address the recommendations accordingly, which would have been necessary for further development of the IBM programme.

Furthermore, the Management viewed the IBM as a research-focused degree programme and a possible pathway for recruiting potential doctoral studies. Thus, this contradicts the stated aim and objectives (i.e. as reflected in the SER report) to prepare students for working effectively in management roles within contemporary international business. There was no clear explanation provided either in terms of how the study programme was in the first place developed: i.e. market-driven or based on sound international benchmarking. Therefore, the review team strongly recommends the adoption of a systematic approach to this procedure where: a) a clear set of criteria is defined to do the comparison of programmes from different

institutions; b) the analysis follows a documented and systematic methodology where key learnings are highlighted, reported and adopted in alignment with the strategic development plan of the programme.

As already mentioned in Section 2, there is also an impression that the IBM programme seems to be oriented to serve regional needs (e.g. graduates work at international companies based in Lithuania). It was evident from the interview with the Management that this situation is creating another identity conflict affecting the definition of scope, purpose and clear identification of the real market for the programme. In this sense, it is strongly advised that a well-grounded analysis of the target market should be conducted to improve its design as well as to guide the plans for recruitment and future sustainability of the programme. The Management team mentioned that there were plans for the near future development of the IBM programme to offer a double degree version in English with a university in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, these plans could not be measured by the review team.

The Management was not in a position to explain the lack of coherence and/or alignment of the IBM aim, objectives and LOs and their correspondence to real market needs, identified through an appropriate market analysis. Similarly, the Management acknowledged that it had not so far incorporated industry internships for IBM students – necessary for their development of appropriate business skills in order to succeed in contemporary business context – although they had been aware of it as a weakness (p. 10, SER). All these demonstrate that there needs to have a systematic thinking behind the development of the programme and/or the courses when, for example, it involved identifying course objectives and LOs as well as teaching, learning and assessment methods. It was also found (through reading the course descriptions) and further acknowledged (during the interviews) that there was no systematic quality assurance standard that all staff are required to follow. Additionally, it was established that the IBM degree programme lacked the most up-to-date knowledge arising from recent research publications, nor was this acted upon although identified as a weakness (p. 16, SER). Feedback mechanism was mostly optional and implemented by individual staff in their respective modules, but not taken into account holistically by the Management for programme improvement purposes.

The main responsibility of the SPC is to maintain and improve the study programme on the basis of regular monitoring (pp. 9, 37 and others, SER). However, the monitoring turned to be conducted for the sake of monitoring itself in that the ideas that may had been gathered based on a quality assurance mechanism were not followed up in a systematic manner to ensure further enhancement of the IBM programme. Some concrete steps should be taken by the Committee to address the weaknesses as a result of their monitoring process (many of which were only mentioned in the SER; others were raised during the Department meetings and recorded in

minutes, some of which were provided after the site-visit). For instance, the Management claims to carry out a “*constant supervision*” of the programme (p. 7, SER), organize “*periodic discussions*” (ibid.) and “*meetings with social partners*” (p. 37), take into account the “*remarks of social partners*” (p. 9), benefit from “*collaboration with social partners*”, etc. At the same time, and in contrast, it acknowledges that one of the weaknesses is “*insufficient social partners’ and alumni’s involvement into study programme improvement activities*” (p. 39, SER). In this concern, they have only a vague idea to “*invite social partners to more actively participate in delivering lecturers, seminars, prepare and submit case analysis to students*” as well as “*to enlarge the circle of social partners*” but no concrete actions in a concrete timeframe.

2.7. Examples of excellence *

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The profile of the programme needs to be revised and refined based on the outcomes of a thoroughgoing SWAT analysis. It should carefully consider and resolve the existing internal contradictions between research and practice orientations, global and regional dimensions, as well as disproportions between lectures and seminars, contact hours and individual work, the order of the disciplines and their status in the programme. Consequently, the programme aim and those learning outcomes not yet properly defined should be improved in terms of their definitions and compliance with the content of relevant modules.

2. For further development of the programme design it is advisable to compare the current curriculum with other similar programmes, particularly those offered abroad in order to select relevant benchmarks and keep up with them. A systematic approach is advised to be adapted where: a) a clear set of criteria is defined to make the comparison of programmes from different institutions; b) the comparative analysis follows a well-grounded methodology where key learnings are highlighted, reported and adopted in alignment with the strategic development plan of the programme; c) actions are rigorously taken to gradually implement the plan; d) the whole process is appropriately documented so as to monitor the progress over time and make corrections when necessary.

3. There is a need for a more active involvement of the teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners in the overall steering of the programme as well as in its quality assurance system. It should involve an appropriate feedback mechanism with a strong focus on

counteractions immediately following identified inconsistencies and shortcomings. Specifically, adjustments in response to market demands should be made in due course (e.g. by introducing new modules addressing needs for particular skills like Entrepreneurship, Negotiations, etc.). A common spirit of a joint purpose, and a feeling of a programme ownership is recommended to be created outside the Study Programme Committee.

4. A teaching staff turnover plan is advised to be designed so as to ensure adequate provision of the degree programme. Additionally, a strategy for professional development of staff, involving measures for enhancing their teaching competencies (especially relating to specific aspects of the LOs approach applied to programme design and delivery) is recommended to be also established. Assessment and incentive schemes need to be proposed in order to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the strategy. Faculty need to be encouraged to do research and publish in subjects related to the scope of the IBM study programme.

5. The international dimension of the programme should be considerably strengthened by:

- a) introducing courses taught in English, as well as specialized English language course (e.g. Business English);
- b) involving more staff in outgoing international mobility and inviting incoming guest-lecturers from abroad;
- c) attracting international students to the class;
- d) enriching the library stocks with the newest English language publications.

All these are particularly important, given the international nature of programme and the intended profile of its graduate.

IV. SUMMARY

The *International Business Management* (IBM) responds to real market needs evidenced by the fact that graduates of this study programme work at foreign companies based in Lithuania. However, its abstract aim and objectives neither characterise appropriately its distinctive profile nor convey a clear message to potential applicants. Besides, there exist inner conflicts between core elements of its overall setup – theory or practice focus, research or business orientation, global or regional dimension, etc. All these demonstrate an obvious absence of a clear vision about the programme's profile.

The study programme LOs address two kinds of competencies – generic and subject-specific. Overall, they fall within the field of International Business and have potential to equip graduates with necessary skills and competencies for successful professional performance. However, their definitions need to be revised since in many cases they are insufficiently clear or redundant. Furthermore, it is not clear how the LOs respond to concrete demands or professional standards of the contemporary global economy. Being improperly defined, they do not provide sufficient certainty about the qualities and professional capacity of the future graduate. The LOs' definitions of the individual subjects are of better quality, although numerous critical weaknesses still can be identified. Overall, there is a certain incoherence between subject LOs, teaching, learning and assessment methods.

The curriculum design of the IBM study programme meets the legal requirements. Nevertheless, its identity is problematic since, on the one hand, it aims to prepare its graduates for an international business career, while on the other, the management told the review team that the curriculum design had been made with a strong focus on scientific research. There is also an impression that the programme seems to be oriented to serve regional needs despite its stated global orientation. There are also other critical aspects – high amount of self-study without an appropriate student support system, prevalence of lectures over seminars and practical work, disputable order of disciplines, absence of courses addressing key competencies and skills, etc.

The programme is delivered by highly qualified staff who fully comply with the legal requirements. The majority of teachers are active participants in national and international projects, while their involvement in academic exchange programmes is quite limited. At the same time, no incoming guest-lecturers have been reported. Faculty produced a significant number of publications over the evaluation period although those focused on programme-related fields were far and few between. Participation of staff in teaching competencies enhancement activities is also quite limited. The lack of a standard practice for the provision of feedback to students is also evident. The procedure seems to be more informal than documented and subject to lecturers' individual preferences and mainly given on student request.

The premises for studies are adequate in size and acceptable in quality. The funds for purchasing new books, subscription of newspapers, journal and databases have been gradually rising for the last several years. However, it became evident that most of the literature relating to the programme was relatively outdated and there was an insufficient number of copies of the newest textbooks, especially those in English. Furthermore, there are certain doubts about the effective use of library resources by students and staff. No arrangements exist for student practice in the study programme related field.

The admission requirements and regulations of studies are well-founded and effective. Valuable information about different aspects of studies is available at several levels and via diverse media. The educational process is organized in a flexible way so as to ensure an optimal reconciliation of work and studies. Nevertheless, a steep decrease in the admitted numbers of students over the period is clearly observable. The programme management is aware of this challenging threat but has no adequate reaction to it. Rules and procedures of student achievement assessment are clearly defined in the regulations and publicly accessible through the university website. However, feedback is given to students following the exam (most often on request only) which is not helpful to their optimal learning outcome acquisition. Additionally, concerns were voiced about professors mostly using tests with closed and open questions which is rather inappropriate for Master's level. Master's Thesis works overall correspond to the study field and the content of the IBM degree programme but the students use a quite limited range of literature despite the available resources.

The programme management arrangements are streamlined, the Quality Assurance policies, strategies and operations are well designed and appropriate, and roles and responsibilities of the different bodies, committees and positions are very well defined. However, through the analysis of the documents and the interviews during the visit, a great number of programme management shortcomings have been discovered. The SER contains evidence that suggest a descriptive rather than critical approach to the presentation of findings. Recommendations, made in the previous evaluation, were not implemented. Internal conflicts of the degree programme, although perceived, were not resolved. Identified weaknesses were not acted upon. All these demonstrate that there was no a systematic thinking and action behind the development of the programme.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT* (state code – 621N20006) at VILNIUS UNIVERSITY (KAUNAS FACULTY) 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	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	14

*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: Team members:	Prof. Dr. John Sae
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**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO (KAUNO FAKULTETO) ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINIO VERSLO VADYBA* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS
– 621N20006)
2017-08-22 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-187 IŠRAŠAS**

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO (KAUNO FAKULTETO) studijų programa *TARPTAUTINIO VERSLO VADYBA* (valstybinis kodas – 621N20006) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	2
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	2
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	14

* 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

Tarptautinio verslo vadybos studijų programa tenkina tikruosius rinkos poreikius ir tą įrodo faktas, jog šios studijų programos absolventai dirba Lietuvoje veikiančiose užsienio įmonėse. Vis dėlto, studijų programos abstraktus tikslas ir uždaviniai tinkamai neapibūdina programos išskirtinumo ir neperduoda aiškios žinutės potencialiems stojantiejiems. Be to, tarp pagrindinių programos sandaros elementų yra vidinių prieštaravimų – orientacija į teoriją ar praktiką, tyrimus ar verslą, pasaulinį ar regioninį aspektą ir pan. Visa tai demonstruoja, kad akivaizdžiai nėra aiškios studijų programos krypties vizijos.

Studijų programos numatomuose studijų rezultatuose nurodytos dvi gebėjimų rūšys – bendrieji ir specialieji. Apskritai, jie patenka į Tarptautinio verslo sritį ir gali suteikti absolventams reikiamų įgūdžių ir kompetencijų, padėsiančių pasiekti sėkmingų profesinės veiklos rezultatų. Tačiau reikėtų peržiūrėti jų apibrėžimus, nes daugumoje atvejų jie nepakankamai aiškūs arba pertekliniai. Be to, neaišku, kaip studijų rezultatai atitinka šiuolaikinės

pasaulinės ekonomikos konkrečius poreikius arba profesinius standartus. Netinkamai apibrėžti, jie nesuteikia pakankamo užtikrintumo dėl būsimų absolventų savybių ir profesinės kompetencijos. Atskirų dalykų studijų rezultatų formuluotės yra kokybiškesnės, nors vis dar galima nurodyti nemažai kritinių trūkumų. Apskritai, šiek tiek trūksta nuoseklumo tarp dalykų studijų rezultatų, mokymo, mokymosi ir vertinimo metodų.

Tarptautinio verslo vadybos studijų programos sandara atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus. Vis dėlto, jos tapatumas yra problemiškas, nes, viena vertus, ji siekia parengti absolventus tarptautinei verslo karjerai, kita vertus, vadovybė informavo ekspertų grupę, kad programa sudaryta akcentuojant mokslinius tyrimus. Taip pat susidarė įspūdis, kad studijų programa orientuota į regiono poreikius, nepaisant deklaruojamos pasaulinės orientacijos. Taip pat yra kitų kritinių aspektų – didelis savarankiškų studijų krūvis nesant tinkamos studentų paramos sistemos, daugiau paskaitų nei seminarų ir praktinių užsiėmimų, ginčytina dalykų seka, pagrindinius gebėjimus ir įgūdžius ugdančių dalykų trūkumas ir t. t.

Studijų programą vykdo aukštos kvalifikacijos darbuotojai, kurie visiškai atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus. Dauguma dėstytojų yra aktyvūs nacionalinių ir tarptautinių projektų dalyviai, nors jie gana ribotai dalyvauja akademinėse mainų programose. Taip pat nėra informacijos apie atvykstančius kviestinius lektorius. Per vertinamąjį laikotarpį dėstytojai parengė nemažai publikacijų, nors tik keletas jų susiję su studijų programos sritimi. Dėstytojų dalyvavimas profesinio tobulinimosi veiklose taip pat gana ribotas. Taip pat akivaizdžiai trūksta nustatytos grįžtamojo ryšio teikimo studentams procedūros. Procedūra yra labiau neformali nei dokumentuota, taip pat paremta individualiomis dėstytojų preferencijomis, o grįžtamasis ryšys dažniausiai teikiamas studentams paprašius.

Studijoms skirtos patalpos yra tinkamo dydžio ir priimtinos kokybės. Lėšos naujoms knygoms įsigyti, laikraščiams, žurnalams ir duomenų bazėms prenumeruoti per pastaruosius kelerius metus pamažu augo. Tačiau paaiškėjo, kad didžioji dalis literatūros, susijusios su studijų programa, yra palyginti pasenusi, o naujausių vadovėlių, ypač anglų kalba, egzempliorių skaičius nepakankamas. Be to, kyla abejonių dėl studentų ir dėstytojų veiksmingo naudojimosi bibliotekos ištekliais. Nėra jokių susitarimų dėl studentų praktikos su studijų programa susijusioje srityje.

Priėmimo reikalavimai ir studijų nuostatai yra pagrįsti ir veiksmingi. Vertinga informacija apie skirtingus studijų aspektus prieinama keliais lygmenimis ir įvairiose medijose. Švietimo procesas organizuojamas lanksčiai, siekiant užtikrinti optimalų darbo ir studijų derinimą. Vis dėlto, aiškiai pastebimas staigus priimamų studentų skaičiaus sumažėjimas per vertinamąjį laikotarpį. Studijų programos vadovybė suvokia šią grėsmę, tačiau nežino, kaip tinkamai į ją reaguoti. Studentų pasiekimų vertinimo taisyklės ir procedūros aiškiai apibrėžtos

nuostatuose ir viešai prieinamos universiteto interneto svetainėje. Tačiau grįžtamasis ryšys teikiamas studentams po egzaminų (daugeliu atveju tik jiems paprašius), o tai nepadaeda jiems pasiekti optimalių studijų rezultatų. Be to, buvo išreikštas susirūpinimas dėl dėstytojų, kurie daugiausia naudoja uždarujų ir atvirųjų klausimų testus, o tai nėra tinkama magistrantūros studijų pakopai. Apskritai baigiamieji magistro darbai atitinka studijų kryptį ir Tarptautinio verslo vadybos studijų programos turinį, tačiau studentai ribotai naudojami literatūra, nepaisant esamų išteklių.

Programos vadybos priemonės yra gerai organizuotos, kokybės užtikrinimo politikos dokumentai, strategijos ir veiksmai puikiai parengti ir tinkami, o skirtingų organų, komitetų ir pareigybių funkcijos ir atsakomybė yra labai gerai apibrėžti. Vis dėlto, iš dokumentų analizės ir pokalbių vizito metu buvo nustatyta nemažai programos vadybos trūkumų. SS yra įrodymų, kad rezultatams pateikti taikytas aprašomasis, o ne kritinis metodas. Ankstesnio vertinimo rekomendacijos nebuvo įgyvendintos. Vidiniai studijų programos prieštaravimai, nors suvokiami, nebuvo išspręsti. Nebuvo imtasi jokių veiksmų dėl nustatytų silpnybių. Visa tai rodo, kad tobulinant studijų programą nebuvo taikytas sistemingas požiūris ir veiksmai.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Studijų programos profilį reikėtų peržiūrėti ir patobulinti, remiantis nuodugnios SSGG analizės rezultatais. Reikėtų kruopščiai apsvarstyti ir išspręsti egzistuojančius vidinius prieštaravimus tarp tyrimų ir praktikos, pasaulinių ir regiono aspektų, taip pat neproporcingumą tarp paskaitų ir seminarų, auditorinių valandų ir savarankiško darbo, dalykų sekos ir jų statuso programoje. Galiausiai, netinkamai apibrėžtą studijų programos tikslą ir numatomų studijų rezultatų formuluotes reikėtų patobulinti, kad jie atitiktų atitinkamų modulių turinį.

2. Toliau tobulinant programos sandarą rekomenduojama palyginti dabartinę programą su kitomis panašiomis programomis, ypač vykdomomis užsienyje, siekiant atrinkti tinkamus etalonus ir nuo jų neatsilikti. Rekomenduojama taikyti sisteminį požiūrį šiais atvejais, kai: a) apibrėžti aiškūs skirtingų institucijų programų palyginimo kriterijai; b) lyginamoji analizė remiasi pagrįsta metodika, pagal kurią akcentuojami pagrindiniai mokymosi rezultatai, pateikiamos jų ataskaitos ir jie priimami, atsižvelgiant į studijų programos strateginės plėtros planą; c) griežtai imamasi veiksmų, siekiant pamažu įgyvendinti planą; d) visas procesas yra tinkamai dokumentuojamas, siekiant sekti pažangą laikui bėgant ir prireikus atlikti koreguojamuosius veiksmus.

3. Reikia aktyviau įtraukti dėstytojus, studentus, absolventus ir socialinius partnerius į bendrą studijų programos valdymą bei jos kokybės užtikrinimo sistemą. Ji turėtų apimti atitinkamą grįžtamojo ryšio mechanizmą, ypač numatant veiksmus, kurie atliekami nedelsiant nustačius neatitikimus ir trūkumus. Konkrečiai, atsižvelgiant į rinkos poreikius, pamažu turėtų būti koreguojama studijų programa (pvz., įtraukiant naujus modulius, tenkinančius konkrečių įgūdžių, pvz., verslumo, derybų ir pan. poreikius). Rekomenduojama už Studijų programos komiteto ribų sukurti vieningą bendro tikslo siekį ir programos nuosavybės jausmą.

4. Rekomenduojama parengti dėstytojų kaitos planą, siekiant užtikrinti tinkamą studijų programos vykdymą. Be to, rekomenduojama nustatyti darbuotojų profesinio tobulinimosi strategiją, į kurią būtų įtrauktos priemonės, kaip ugdyti dėstymo gebėjimus (ypač susijusius su specifiniais numatomų studijų rezultatų metodo, taikomo kuriant ir vykdant programą, aspektais). Reikia parengti vertinimo ir skatinimo programas, siekiant užtikrinti veiksmingą ir efektyvų strategijos įgyvendinimą. Dėstytojus reikia skatinti vykdyti tyrimus ir skelbti publikacijas temomis, susijusiomis su Tarptautinio verslo vadybos studijų programos aprėptimi.

5. Reikėtų gerokai sustiprinti programos tarptautiškumo aspektą: a) įtraukiant anglų kalba dėstomus dalykus bei specializuotos anglų kalbos dalykus (pvz., Verslo anglų kalba); b) daugiau darbuotojų įtraukiant į išvykstamojo tarptautinio judumo programas ir kviečiant lektorius iš užsienio; c) pritraukiant tarptautinių studentų; d) papildant bibliotekos išteklius naujausiomis publikacijomis anglų kalba. Visa tai yra ypač svarbu, atsižvelgiant į tarptautinį programos pobūdį ir numatomą jos absolventų profilį.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)