



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Mykolo Romerio universiteto

***APLINKOS APSAUGOS POLITIKOS IR
ADMINISTRAVIMO STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
(621L22005) VERTINIMO IŠVADOS***

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
(621L22005) STUDY PROGRAMME
at Mykolas Romeris University**

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Aplinkos apsaugos politika ir administravimas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621L22005
Studijų sritis	Socialinių mokslų
Studijų kryptis	Politikos mokslų
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	1,5 (nuolatinės), 2 (ištęstinės)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Politikos mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2005 vasario 8 d., Nr. 183

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Environmental Policy and Administration</i>
State code	621L22005
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Political sciences
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	1,5 (full time), 2 (part time)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Political Science
Date of registration of the study programme	The Programme was registered in the Ministry of Education and Science on 8 February 2005, Order Nr.-183

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V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	Ошибка! Закладка не определена.

I. INTRODUCTION

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area sets out the following standard: “*Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities*” (ESG: Part 1: 1.6 Information systems).

An External Evaluation Team lead by Prof.dr. John Francis (USA) was appointed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) to conduct an evaluation of Environmental Protection Policy and Administration¹ study programme in political science study field (state codes: 621L22005), which is offered by Mykolas Romeris University from 1 September 2005.

Mykolas Romeris University is a public institution in Vilnius, Lithuania and registered on 22 Dec 1997. It includes six faculties as well as the Institute of Humanities. The Faculty of Politics and Management and the Public Management Institute (which includes the Environmental Management Centre) are responsible for the Master’s programme in Environmental Policy and Administration, with full time and part time studies in Lithuanian language. Its two specializations in Land Management Policy and Management of Natural Resources were approved by the University Senate in 2005 and 2006, but due to lack of students the University closed both specializations (new admissions) in 2010.

The present evaluation has been carried out under the guidelines and procedures of SKVC. For the evaluation of the study programme, the documents regulating evaluation were used: Procedure of the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes, Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes, General Requirements of Master’s Degree Study Programmes.

This evaluation report is based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) received at the end of October 2013, the site visit of the expert group to Academy on 5 December 2013 as well as supplementary information provided to SKVC and the expert team by the Programme staff . During the site visit the team had the opportunity to discuss the programme with administrators, teaching staff, students, graduates and social partners. The team toured the Academy’s library and other instructional facilities. All members of the external evaluation team reviewed the SER and substantively contributed to the final report. At the end of the site visit the experts met to discuss and agree on the content of the report, which represents the expert team consensual views.

The expert team noted that the use of English language in the SER is sometimes not so easy to apprehend, which made some parts possibly misleading and difficult to analyze. Additionally, an important element of the self-evaluation process is largely absent – namely the self-evaluation of the programme’s strengths and weaknesses (for example, SWOT analysis). During the interviews the expert team found several problems related to reliability and accuracy of the information stated in the SER, for example:

a) SER contains declarations that were not confirmed by supplemented documents or other evidence proving real actions taken by the particular programme administration, for example statements such as “*social partners are evaluating current labour market needs*” (SER: page 6),

¹ The exact translation of Lithuanian title is Environmental *Protection* Policy and Administration, however the expert team will hereafter use the shorter English term used in the SER.

“the programme teachers are or have been involved in different research projects related to the environmental management and policy projects” (page 19), *“study quality monitoring system was created which allows receiving feedback (social partners and, graduates’ polls) about the quality of the studies”* (page 34).

b) it was mentioned in the SER (page 35 and Annex:5) that there had been previous evaluations (internal and external) with recommendations that had been taken into account, but since there seems to be some confusion as to who carried out this evaluation, what its status is, and due to the fact that it was not made available to the expert team it was not taken into account; and there were no evidence during interviews for the statements such as *“the programme quality was strongly improved”* or *“strong efforts were carried out to include students in important decisions done in committee meetings”*. Student and stakeholder involvement in the drafting of the SER appeared at best to be only nominal, and was not evidenced at interviews. Moreover, the chapter 2.6.3 *“Summary of the latest evaluation of the programme”* gives no clear distinction on the recommendations and outcomes of internal or external evaluations.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aim of the *Environmental Policy and Administration* study programme is to train specialists for high-level qualifications in environmental policy formulation, implementation and evaluation in both the public and private sectors. The study programme is oriented to give practical experience and training to meet the employment needs in this field. Through its social science and political science profile it reflects an identified shortage of expertise in development of environmental policy and targets a different labour market than the more natural science/engineering profiles in other University environmental programs. Currently, no other programme with this profile exists in Lithuania. That the programme fulfils present public and labour market needs was confirmed during the interviews with the social partners as well as the alumni groups during the site visit. However, neither SER nor other provided documents prove that detailed market surveys are carried out systematically. There was no available information on how many graduate students are working in their fields of specialization.

Since its inception, there are close links between the programme and the Ministry of Environment and related agencies and other environment-related government offices who are involved not only as advisors to the study committee but also in proposing topics for the thesis and offering employment of students, which greatly supports the relevance of the studies to future career opportunities. Despite a close cooperation with certain social partners (mainly public sector), their involvement in particularly reviewing programmes aims and learning outcomes is limited and needs to be further improved. It should be noted that documentation provided on Employability of graduates by organizations (2011, 2012, 2013) shows that the largest share of graduates (50 – 65 %) become employed in the private sector.

Taking into account demographic concerns in Lithuania and searching for new opportunities for this unique programme, it is therefore suggested to carry out greater and more detailed analysis of the job market in Lithuania and neighbouring countries in order to respond to national or intra-regional, regional needs of public as well as business and other non-government sectors.

The description of the programme - including aims, learning outcomes, study subjects - are publically accessible and well presented at <http://www.mruni.eu>. No other specific marketing actions were indicated in the SER or interviews. Although the student survey indicates that 50 percent out of 32 respondents think that *“aims, learning outcomes, objectives and competences are partly clearly explained”*, 46% stated that *“teachers partly present how aims and LOs of study*

subject are related to aims and LOs of the study programme”.

There have been two specializations within the Programme: (1) Land Management Policy aiming at training specialists for the land reformation process in Lithuania and (2) Management of Natural Resources which was geared towards the sustainable management of natural resources. Both specializations included environmental policy studies. Recently, the societal demand for competence in land reform management has diminished as the land reform has now been largely accomplished, and the number of students applying for the programme has decreased substantially from 354 in 2009 to 109 students in 2012 in years 1-2 taken together. The University does not run programmes with less than 15 students, and the current aim is set to 25 students. Therefore, the University has decided to close the two specializations in autumn 2013 (student admission was finished in 2010). The University administration is thus responding promptly to the new situation by rethinking the design of the programme.

The *study aim of the programme* is to gain both general and special (subject specific) competences. These include *8 competences* and *16 learning outcomes* in total. The evaluation team found it difficult to judge the relevance of some of these competences and learning outcomes since the use of language (in English) was not clear. The teachers, students and graduates whom the talked with did not explicitly relate to the learning outcomes either. Moreover, the relationship between the general and specific competencies is puzzling, since some of the specific competences appear to be of general character, while some of the learning outcomes connected with the general competencies appear quite specific. For example, learning outcomes 5.1 to 6.2 seem very general for such a program, while 3.1 is overly specific (“*is able to analyse targeted on environmental protection persons and groups’ needs and give conclusions*”) and 2.2 seems very odd (“*is able to accept rational decisions in every formed situation*”). Some are also overlapping such as 1.1, 1.2, 7.1 and 7.2. And learning outcomes 8.1 and 8.2 appear as too technical for a programme focusing environmental policy (social science) rather than its technical management (natural science). Some of the subject specific competences or programme learning outcomes usually assigned to Political Science field competences are missing (such as understanding and being able to apply theories of international relations, public administration, governance and policy analysis to multi-level environmental policy-making). Instead, only secondary or not so relevant competences are listed, for example general competence 2 “*ability to conduct environmental organizations and projects, to integrate themselves into various labour collectives*), and subject specific competence 8 with learning outcome 8.1 “*is able to apply modern technologies in environmental resource use*”. Therefore, the expert team recommends that all of these be evaluated and eventually reformulated into fewer and more relevant objectives and learning outcomes taking into account the qualification offered in the Political Science field.

The expert team’s main concern thus lies with the programme’s content and the qualifications offered as a master’s degree in political science. Originally this programme was registered in the field of Public Administration, and it is one of the oldest in the University. In 2010 this was changed to Political science due to changes in the coding system for study fields. The expert team was informed by the University that there is an ongoing project with possible re-classification of study fields. Nevertheless, the experts found considerable discrepancy between the current programme’s current reliance on teaching about environmental management and implementation of adopted policies and laws and its title *Environmental Policy and Administration* as well as its classification in political science, which anticipates a much heavier focus on political science methodologies and analytical approaches. One expects such a programme to have as main component to teach students in critical analysis of issues relating to agenda setting, policy formulation, interest-based negotiations, political choice and agency/target group use of environmental policy instruments including institutional factors promoting or inhibiting implementation processes. Examples of core elements with a political science lens would then include for example multilevel environmental governance, the role of societal actors including citizens and interest groups, producers and

consumers, as well as of EU, central and local government policymaking and their administrative routines. The meetings with social partners particularly suggested more emphasis on international and especially European politics in light of Lithuania's entry into the European Union as well as regional (Baltic) agendas.

Therefore, the expert team states that the title, defined aims and learning outcomes of the programme are not fully consistent with the master's level of studies and qualification offered in the Political Science field, and propose that the programme and its content would require strong leadership by teaching staff with political science background and competencies, in addition to the current strong focus on knowledge about the implementation of environmental policy in Lithuanian practice. The experts still deem it worthwhile to continue this programme due to its uniqueness and great potential in meeting societal needs for expertise in social science analysis of environmental policy and administration, and have faith that the University will take action to revise the curriculum according to the above suggestions and assign competent staff to this end.

Also it is important to note that student surveys indicate that in general, taking into account 32 respondents, 36 % are satisfied with the quality of study program, 42 % only partly and 14 % are not satisfied; also, 38 % state that in general the study programme met expectations, 30 % that the study programme partly met expectations, while 26 % think that the study programme did not meet their expectations. There is however no evidence that these results are seriously taken into account, neither in SER, during interviews or in protocols of the Programme Study Committee.

In sum: The University's tradition of rapid innovation in developing new programmes for their graduate students is to be commended. There is a widespread recognition of the importance and distinctive role of this study programme in Lithuanian environmental policy studies. Also, the programme's extensive connections throughout environmental policy making community are of great benefit for students. However, the programme's current aims/competencies and learning outcomes are somewhat obscure and in need of streamlining in line with the program's overall objective and qualification offered. The current focus on environmental policy implementation in Lithuania must be complemented with a strong political science component for multi-level environmental policy analyses.

2. Curriculum design

As was previously stated, this programme has undergone change of classification by field of science from Public Administration to the field of Political Science. However, neither the SER nor the interviews gave any evidence of changes made in programme aims, competences and LOs, or curriculum design and subject related improvements relating to this change. Since Political Science is generally viewed as a more narrow disciplinary specification than Public Administration which is a multi-disciplinary and more practically oriented field of studies, one would have expected some revision in this respect.

The programme follows the main requirements of the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania. The Master study programme's content and study volume comply with the requirements for full time and part time MSc university studies indicated in Lithuanian legal acts :

1. The number of subjects per semester is adequate;
2. The number of deepening subjects covers the main part of the programme;
3. In total, the programme consists of 21 % auditorium hours and 79 % individual work hours for full-time study form; 12 % auditorium hours and 88 % individual work hours for part-time study form. The distribution of contact hours and independent work hours matches the legal requirements.

However, the Expert team assessed a selection of the theses, and found few signs of adequate management and quality assurance process of the independent work, because the great majority of final thesis had a generally low analytical quality which indicated lack of attention to this particular issue.

The final thesis formal requirements are met at a threshold level, nevertheless improvements are urgently needed in supervision and quality assurance processes;

4. Supplementary studies (bridging courses) are foreseen for two types of students: those who graduated in colleges and having not university higher education degree and students who graduated in universities but not in the social science study area. The first group must pass 1 year political science bridging course (60 credits) and the second group must pass 3 bridging political science study subjects (Basics of Political Science, Modern Political Theories, Comparative Political Theories, in total 9 credits). The interviews indicated that some students falling under previously mentioned criteria might have finished the programme without taking the above mentioned courses.

Both the full time and part-time studies have 90 credits (60 credits in the programme and 30 credits for master thesis). Each study subject has 6 credits. In practice, lectures are given in the evenings to allow full-time students to also be employed in parallel with their studying, while part-time students are taught on Saturdays. This adjustment of teaching hours to fit with needs for further training of public and private employees is noted as a benefit, not least to fulfil market needs. Nevertheless, it might also cause some conflict with the necessity of sufficient time allowed for analytical depth in graduate studies, in particular when writing the master's thesis. The experts' talks with the students indicated that they have to work long hours since several of them are full-time employees also when studying full-time.

The current programme includes 8 specialized study subjects (73 % of the programme), 2 general competence subjects (18 %) and 2 optional study subjects (student choose one) (9 %). The Expert team's evaluation suggests an imbalance in so-called specialized and general competence courses in view of the programme aims. The curriculum design should be informed by what is the core of the programme. As noted above, there is at present heavy emphasis on more technical analyses of the realization of existing environmental policy in various sectors rather than discussing and analysing core issues and approaches as relevant for a political science programme. Hence, the programme outcomes do not seem to match learning outcomes from subjects.

The interviews with students and the survey also show that students expect more seminars, practice at relevant institutions as well as interdisciplinary projects.

The graduates are awarded their diploma after successfully preparing and defending a master thesis. Judging from the list of topics in accomplished master's theses, and also going more into depth in a selection of those via the internet data base, the experts found that their focus is generally very technical, and that they lack sufficient depth in use of methodology and understanding of political science and policy analysis components. There is also a pertinent need for review of previous studies and use of scientific literature in the theses. Despite that the teaching staff mentioned that they recommend use of international journals and data bases, the experts saw little evidence of such use in the examined theses. Indeed, the references in those master's theses the experts examined in-depth did not show any signs of have carried out literature reviews or discussed research methods. The expert team therefore urge to considerably strengthen the teaching of social science methods, allocate supervisors with adequate knowledge of such methods as well as ensure that the examination committee also are well acquainted with social science methodologies, which is not the case today.

The expert team proposes that the program is benchmarked against similar teaching

institutions and programmes around Europe in order to develop the curriculum in line with the above improvements.

In sum: There is a compelling need for systematically introducing political science course work and political science faculty into the programme (aims, LO, competences and study subjects), in order to meet the expectations of students, community leaders and employers. There is a strong interest in grounding the masters' programme in the understanding the role of politics in the making and implementation of public policy. The programme should be benchmarked against similar programmes across Europe to ensure that the course work and master's thesis will be in line with those aims.

3. Staff

14 teachers are teaching in the programme of Environmental Policy and Administration. 3 of them are professors (21%), 8 are associate professors (58%), 2 having a doctoral degree (14%) and one lecturer with long professional experience in relevant study field. Some of these are on five-year and some on one-year contracts. Still, however, only four of them have a social science background, including law. Several have extensive experience in working in government ministries and agencies with environmental policy. Nine of the lecturers work full-time and 5 are working additionally in social partners organisations, which are relevant to the study field. It is acknowledged that the variation in professional backgrounds within the environmental field among the teachers is an asset to the programme, but the shortage of political science and social science methods remains a problem to fulfilling the teaching tasks. Natural scientists generally have a different mind-set in relation to analysing environmental policy, with a strong focus on its more technical implementation with less emphasis on analysing the political choices and potential interest-based conflicts. It was mentioned in the meeting with the self-evaluation team that the staff had undergone special training to the delivery of social sciences, however when the experts asked the teachers and students such training could not be proven. Even if the field of environmental policy is indeed interdisciplinary there is also a definite need for strong social science analytical skills to meet the expectations on an advanced political science degree.

All lecturers are involved in master thesis work process. Several lecturers are active in different research and education projects and are publishing scientific work, but again, when the experts examined the profile of some of their most relevant publications they found them to have little bearing on political science aspects of environmental policy research but largely natural science focused in their research questions and methodology.

The majority of research and education is conducted in Lithuania. Few of the course readings are in English and related to international and comparative environmental policy research. There is only limited international exchange of teaching staff with the support of Erasmus (3 teachers) and only three students have participated in the Erasmus exchange programme.

The teaching staff turnover is not significant, and many of the present teachers are quite old. It was not clear from the SER and interviews when and how new staff is enrolled and what criteria apart from MRU are used, but the impression was that there is no clear strategy as to how recruitment of new staff and change of old staff correlates with the changing demand of the programme. There is a compelling need for rejuvenating the teaching staff, in particular recruiting full-time lecturers with political science background to ensure the quality of the teaching and supervision in social science theory and methods. The information given by social partners indicated that supervision as well as examination of master's theses might be carried out by persons with little academic training, especially from the social sciences, even if there is also an assigned

supervising teacher from the University.

The recommendations in the area of teaching staff include:

- taking a more active part in scientific work and improving the analytical skills in the field of political science;
- introducing study subjects in foreign (English) language, including courses for teaching staff (some of the teachers do not speak English, but provide students literature and data bases in English) as well as elements of the study process in foreign languages (English) to improve the internationalization of the programme;
- inviting English speaking guest lecturers from abroad, as well as from other Lithuanian institutions, especially social science experts in the environmental policy field.

In sum: The programme's extensive connections throughout environmental policy making community are of great benefit for the programme's students. There is a compelling need for systematically introducing political science course work and political science faculty into the programme, in order to meet the expectations of students, community leaders and employers. In particular, improvement of social science/political science methodological competencies and language skills of the teaching staff is needed for advanced level teaching in environmental politics and administration.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Students can study and lectures are held in three different University buildings. According to the SER, the central building has 3 auditoriums for general lectures for 704 students, 46 auditoriums for 773 students. The new building has 463 places and 20 auditoriums for 1052 students. The first building contains 4 auditoriums for general lectures for 608 students and 23 auditoriums for 735 students. The University has internet-reading room for 21 students. There is a good internet connection infrastructure. The auditoriums have all necessary equipment – all teacher work places are computerized. 5 auditoriums have stationary video conference system. There are 16 computerised auditoriums in the Central building and 3 in the Faculty of Public Safety.

There are 141 computerised work places for students in University's libraries and reading rooms. When the expert team visited the library and student reading premises, they were very impressed with the high standard and comfortable work environment for students. The University offers a variety of physical and virtual spaces for students and the student rooms were highly occupied during the expert team visit. The library services are modern and with excellent service. According to the SER, responsible University's units are constantly analysing needs of the readers and are looking for new forms of services (from 2010 “thematic“ librarians). New books lists are published on the library's website every month. The number of electronic resources has increased substantially in recent years. The Library offers significantly long working hours – until 5 o'clock in the morning and opens up again at 8.45. The library structure and work places are also suitable for readers with disabilities.

The experts were nevertheless puzzled by the fact that many the readings for the political science classified programme in *Environmental Policy and Administration* were found in the book shelves for Natural Science – Environment rather than in social science. There were some international books on environmental policy that are highly relevant for the programme, albeit these did not seem to be included in the course syllabus. This might be a language issue, but today most students should be able to read English. The interviewed students ensured that they had ample access to all the learning resources they would need, and the library resources are excellent, but there was little evidence in their theses work that this literature had been fully utilized.

Some of the courses of the programme practice MOODLE e-studies environment. But the SER mentions that not all modules of the programme are delivering the MOODLE system, and the expert team was not informed what alternatives were used for those. The student survey indicated that the majority of teachers do not use MOODLE either.

Both full-time and part-time students interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the overall quality of the programme's facilities and its learning resources, and the student surveys provided indicate the same.

In sum: The high quality of the library and classroom and other learning facilities is fully adequate in meeting the research needs of the graduate students in the programme. Still, the excellent study environment also displays a paradox since the expert team found little evidence that the students make use of those resources in the writing of their theses. This shortcome should be remedied. The expert team also recommends faculty to be consistent as to whether and if so how to use the MOODLE system for the benefit of students.

5. Study process and student assessment

The student admission process was approved by the University Senate on 18 April 2013. The competitive score is made of the sum of two scores of arithmetic means of assessments of Bachelor studies. According to the SER, there is no fixed competitive line of the entrants. Moreover, those who want to study in this programme can have bachelor's degree in any study field. The experts noted the breath of student's disciplinary backgrounds in this programme, many of whom come from the natural sciences, while others come from working places to obtain a master's degree. The experts were informed that college students need to fulfil a probationary year prior to entering, and that students with a natural science degree must first take 9 points of political science. However, this is deemed insufficient since the political science teaching both seems to be quite separate from the content of the programme, and also this course appears to be counted as part of the master's programme. Supplementary studies (bridging courses) are foreseen for students of two types: students that graduated in colleges and having not university higher education degree and students that graduated in universities but not in the social science study area. The first group must pass 1 year political science bridging course (60 credits) and the second group must pass 3 bridging political science study subjects (Basics of Political Science, Modern Political Theories, Comparative Political Theories. This amounts to 9 credits and is additional to the master programme. The entry requirements for an advanced political science degree should thus be strengthened. Also, even the social science profile students get little, if any, advanced political science teaching in this programme which is previously mentioned. In particular, training in writing essays and applying social science methodologies appear to be largely absent in the current entry requirements.

According the SER, student retention is low. During the years 2008-2012 a total of 39 students suspended their studies for varying reasons. It was mentioned in the interviews that students can suspend their studies but not for how long time. Nevertheless, the Expert team states that the current drop-off rates are not monitored and managed properly; systemic evaluation is needed in this respect.

The adopted system to avoid plagiarism was said to use Google by entering part of the sentence (also translated into English) to look for a match. Students are also taught early in the course about this and have to submit drafts of thesis throughout the process.

There are opportunities for students to connect to ongoing research through their master's

theses. Themes are suggested both by social partners from government offices and by teachers, but those students the experts met during the visit all emphasized that they had themselves chosen the topics as well as who would be their supervisors. The best master theses can feed into the university's research journals or into the government. The experts found evidence of the latter. Still, several students mentioned that they would like some more practical experience, possibilities to attend conferences and meeting social partners during their studies.

There is variety of different financial support given to students by the university. Even if the University as a whole has only 10-15 % state-funded students, the interviewed students claimed that the majority of students in the Environmental Policy and Administration programme are state-funded.

The University provides support for disable students, by creating favourable conditions in auditoriums, libraries and other facilities. As for student mobility, the impression was that students who study part time alongside work feel that they have few opportunities in practice to go abroad. Still, increasing the possibilities of student exchanges with other countries should be strived for the future.

The assessment system of students' performance is sufficiently clear and adequate. However, the expert team had the impression that some of the grades given to master's theses were on the high side.

In sum: Assigning a central role to social science theory and methodology in the researching, writing and examination of masters' theses is essential. Also, the admission requirements for students outside of social science/political science should be strengthened (including teaching staff, especially those with natural/ technical background). There was also an expressed wish from students to get more practical experience in their studies, and to have the opportunity to meet social partners and attend relevant conferences. Further possibilities for student exchange should be explored.

6. Programme management

The Faculty of Politics and Management and the Public Management Institute are responsible for the management of the programme, including its three institutes/units of Management, Political Science and Public Administration (that has an *Environment Management Centre* established since four months ago). In addition, the following entities are mentioned as having important roles in the programme management:

▲ The Faculty's Environmental Study Programme Committee is responsible for improving the programme's curriculum, the quality of implementation process, staff selection and the supervision of the need of material and information resources; this committee meets at least once per semester;

▲ The Academic Affairs Centre is responsible for the coordination of the study programme's implementation on the institutional level;

▲ Teaching staff and social partners are responsible for the improving and renewing the study programme, to reach projected results;

▲ There is an assigned Director of study programme responsible for learning outcomes and quality, while the Institute Director applies to the Dean of Faculty on hiring of teaching staff for the programme, according to information given in the meeting with the University administration;

▲ The Career Centre helps with analysing market needs.

- ▲ **The Environmental Management Centre** was recently established with the aim to coordinate research and study activities in the field of environmental policy and management, incorporate research activities into environmental study programmes, prepare and carry out research projects. But there is no clear plan from the members of this centre as to how they plan to improve the present research situation of the programme and what is envisaged for the future.

The responsibilities for programme decisions and the monitoring of the implementation of the programme are quite clearly listed and allocated, but there is some evidence that there is no clear sense of ownership of the programme. Regular (monthly meetings) of the Study Programme Committee are held and protocols are available. Reviewed protocols are however very formal, problems identified are that these reflect very superficial discussions with few details; for instance, there is no clear distribution of foreseen tasks and timeline for implementation measures. The protocols are also absent from continuity – none of them check and report what is done from previous decisions. There appears to be a lack of energy put into the further development of the programme. The evaluation visit revealed that there is no clear strategy on how to attract additional students in the future and how to counter the decreasing number of applicants to ensure programme viability in the mid-term. Goals for the further development of the programme over the next 5-10 years remain obscure.

Information about the programme (aims, structure, projected learning results, study methods, scope, assessment of knowledge and abilities procedure, assessment criteria) can be found on the official university's website. It is mentioned in the SER that the study quality monitoring system was created which allows for obtaining feedback from stakeholders. However, in the meetings the experts received unclear messages as to how those evaluations had been fed back into the system and who is responsible for adjustments of course contents and changes in allocation of teaching staff. The expert team looked at protocols from the Environmental Study Committee and reviewed student questionnaires but those did not sufficiently clarify the allocated division of responsibilities in this respect.

Information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected only from students (small part), but not analysed, market analysis and SWOT analysis are totally absent. Even the opportunity of writing the Self Evaluation Report was not used to determine weak points as basis for a programme improvement. Teachers' level study module evaluations are regularly performed, but there is no evidence that it is analysed at a programme management (Study Committee) level. Students' survey outcomes are insufficiently communicated to the students in terms of whether, and to what extent, their evaluations have been considered in decision making. A further shortcoming is that stakeholders, despite the close contacts with some of these, are insufficiently involved in the evaluation and improvement processes. Internal quality assurance measures are reported as undertaken, but their effectiveness and efficiency remains unclear for the external evaluation team.

The expert team recommends reorganizing the management structure of the programme implementing a strategic planning procedure which differentiates and explicitly specifies management responsibilities for the programme and which creates a positive sense of programme ownership.

In sum: The University administrative structure appears complicated in relation to this programme, and reducing ambiguity in the management of the programme is needed by clearly identifying the respective roles of the faculty and the administration. The evaluation procedures require strengthening to ensure adequate monitoring and feedback.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a compelling need for systematically introducing political science coursework and political science faculty into the programme, in order, to meet the expectations of students, community leaders and employers. There is a strong interest in grounding the masters' programme in the understanding the role of politics in the making and implementation of public policy.
2. Evaluating the study objectives and learning outcomes and eventually reformulating them into fewer and more relevant ones.
3. Assigning a central role to social science theory and methodology in the researching, writing and examination of masters' theses.
4. Involving students and staff more deeply in research activities and professional networking in the field of environmental policy and administration would be highly beneficial.
5. Strengthening the internationalization of the programme curriculum and benchmarking against similar programmes in other European countries, and improving language skills among teaching staff to enable further use of international study literature.
6. Strengthening the evaluation procedure at programme level including analysis of market needs.
7. Reducing ambiguity in the management of the programme by clearly identifying the respective roles of the faculty and the administration.

IV. SUMMARY

An External Evaluation Team lead by Prof. dr. John Francis (USA) was appointed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) to conduct an evaluation of Environmental Protection Policy and Administration study programme in political science study field (state codes: 621L22005), which is offered by Mykolas Romeris University from 1 September 2005.

The evaluation report is based on the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) received at the end of October 2013, the site visit of the expert group to Academy on 5 December 2013 as well as supplementary information provided to SKVC and the expert team by the Programme staff.

The aim of the study programme is to train specialists for high-level qualifications in environmental policy formulation, implementation and evaluation in both the public and private sectors. It reflects an identified shortage of expertise in development of environmental policy and targets a different labour market than the more natural science/engineering profiles in other University environmental programs. Currently, no other programme with this profile exists in Lithuania. The programme's extensive connections throughout environmental policy making community are of great benefit for the programme's students.

Given this profile, however, the expert team found that there is a compelling need for systematically introducing political science course work and political science faculty into the programme (aims, LO, competences and study subjects), in order to meet the expectations of students, community leaders and employers. There is a strong interest in grounding the masters' programme in the understanding the role of politics in the making and implementation of public policy. The programme should be benchmarked against similar programmes across Europe to ensure that the course work and master's thesis will be in line with those aims.

In particular, improvement of social science/political science methodological competencies and language skills of the teaching staff is needed for advanced level teaching in environmental politics and administration. Assigning a central role to social science theory and methodology in the researching, writing and examination of masters' theses is essential. Also, the admission requirements for students outside of social science/political science should be strengthened (including teaching staff, especially those with natural/ technical background). There was also an expressed wish from students to get more practical experience in their studies, and to have the opportunity to meet social partners and attend relevant conferences. Further possibilities for student exchange should be explored.

The University administrative structure appears complicated in relation to this programme, and reducing ambiguity in the management of the programme is needed by clearly identifying the respective roles of the faculty and the administration. The evaluation procedures require strengthening to ensure adequate monitoring and feedback.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Environmental Policy and Administration* (state code – 621L22005) at Mykolas Romeris University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

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

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof. dr. John Francis

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. dr. Katarina Eckerberg

Mr. Grant Horsburgh

Ms. Lina Šleinotaitė-Budrienė

Ms. Agnė Adomaitytė

**MYKOLO ROMERIO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS *APLINKOS APSAUGOS POLITIKA IR ADMINISTRAVIMAS*
(VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621L22005) 2014-02-17 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ
NR. SV4-77 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Mykolo Romerio Universiteto studijų programa *Aplinkos apsaugos politika ir administravimas* (valstybinis kodas – 621L22005) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	2
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	2
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
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

Prof. dr. Johno Franciso (JAV) vadovaujama ekspertų grupė Studijų kokybės vertinimo centro buvo paskirta įvertinti nuo 2005 m. rugsėjo 1 d Mykolo Romerio universitete vykdomą politikos mokslų krypties Aplinkos apsaugos politikos ir administravimo studijų programą (valstybinis kodas 621L22005).

Vertinimo ataskaita parengta remiantis 2013 m. spalio pabaigoje gauta Savianalizės suvestine, ekspertų lankymosi šioje aukštojo mokslo įstaigoje 2013 m. gruodžio 5 d. išvadomis, taip pat SKVC ir ekspertų grupei programos darbuotojų pateikta papildoma informacija.

Šios studijų programos tikslas – rengti aukštos kvalifikacijos specialistus, gebančius gerai suprasti aplinkos apsaugos politikos formavimo, įgyvendinimo ir vertinimo principus tiek viešajame, tiek privačiame sektoriuose. Programa sukurta atsizvelgus į specifinių aplinkos apsaugos politikos formavimo žinių turinčių specialistų trūkumą ir orientuota į kitokią darbo rinką, nei kitų universitetų aplinkos apsaugos programų rengiami labiau gamtamokslinės ir inžinerinės pakraipos specialistai. Šiuo metu Lietuvoje nėra kitos panašaus pobūdžio programos. Platūs programos ryšiai su aplinkos apsaugos politiką kuriančia bendruomene yra labai naudingi studentams.

Atsizvelgus į tokį programos pobūdį, ekspertų nuomone, norint geriau atitikti studentų, bendruomenės lyderių ir darbdavių lūkesčius būtina numatyti reikalavimą rengti politinių mokslų kursinį darbą bei įdarbinti daugiau dėstytojų, kurių specializacijos sritis yra politikos mokslai (aiškiai apibrėžiant tikslus, studijų rezultatus, kompetencijas ir studijuojamus dalykus). Ypač svarbu, kad ši magistro programa būtų grindžiama supratimu apie politikos vaidmenį kuriant ir įgyvendinant viešąją politiką.

Programa turėtų būti lyginama su panašiomis visoje Europoje vykdomomis programomis, siekiant užtikrinti, kad rengiami kursiniai darbai ir magistro baigiamieji darbai atitiktų apibrėžtus tikslus.

Siekiant kelti aplinkos apsaugos politikos ir administravimo programos dėstymo lygį, būtina tobulinti pedagoginio personalo metodologines kompetencijas socialinių ir politinių mokslų srityje bei užsienio kalbų įgūdžius. Vykdam mokslų tyrimus, rengiant ir vertinant magistro baigiamuosius darbus didžiausią dėmesį skirti socialinių mokslų teorijai ir metodologijai. Taip pat turėtų būti sugriežtinti priėmimo reikalavimai socialinių ar politinių mokslų nebaigusiems studentams (taip pat ir pedagoginio personalo nariams, turintiems išsilavinimą gamtos ar techninių mokslų srityje). Studentai ne kartą pabrėžė, kad studijuodami pageidauja įgyti daugiau praktinės patirties, turėti galimybių susitikti su socialiniais partneriais ir dalyvauti jiems aktualiose konferencijose. Turėtų būti ieškoma būdų plačiau naudotis studentų mainų programų galimybėmis.

Universiteto administracinė struktūra programos atžvilgiu yra pernelyg sudėtinga; būtina šalinti programos vadybos dviprasmiškumus aiškiai apibrėžiant atitinkamas fakulteto ir administracijos vykdomas funkcijas. Vertinimo procedūros turėtų būti tobulinamos, siekiant užtikrinti tinkamą stebėseną ir grįžtamąjį ryšį.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Norint geriau atitikti studentų, bendruomenės lyderių ir darbdavių lūkesčius būtina numatyti reikalavimą rengti politinių mokslų kursinį darbą bei įdarbinti daugiau dėstytojų, kurių specializacijos sritis yra politikos mokslai. Ypač svarbu, kad ši magistro programa būtų grindžiama supratimu apie politikos vaidmenį kuriant ir įgyvendinant viešąją politiką.
2. Peržiūrėti studijų tikslus ir rezultatus, suformuluoti jų mažiau, tačiau aktualesnių programai.
3. Vykdam mokslų tyrimus, rengiant ir vertinant magistro baigiamuosius darbus didžiausią dėmesį skirti socialinių mokslų teorijai ir metodologijai.
4. Būtų itin naudinga labiau įtraukti studentus ir personalą į mokslo tiriamąją veiklą ir profesinių tinklų kūrimo procesą aplinkos apsaugos politikos ir administravimo srityje.
5. Stiprinti programos turinio tarptautiškumo aspektą, lyginti programą su panašiomis

- programomis kitose Europos valstybėse; dėstytojai turėtų tobulinti savo kalbų mokėjimo įgūdžius, kad galėtų plačiau naudotis mokomąja literatūra užsienio kalba.
6. Tobulinti programos lygmeniu taikomas vertinimo procedūras, įskaitant rinkos poreikių analizę.
 7. Būtina pašalinti programos vadybos dviprasmiškumus aiškiai apibrėžiant atitinkamas fakulteto ir administracijos vykdomas funkcijas.

<...>

Paslaugos teikėja patvirtina, jog yra susipažinusi su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso² 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)

² Žin., 2002, Nr.37-1341.