



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO  
*SOCIALINĖS ANTROPOLOGIJOS* STUDIJŲ  
PROGRAMOS (621L60001)  
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF *SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY* (621L60001)**  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
**AT VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY**

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Socialinė antropologija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621L60001
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Antropologija
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Antropologijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	Lietuvos Respublikos švietimo ir mokslo ministro 2007 m. vasario 19 d. įsakymu Nr. ISAK-225

## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Social Anthropology</i>
State code	621L60001
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Anthropology
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Anthropology
Date of registration of the study programme	19 of February 2007, under the order of the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. ISAK – 225

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The procedures of the external evaluation of the *Social Anthropology* Masters study programme in the field of Anthropology were initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania nominating the external evaluation peer group formed by the Chair, Dr. Michael Stewart (University College London, UK), Professor Zdzislaw Mach (Head of the Centre for European Studies, Krakow University, Poland), Adjunct Professor Dr. Reetta Toivanen (University of Helsinki, Finland), Assoc. Prof. Donatas Brandišauskas (Senior Research Fellow, Head of the Module of Sociocultural Anthropology, Vilnius University, Lithuania), and Mr. Gytis Valatka, student representative (Vilnius University, Lithuania).

For the evaluation the following documents have been considered:

1. Law on Higher Education and Research of Republic of Lithuania;
2. Procedure of the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes;
3. General Requirements for Masters Degree Study Programmes;
4. Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes.

The basis for the evaluation of the study programme is the Self-Evaluation Report (hereafter, SER), prepared in 2013, its annexes and the site visit of the expert group to Kaunas on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013. The visit included all required meetings with different groups: the administrative staff of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, staff responsible for preparing the self-evaluation documents, teaching staff of the Masters programme, students of all years of study, alumni of the programme and employers. The review panel evaluated various support services (classrooms, laboratories, library, computer facilities), and also examined students' final Thesis, and various other materials. At the end of the visit, and after the review panel discussion were presented a set of introductory general conclusions. After the visit, the panel met again to discuss and agree the content of the report, which represents the review panel consensual views.

Our assessment of the study programme was, taking into consideration the considerable challenges a programme of this sort faces in any part of Lithuania, very positive. We were overwhelmed by the extremely enthusiastic attitude of the current students and the alumni to the study programme. The students – to put it quite simply – adore the study programme, including, we have to admit, aspects of the programme over which we had, prior to the visit, expressed considerable scepticism (such as the value of the short term courses with foreign scholars that

can last as little as one week). Arguing forcibly against our pre-judgement, the students asserted that the short courses – with the access to distinguished foreign faculty – was one of the fundamental features of the study programme, one of the primary reasons they had chosen it and a unique feature that ‘has to be preserved’.

The enthusiastic attitude of the students came across in everything they said. It is clear that the Centre of Social Anthropology (the larger part of Professor Vytis Čubrinskas’) office is a place that all can go to borrow books, to find colleagues to talk to, to hang out and acquire all those informal forms of socialisation into a disciplinary way of thinking that few universities today can provide. Students stressed the ‘great atmosphere’, the fact that you are treated as an equal and feel you are among friends in your work. Indeed, we discovered that the Centre is a focal point for anthropologists across the country that encourages their students to visit to find the key textbooks in social anthropology that are currently unavailable in other Departments.

Professor Vytis Čubrinskas, who singlehandedly manages this programme of education, is a charismatic intellectual leader to his students. This fact is neither to be sneered at nor to be belittled. Contrary to common opinion, such leadership demands great efforts of imagination and empathy. To sustain such leadership in the anthropological desert of central Lithuania is a real achievement that stands as sterling testimony to Professor Čubrinskas’ profound commitment to making this study programme viable. As one student told us: I was so glad to find that finally here somebody understood me and helped me to do what I had so long wanted to do.” (this student won EU funding to go to Chicago during her studies). It is hard to imagine a better recommendation for a university course at this level of study.

Three years ago the current Chair of this evaluation visited the study programme, with a different team of fellow assessors. While the review panel at that time were impressed with many features of the programme they found a flaw in the curriculum design serious enough to merely award a 2 (Curriculum design evaluation area) and made a number of specific suggestions for improvement. As documented below, the most substantial issues raised, not just in relation to the curriculum, but in other areas too (e.g. library openings), have been effectively addressed. Most importantly the preparation of students for their essential fieldwork exercise has been persuasively improved. We found a list of Theses that showed a very significantly improvement in topic and range. Many of these Theses had been written on the basis of fieldwork conducted abroad. Moreover the programme co-ordinators had found financial support to enable students to travel – this has been a real asset for the students in the past few years of severe financial crisis and the programme deserves great praise for having the foresight to apply for such support.

In the crucial area of curriculum development in 2010 we had argued that there was a need to form “*a greater focus, perhaps even specialization*”, a “*more fully defined profile and strategy*”, and a “*clear research profile*”. We argued that there was a constant danger in “*the pressure to maintain a large scale programme leads to a lack of consistency in provision and, at times, an aleatory program structure*”. So we suggested that there was “*a need for greater intellectual cohesion, for closer specification of the program’s unique qualities and resolute focus on training students in these areas of expertise*”. Three years later these earlier identified weaknesses have been genuinely addressed. There are three clearly identified foci of the programme: transnationalism; intercultural interaction and ‘state and religion’. These foci are both highly appropriate to the task of promoting a coherent anthropological project in modern day Lithuania, allow students to focus their efforts on realisable Theses projects and mark Vytautas Magnus University (VMU, for short) study programme out within Lithuanian social sciences.

The development of a Bachelor at Vytautas Magnus University – which was not evaluated on this visit – is also a positive sign of the strong institutional support that exists at the university for the development of this study programme. Altogether it was the review panels’ view that this is a good programme in a discipline that has weak institutional support at the national level and that needs to be given the reassurance that comes from a full approval for a six year review. It is hoped that this will also allow the university to make further productive investment in this work.

## **II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS**

### ***1. Programme aims and learning outcomes***

*The programme aims and intended learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible and are based on both academic and likely professional requirements, as well as public needs.*

The programme applies an anthropological lens to the study of humanity and a broad range of sociocultural phenomena in today's world. We were impressed by the coherence and appropriateness of the three key knowledge and understanding intended learning outcomes. The programme is firstly designed to provide a thorough knowledge of how to identify occasions of social rupture caused by the collision of different global, transnational and local developments with ethnic, racial, religious identifications and politics. Second, it provides systematic knowledge of how to manage intercultural understanding and an ability to monitor, analyse and offer solutions to mitigate social and cultural encounters and conflicts in contributing to the public debates on such issues. Finally the programme aims to provide a thorough understanding of how to design a research project, an introduction to writing a grant proposal, conducting independent field research, analysing and interpreting fieldwork data – all crucial skills in the modern labour market.

The programme provides a coherent approach to anthropology with an appropriate balance of theory-method and particular thematics including regionally-specific issues. The programme structure and content is designed around three key themes: intercultural understanding, transnationalism and social change regarding state transformations. The Eastern European dimension adds experiential-ethnographic character to the teaching. The sequence of subjects appropriately arranged starting with the theory-method cluster in the first term and following up with the thematic cluster during the next two terms. The generic intended learning outcomes are clearly presented and well designed to provide students – as attested by our meeting with the alumni of the study programme – with transferrable skills. These included an ability to approach a problem holistically, approaching issues from new and unfamiliar perspectives and 'critical thinking' in the sense of refusing to be satisfied with the common sense or the most obvious answers to problems.

In general the structure of the programme makes it competitive with other programmes in social sciences in Lithuania as it explicitly integrates a range of academic fields, such as social theory

and social research methods, culture analysis, social change, transnationalism and globalization, identity politics and politics of culture, post socialism, area studies etc.

We further determined that the programme aims and intended learning outcomes are *consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered*. The arrangement of the teaching ensures a clear progression from theory to thematic and case studies and then an integration of perspectives in Master Theses. Besides lectures and seminars a variety of study methods are applied: review writing, field assignments, group discussions, conference presentations etc. Particular study methods are applied for independent research modules and are appropriately sequenced. Research Project Design is placed in the second term with a report on Anthropological Fieldwork in the third. Text and discourse analysis as study methods are used in the former case as fieldwork assignments including pilot fieldwork is in the latter case.

In conclusion, we confirm that *the name of the study programme, its intended learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other*.

This said there is no programme in the world that cannot consider ways to improve and we would urge the programme to consider how to take even greater interest in the internal diversity of Lithuanian society; providing students equipped to contribute to the pluralist ethos that the Dean spoke of in our visit. In this context, and looking to the longer term, Lithuanian Diaspora is a limiting frame. Plans for a Baltic doctoral school – that would widen the research agenda of future post-docs – would, if successful, help develop this necessary broadening of approach.

## **2. Curriculum design**

*Our study visit enabled us to determine that the curriculum design meets legal requirements.*

We observed that the 2009 Law on Higher Education and Research had introduced the ECTS credit without any major affect on the volume of the study subjects. Out of a new total of 120 ECTS credits, compulsory subjects comprise 36 ECTS credits, and 12 more ECTS credits are allocate to an individual Research Project Design and Anthropological Fieldwork – which are compulsory as well. Optional subjects comprise 42 ECTS credits i.e. 7 subjects to be chosen from 13 courses listed as optional (each subject (except for the Master Thesis – 30 ECTC credits) consists of 6 ECTS credits – or 160 hours of work). All 13 optional courses address the intended learning outcomes of the study programme either in teaching and broadening appropriate theory-methodology or in thematic focus, presenting particular subfields of anthropological study. 3 (24 ECTS credits) optional courses are cross-listed with *Applied*

*Sociology* Masters programme which gives the programme a certain dose of interdisciplinary nature. The level and intensity of contact was deemed appropriate to this level of study.

*We confirm that the study subjects are spread evenly, and that their themes are not repetitive; that the content of the modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies and well suited to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes; and finally we attest that the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

Students study 5 subjects (including individual research units) during each of the three semesters; the fourth semester is intended for preparation of the Masters Thesis. The programme structure and content is well designed and sequence of subjects is arranged to make the teaching and learning of anthropology coherent by delivering theory-method subjects and case studies in balance. The cluster of courses that provide **anthropological theory and methodology** offer a complex understanding of contemporary sociocultural anthropology theories and methods and clearly develop the research competences and training in research skills. Visual Anthropology, although an optional course, provides students with an introduction to visual methodologies. The second cluster is **thematically organised** along the three axes of the whole programme: the *state*, *transnationalism* and problems of *intercultural understanding*. Within this, three obligatory modules, i.e. ethnicity, migration and politics of identity; anthropology of state and the course on sociocultural identities are designed to address collisions (or encounters) and social ruptures caused by different global, transnational and local developments with ethnic, racial, religious etc. identifications and politics. Another three optional courses, i.e. political anthropology, area studies in anthropology, and globalization and anti-globalism provide broader topical insights to modern social life, well informed by relevant anthropological literature.

In line with recommendations from the previous visit, there is as strong **regional, Eastern European, perspective** in the Curriculum, expressed through courses like the Anthropology of Socialism and Post Socialism and a variety of other courses that use Eastern European case material (Applied Anthropology, Economic Anthropology, Medical Anthropology).

The students are also given plenty of time to lay the ground for their Thesis work which takes up the whole of the last semester. Prior to that, one-fifth of the total student's workload in the second and third semester is allocated to the supervised independent research work by preparing Research Project Design and conducting Pilot Fieldwork.

During the course of previous visit we identified the substantive preparation of the students for their fieldwork as an area needing further work. Specifically we recommended that the

programme put greater emphasis on helping students determine the focus of their thesis topic and field sites. We thought it should be possible in a more organized way to help them select fieldwork themes in line with the available resources, knowledge-base and skill of the staff and in greater coordination with the programme aims and intended learning outcomes. The programme has now implemented a number of significant changes and demonstrated – in the range of topics and sites of fieldwork – a robust response to our recommendations.

There remain some issues. We felt that most of the Masters theses have too formulaic structure and the students should be encouraged to write more flexibly and creatively. At the same time we would want to see more use of the field method of participant observation reflected in their texts. It seemed that interviews often dominated students' texts and were in these cases the only ethnographic sources and illustrations of student's arguments. If interviews are considered as the main products of field research in Masters level in anthropology, this can pose problems. The attitude that the more interviews one conducts, the better the product, derives from a non-anthropological research paradigm.

In particular in 2011-12 the faculty participated in the European Social Fund project "Development of Education and Training of Specialists in the Humanities and Social Sciences Enhancing Economic Growth". This provided internships for students and allowed them better to orient their work towards the practical needs of business and public organizations. This programme had wider effects, such as a more robust supervisory system that has led students to proceed more smoothly with their work on their Masters Thesis under individual supervision. Above all, this project provided students with additional funding for internships and fieldwork outside Lithuania. Alongside this students were encouraged to use Erasmus internships for the same purpose. As a direct result of these actions the spectrum of Theses defended in 2013 broadened considerably both thematically and regionally.

Furthermore, special emphasis was put on the course work of the obligatory subjects – anthropological theory and methodology – using these to help student define topics for research, select particular field sites and, in some cases, gain some practical experience in these sites.

At the same time the teaching or supervisory resources was significantly expanded in 2011 by launching Masters Certificate Study Programme with Southern Illinois University, as well as by increasing the number of international adjuncts invited to the programme. Outgoing students on Erasmus exchanges or internship programmes were also encouraged to seek their local tutors' advice in determining the focus and site of their Thesis.

Finally, the system for ensuring close supervision at home has been improved as is acknowledged in the student survey of 2013.

We were also able to determine that *the content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in science, art and technologies*. Three optional courses are cross-listed with Applied Sociology Masters study programme giving the Programme a certain interdisciplinary nature. This also reflects the well-grounded cooperation between the two fields at Vytautas Magnus University as attested on our previous visit.

During the evaluation period the programme improvement has led to certain changes in the study plan. High quality internationally recognized visiting faculty teach in special fields of sociocultural anthropology otherwise unavailable in Lithuania. Some courses like Anthropology of Religion were modified to align them better with the thematic focus of the study programme (it is now called: Religion, Culture and the State).

As in 2010 there is an issue with students coming from different disciplinary backgrounds have uneven success in achieving the programme's aims and intended learning outcomes. In principle, the commencement of the Bachelor study programme in *Sociology and Anthropology* (in the study field of Sociology) which offers a minor studies in anthropology at Vytautas Magnus University, may change this situation in the future.

We are also minded to recommend that wherever humanly possible, short term visiting faculty should be encouraged to extend their stay from 5 to 10 working days. Students explained how they coped with the work-load on a five day course, but it is clear from experience at other universities which also use the intensive teaching format (e.g. CEU and Krakow) that this small change would make a significant positive impact on achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

### **3. Staff**

The teaching staff of the programme includes full and part-time teachers and gives an important role to visiting professors. There are in total 14 teachers: 4 professors, 2 associate professors, 7 assistant professors, 1 assistant (PhD Candidate) and, on average, 5 visiting professors. Visiting professors are professionals or researchers with considerable academic experience in anthropological fields that are weak or absent in Lithuania and who enrich the content of the programme and are extremely popular with the students. *The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure the achievement of intended learning outcomes.*

*The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements and the qualifications of the teaching staff were demonstrated to be adequate to ensure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

*Comparison of general and programme provision of legal requirements for the academic staff composition:*

<b>Legal requirements</b>	<b>Volume of general provision, per cent</b>	<b>Volume of provision within the programme, per cent</b>
Teaching by the scholars	80≤	92
Lecturing by the scholars	100	100
Compliance of teachers' research interests with the courses of the study field taught	60≤	100
Courses of the study field taught by the professors	20≤	31

The students are overwhelmingly satisfied with staff experience in the programme and the range of resources on offer. We noted that there is still only one part-time (0.75) anthropologist associated with the study programme, apart from its Director, and in the longer term this will become a weakness. While in 2010 it was hoped that Dr. Renatas Berniūnas, for instance, would become a full-time member of the study programme in the years, since he has only had one year on a 0.25 appointment.

We would suggest that in the years ahead particular effort is made to recruit post-docs in anthropology with strong research profiles to complement the teaching strengths that already exist. Indeed this kind of development would be a prerequisite for the development of any doctoral programme in anthropology.

*The teaching staff turnover is adequate to ensure the provision of the study programme, but we would like to see more effort to retaining the young post-doctoral researchers who will play a crucial role in stabilising the study programme within the frame of Vytautas Magnus University.*

The programme makes a strategic choice to recruit a changing group of international researchers to teach on short courses. During the period of evaluation, 9 such visiting faculty contributed to the implementation of the study programme. 11 other teachers/researchers came to for short academic visits and/or research fellowships. Moreover there are two formal relationships, one via the *LLP/Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus programmes*, the other a bilateral exchange between VMU and Southern Illinois University (USA). Although the review panel was somewhat

sceptical of these arrangements before we visited, the students were unanimous in their acclaim for this system and indeed many stated that this was the single most attractive feature in the study programme. Asked if they would rather swap foreign short term visitors for one full-time Lithuanian junior scholar they resoundingly and forcefully rejected our suggestion.

We should add that despite the fact that to the review panel there seemed to be a problem before our visit that there are just a few full-time teachers and a limited range of topics to supervise (basically Migration and Religion), this turned out not to be a problem for the students. They are happy with the procedures for contacting their foreign supervisors via email or Skype, or combining a local supervisor with a foreign Professor, as adviser. Despite the student's reaction, this is an area worthy of improvement, by inviting young post-docs in anthropology with a broader research interests.

It was also clear to the review panel that *VMU creates the conditions necessary for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the study programme* within the limits of the possible in Lithuania. The absence of a sabbatical system remains a concern but grant-raising should be possible by all research active staff. Time and resources are needed in order to encourage the academic staff to do more research and publish internationally. This would increase international visibility of Lithuanian anthropology, strengthen cooperation with other anthropological centres, and also will provide the study programme with an original empirical and/or theoretical basis.

It is also true that *the teaching staff of the study programme is involved in research directly related to the study programme being evaluated* though, in line with the above there is room for improvement here. The provision of services that enables educational development of the staff is stronger than the research provision.

#### ***4. Facilities and learning resources***

Our study visit enabled us to confirm through observation that the premises as well as the teaching and learning equipment (laboratory and computer equipment, consumables) are adequate in size and quality. There are 75 classrooms and auditoriums available at Vytautas Magnus University that provide adequate space for current educational purposes. Seminar room 309 at the Department of Sociology is the most often used space for lectures, seminars, group meetings and consultations with students and it is adequate for current levels of recruitment. The conditions of campus facilities comply with the labour security and hygiene norm requirements. We were told that once a year, the Office of Infrastructure prepares a plan of required

renovations and each department incorporates its requirements for optimal technical, safety and teaching conditions. *Social Anthropology* students, following campus rules and regulations, may work in the ten University Library Reading Rooms providing 471 working places, including 100 computerized ones.

Currently multimedia equipment is available in 48 auditoriums of the University. The rest of the teaching rooms are provided with mobile multimedia facilities available from the VMU Technical Service Department. According to a self-evaluation survey, all the students and graduates of the Social Anthropology programme agreed that study rooms are well equipped (multimedia and computers, internet connection), comfortable and have enough space for all class members.

*The VMU does have adequate arrangements for students' practice* despite the shortage of resources characteristic of Higher Education across the European continent. A notable and impressive feature is the CISCO supplied virtual electronic classroom that provides VMU students with a state of the art classroom where they can connect to teachers in Illinois or elsewhere and effectively hold virtual classrooms involving at least ten local students. This room is staffed with qualified media engineers and makes a very significant contribution to delivering the teaching strategy of the study programme. The University is to be complemented on this facility.

*The teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible* both in the main library where journal provision is strong and in the programme itself, including such major resources as JSTOR (Arts and Sciences I, II, III collections); Oxford Journals Online; Blackwell Synergy; Cambridge Journals; eBooks on EBSCOhost; Oxford Reference Online: Premium Collection; SAGE Journals Online; SpringerLink and many others. In general the students are happy with the provision of resources and the majority of them, we saw in the student survey, think that the VMU does provide them with new study materials.

In 2010 we made a specific recommendation that the library open more often and that greater resources be put into e-learning materials and on both these fronts significant action has been taken. VMU Library opening hours have changed since 2010 and it is now open 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturdays. Since 2012 the Moodle system has been introduced at VMU which enabled increase of usage of e-resources. It has also encouraged teachers to require students to explore and refer to licensed databases more widely. One innovative course is the Sociology of Civil Society which operates as a distant learning course using Moodle and requiring extensive usage of databases.

As before, the Centre of Social Anthropology – otherwise known as Professor Čiubrinskas’ office – offers a truly significant resource for all the anthropology students since it constitutes the best anthropological library in Lithuania. Indeed during our visit to Lithuania it became clear that anthropologists from across the country come to Vytautas Magnus University to avail themselves of this resource.

### 5. Study process and student assessment

It is clear from our visit and reading of the Self-evaluation Report *that the admission requirements are well-founded* and clearly justified and that the study programme attracts sufficient number of students to continue to render it viable as the following table demonstrates.

Table 6. Competition according to number of applications, quota of study places and its fulfillment:

Type of study place	2010	2011	2012						
	Appl.	Q	Ad.	Appl.	Q	Ad.	Appl.	Q	Ad.
State-funded	30	7	7	26	5	5	41	5	5
EU -funded		-	-		8	8		2	2
VMU -funded		-	-		-	-		2	2
Self-funded		3	3		2	2		2	2
Total:		10	10		15	15		11	11

The organization of studies at Vytautas Magnus University is administered by the VMU Code of Academic Regulations. The study process is regulated in detail by the course schedule. Each semester schedule is posted on the Intranet and faculty notice board. Usually, throughout the semester, *Social Anthropology* students have no more than one lecture and one seminar a day. However, classroom sessions can take longer during intensive courses. In line with the directions of the VMU Code of Academic Regulations, the average number of credits in one academic year is 60 ECTS. The length of the Master’s degree is four semesters.

In 2010 we raised questions around the rate of drop-out but as the following table indicates there has been considerable improvement on this front (as well as clearer mechanisms for registering genuine as opposed to ‘paper’ drop-outs [i.e. those who never register]). It is also worth noting that the scores for admitted students are strong both in their maximum and in their minimum and compare well with other institutions running comparable study programmes.

Drop-out of students:

*2010/2011 – 2012/2013 Social Anthropology Master Studies*

Academic Year	Number of students admitted to the Programme	Tender points of the admitted students (high / low scores)	Number of students removed from the list of students and the reasons
2012/2013	11	9.64 / 8.00	0
2011/2012	15	9.72 / 8.06	4 – admitted students failed to register and did not start their studies; 2 – academic failure.  Total: 6
2010/2011	10	9.95 / 7.06	2 – admitted students failed to register and did not start their studies; 1 – has changed the study field by move to another university.  Total: 3

All the evidence we saw demonstrated that *students are encouraged to participate in research, and applied research activities and have strong, well-organised and funded opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes*. 57% of the programme students participated in mobility programmes during the three-years since 2010. Many of the other students had already participated in the *Erasmus* exchange programme during their first cycle studies and thus have no right to apply to this programme again. Students travelled to: Lund University (Sweden), University of Copenhagen, Black Hills University (USA), University of Lumiere Lyon II (France), Tallinn University etc. During the period under evaluation 10 students took internships in the UK, USA, South Korea, Turkey, Romania, Germany, Sweden, Macedonia, Israel, and Egypt. There is also an important group of incoming students via Erasmus exchange programme with 11 students from Italy, Sweden, Denmark.

## **6. Programme management**

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the study programme are clearly allocated as far as the review panel could tell. *Social Anthropology* is housed within the Department of Sociology and there are very good relations among the staff in this Department.

Information and data on the implementation of the study programme are regularly collected and analysed as is evidenced by the coherence and solidly grounded data presented in the SER and annexes. It is clear from the experience in 2010 and now that the outcomes of internal and

external evaluations of the study programme are used for the improvement. As stated on several occasions through this text, issues that were raised three years ago and recommendations that were made have all been addressed. From our discussion with the stakeholders it is clear that evaluation and amelioration processes do involve stakeholders who, as alumni of the programme in several cases, have a longstanding interest in and knowledge of the study programme. Overall we judge that the internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient.

Due to our judgement that the programme has not yet found a means to retain young talented researchers and find a means to recruit these around the programme, providing post doctoral positions for them, but has in fact lost some such people to other universities and programmes, we note that there is a weakness here which motivates our score of three and which, hopefully, the programme management, in conjunction with the University and Faculty management will be able to resolve.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It would benefit the study programme to hire one research oriented post-doc to contribute to the teaching and supervision of students. The programme is at the moment very much in the hands of one person and it would improve the quality and broadness of the programme if at least one more junior person were brought in. While moving to implement this we recommend you invite young post-docs in anthropology with a broader research interests to supervise final theses and broaden the research base.
2. Since most Masters Thesis have a rather too formulaic a structure and could be more flexibly and creatively written, we would encourage you to promote flexibility in the approach allowed by students. We would also recommend that there should be encouraged a more systematic reflection on methods in the Theses including field methods of participant observation in the texts. It seemed that interviews dominated students' texts and were often the only ethnographic sources and illustrations of student's arguments. We recommend that interviews not be considered as the main products of field research in Masters level.
3. Time and resources are needed in order to encourage the academic staff to do more research and publish internationally. This would increase international visibility of Lithuanian anthropology, strengthen cooperation with other anthropological centres, and also will provide the study programme with an original empirical and/or theoretical basis.
4. Wherever humanly possible, all short courses should run over two weeks not one, as this will give students more time to assimilate the material and learn in a less stressed environment.
5. We recommend that attention is paid to harmonising the knowledge level and skills of the students as the fact is that many students come from other disciplines to take a Masters in Anthropology. This could be done with a thorough introduction course for those who have no Bachelor in such field.

## IV. SUMMARY

Our evaluation of the programme was, taking into consideration the considerable challenges a programme of this sort faces in any part of Lithuania, very positive. We were overwhelmed by the extremely enthusiastic attitude of the current students and the alumni to the programme. The students – to put it quite simply – adore the programme. The enthusiastic attitude of the students came across in everything they said. It is clear that the Centre of Social Anthropology (the larger part of Professor Vytis Čubrinskas') office is a place that all can go to borrow books, to find colleagues to talk to, to hang out and acquire all those informal forms of socialisation into a disciplinary way of thinking that few universities today can provide. Indeed, we discovered that the Centre is a focal point for anthropologists across the country who encourage their students to visit to find the key textbooks in social anthropology that are currently unavailable in other departments.

Professor Vytis Čubrinskas, who singlehandedly manages this programme of education, is a charismatic intellectual leader to his students. This fact is not to be sneered at nor to be belittled. Contrary to common opinion, such leadership demands great efforts of imagination and empathy. To sustain such leadership in what one has to say in the anthropological desert of central Lithuania is a real achievement that stands as sterling testimony to Professor Čubrinskas' profound commitment to making this programme viable.

Three years ago the current Chair of this evaluation visited the programme, with a different team of fellow assessors. While the review panel at that time was impressed with many features of the programme they found a serious enough flaw in the curriculum design to merely award a 2 (Curriculum design evaluation area) and made a number of specific suggestions for improvement. As documented in the report the most substantial issues raised, not just in relation to the curriculum but in other areas too (e.g. library openings) have been effectively addressed.

In the crucial area of curriculum development there are now three clearly identified foci of the programme: transnationalism; intercultural interaction and 'state and religion'. These foci are both highly appropriate to the task of promoting a coherent anthropological project in modern day Lithuania, allow students to focus their efforts on realisable Theses projects and mark the VMU study programme out within Lithuania social sciences.

The development of a Bachelor – which was not evaluated on this visit – is also a positive sign of the strong institutional support that exists at the university for the development of this study programme. Altogether it was the review panels' view that this is a good programme in a

discipline that has weak institutional support at the national level and that needs to be given the reassurance that comes from a full approval for a six year review. It is hoped that this will also allow the university to make further productive investment in this work.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Social Anthropology* (state code – 621L60001) at Vytautas Magnus 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	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	3
4.	Material resources	4
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	4
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>20</b>

\*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:

Dr. Michael Sinclair Stewart

Grupės nariai:  
Team members:

Prof. Zdzislaw Mach

Dr. Reetta Toivanen

Assoc. Prof. Donatas Brandišauskas

Mr. Gytis Valatka

**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ  
PROGRAMOS *SOCIALINĖ ANTROPOLOGIJA* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621L60001)  
2013-12-13 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-551-4 IŠRAŠAS**

&lt;...&gt;

**V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS**

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Socialinė antropologija* (valstybinis kodas – 621L60001) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	4
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	<b>Iš viso:</b>	<b>20</b>

\* 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**

Atsižvelgiant į iššūkius, su kuriais tokio pobūdžio studijų programa susidurtų bet kurioje Lietuvos aukštojoje mokykloje, antrosios pakopos *Socialinės antropologijos* studijų programą ekspertų grupė įvertino teigiamai. Ekspertus itin sužavėjo pozityvus studentų ir absolventų nusiteikimas šios studijų programos atžvilgiu. Studentai, paprastai tarant, dievina studijų programą. Entuziastingas studentų požiūris atsispindėjo visame, apie ką jie bekalbėtų. Akivaizdu, kad Socialinės antropologijos centras (vadovaujamas prof. Vyčio Čiubrinsko) – tai vieta, kur kiekvienas gali užsukti pasiskolinti knygų, pasikonsultuoti su kolegomis, neformaliai socializuotis išsiugdant gebėjimą kryptingai mąstyti. Pažymėtina, kad nedaugelis universitetų šiandien gali tai užtikrinti. Šis centras, kaip ekspertų grupė įsitikino, yra antropologų traukos objektas šalies mastu; kitų studijų programų studentai raginami ieškoti čia pagrindinės literatūros socialinės antropologijos tematika, kurios šiuo metu stokojama kitur.

Profesorius Vytis Čiubrinskas, kuris vienas vadovauja studijų programos vykdymui, yra charizmatinis lyderis. Šio fakto nereikėtų nei menkinti, nei iš jo šaipytis. Priešingai nei daugelis mano, toks vadovavimas reikalauja didelių pastangų, vaizduotės ir empatijos. Lyderiauti „antropologinėje vidurio Lietuvos dykumoje“ yra tikras pasiekimas, patvirtinantis tvirtą profesoriaus Čiubrinsko pasiryžimą vykdyti šią studijų programą.

Prieš trejus metus ekspertų grupės vadovas dalyvavo prieš tai vykusiame studijų programos vertinime. Nors studijų programa ankstesnio vertinimo metu ekspertų grupei paliko teigiamą įspūdį, tačiau taip pat buvo identifikuota programos sandaros trūkumų, dėl kurių minėtoji vertinamoji sritis buvo įvertinta dvejetu bei buvo pateikta nemažai konkrečių siūlymų studijų programos tobulinimui. Atkreiptinas dėmesys, kad svarbiausi tą kartą iškelti probleminiai klausimai, susiję ne tik su studijų programos sandara, bet ir su kitomis sritimis (pvz., bibliotekos darbo valandos), buvo išspręsti.

Šiuo metu yra aiškiai nustatytos trys pagrindinės studijų programos sandaros tobulinimo sritys: transnacionalizmas, tarpkultūrinė sąveika bei „valstybė ir religija“. Jos puikiai atitinka uždavinių nuosekliai populiarinti antropologiją šiandienos Lietuvoje, padeda studentams sutelkti pastangas į taikomųjų baigiamųjų darbų rengimą ir išskiria šią Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programą iš kitų Lietuvos socialinių mokslų srities studijų programų.

Bakalauro studijų programos, kuri nebuvo vertinama šio vizito metu, vykdymas taip pat yra pozityvus dalykas, rodantis, kad universitetas yra suinteresuotas antrosios studijų pakopos studijų programos vykdymu. Apskritai, ekspertų grupės nuomone, tai yra gera antropologijos krypties, kuri ne itin remiama nacionaliniu lygmeniu, programa, todėl būtų tikslinga ją akredituoti šešeriems studijų metams. Tikimasi, kad tai taip pat užtikrins galimybę universitetui ir toliau našiai šia linkme dirbti.

### **III. REKOMENDACIJOS**

1. Būtų naudinga, jeigu dėstyti *Socialinės antropologijos* studijų programoje būtų pasamdytas bent vienas daktaro laipsnį įgijęs tyrėjas, kuris taip pat vadovautų studentų baigiamiesiems darbams. Šiuo metu studijų programa yra sutelkta vieno asmens rankose, todėl priėmus bent vieną „jaunesnįjį“ dėstytoją, studijų programos kokybė pagerėtų, studijų objektas taptų daugiau apimančiu. Minėtojo tikslo realizavimui rekomenduojame pasikviesti jaunu, daktaro laipsnį neseniai įgijusių antropologijos specialistų, kurių mokslinių tyrimų laukas yra

platesnis, taip pat suteikti jiems galimybes vadovauti studentų baigiamųjų darbų rengimui bei plėsti mokslinių tyrimų bazę.

2. Kadangi daugelio magistrantūros baigiamųjų darbų struktūra yra šabloniška, nors darbai galėtų būti rengiami vadovaujantis žymiai kūrybiškesniu požiūriu, ragintume suteikti studentams galimybes lanksčiau žiūrėti į šį procesą. Taip pat rekomenduotume skatinti studentus jų baigiamuosiuose darbuose naudoti įvairesnius tyrimo metodus, įskaitant lauko tyrimus taikant dalyvaujimąjį stebėjimą. Ekspertų grupei pasirodė, kad studentų darbuose vyrauja apklausos, dažnai tai yra vienintelis etnografinis šaltinis, kuriuo remiantis pateikiami studentų argumentai. Rekomenduojame apklausų netaikyti kaip pagrindinio antrosios studijų pakopos studijų programos tyrimo metodo.
3. Siekiant paskatinti akademinį personalą atlikti daugiau mokslinių tyrimų, taip pat daugiau publikuoti tarptautiniuose mokslo leidiniuose, būtų tikslinga tam skirti daugiau laiko ir lėšų. Minėta veikla padidintų Lietuvos antropologijos matomumą tarptautinėje erdvėje, sustiprintų bendradarbiavimą su kitais antropologijos centrais, o studijų programa įgytų tvirtą empirinį ir (arba) teorinį pagrindą.
4. Kai tai yra įmanoma, visi trumpos trukmės studijų dalykai turėtų trukti ne mažiau kaip dvi savaites. Tokiu būdu studentai turėtų daugiau laiko įsisavinti studijų medžiagą bei studijų procese būtų patiriama mažiau įtampos.
5. Rekomenduojame skirti daugiau dėmesio studentų žinių ir įgūdžių lygio suvienodinimui, nes nemažai antropologijos magistrantūroje šiuo metu studijuojančių studentų prieš tai studijavo kitus dalykus. Siekiant šio tikslo galėtų būti dėstomas išsamus įvadinis kursas tiems, kurie nėra įgiję bakalauro laipsnio antropologijos kryptyje.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso<sup>1</sup> 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

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<sup>1</sup> Žin., 2002, Nr.37-1341.