



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus universiteto

ORGANIZACINĖS PSICHOLOGIJOS PROGRAMOS
(62406S105, 621S15001)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY* (62406S105,
621S15001)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius University

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Organizacinė psichologija</i>
Valstybiniai kodai	62406S105, 621S15001
Studijų sritis	socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	psichologija
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	organizacinės psichologijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<i>Organizational Psychology</i>
State codes	62406S105, 621S15001
Study area	social sciences
Study field	psychology
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Cycle of studies	second
Study mode (length in years)	full-time (2)
Scope of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Organizational Psychology
Date of registration of the study programme	1997/05/19

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I. INTRODUCTION

The 2 year, 120 ECTS credit Master's level programme in Organisational Psychology at Vilnius University appears to be comparable to good organisational psychology programmes in other parts of the world. It also appears to be in line with the standards of the Bologna Process for M.A. specialist programmes. Established nearly 15 years ago in 1997, it is designed to prepare psychologists to work in private and public organizations, providing services to improve personnel decisions, staffing, worker motivation, organizational problem solving and other areas, as needed. According to the self-study, conducted over a four month period by 5 programme committee chairs and a student, the main objective is to train specialists of *Organisational Psychology to be able to independently, innovatively and responsibly apply the scientific knowledge, ethical principles of psychologists and problem-solving skills in organizational counselling, personnel assessment, training and other areas, to analyse the psychological conditions of effective performance on the levels of organization, work group or individual employee.* It appears that this objective is an adequate reflection of student outcomes. The programme successfully meets this goal.

The present review has been carried out under the guidelines and procedures of SKVC. The initial stage involved the preparation of a self-evaluation report by the University which was seen and commented on by the team of experts. The team visited the University in October 2011. This visit was carried out in conjunction with the evaluation of the BA programme and the masters programmes in clinical psychology, educational psychology and psychology and criminology, for which separate reports have been prepared. During the visit the team discussed the programmes with faculty administrators, teaching staff, students, graduates and employers. They also visited the library, offices, teaching space and laboratories associated with the programme.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

According to the self-evaluation report, the objectives, goals and structure are continually being improved to reflect the training experience of organisational psychologists in European countries as well as the needs of Lithuanian businesses. Cooperation with organisational psychologists, many of whom graduated from the programme themselves, characterise the programme. Graduates, teaching staff and students assist in the contemporary business environment.

The programme is designed for students with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Completion of the M.A. degree grants the right to work in state institutions, businesses, non-governmental organisations and other institutions as a professional psychologist. It also enables a student to continue to the doctoral level to join the ranks of researchers and teachers of organisational psychology. The focus is on providing knowledge about management, refining communication and interpersonal skills, and developing critical thinking/problem-solving abilities. Students are also provided with ample instruction in research methodology, statistical analysis, counselling theory and practice and other critical components of psychology.

The programme facilitates a strong general background with specific training relevant to organizational settings. It appears to help students establish a solid identity as psychologists, familiar with a variety of theoretical perspectives and able to apply this knowledge in corporate settings, both locally and internationally.

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

Based on the self-study material provided, student feedback and the university website, outcomes are publicly accessible and well-defined. Operationalizing critical thinking and problem-solving is, of course, an on-going challenge for all disciplines, but the strategies employed for both teaching and assessment (case studies, group problem-solving tasks, presentations, video recording and self-critique of interview skills, etc..) can indeed provide observable evidence of mastery in programme and course goals.

There is a concern that some of the outcomes do seem to overlap with those of the BA in psychology. Focusing on similar objectives to the BA is not necessarily a problem if review is needed, or if students in this programme are coming from many other programmes and places, but focusing less on review of basic theoretical concepts and more on aspects specific to business and management is recommended as a possible means of improvement, since it appears most students in the programme also earned their BA at Vilnius University. Otherwise, learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market.

Additionally, community stakeholders would prefer a bit more familiarity with business concepts and strategies from graduates. Courses in the 4 course groups described do seem specific to organizational issues, however, and are logically sequenced.

Aims and outcomes seem consistent with the type and level of degree and the qualifications offered, and are also measurable and compatible with the programme. The programme also meets Europsy guidelines with the exception that additional practice would be necessary before the qualification would be fully recognised..

Graduates of the programme appear to be in demand and, even in the current economic climate, able to successfully find employment in their chosen field upon completion of the credential.

In sum, the programme aims and learning outcomes are well-defined, clear and publicly available. The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market and are also consistent with the type and level of studies and qualifications offered. At course level, most learning outcomes are good but a few need to be better connected to both goals and assessment strategies. The name of the programme, learning outcomes, contents and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design is efficient, logically-sequenced and focused. It seems to comply with Lithuania's legal requirements for masters study programmes, provided the Professor who recently retired is immediately replaced by another of the same rank.

The programme is spread evenly and progresses sequentially through areas essential for the preparation of effective organizational psychologists without unnecessary repetition. It includes practice and research components as well as key theoretical content. Some of the optional courses (Labour Law, Counselling Practicum and perhaps Advanced Research Methods) seem almost as if they should be mandatory, but complying with the Europsy model completion times may make this difficult. There seems to be little choice in optional subjects. Scope of courses

seems very good for the type and level of qualification and matches desired outcomes at the programme level.

Teaching methods include seminars, case studies, presentations, problem-based learning, reflections and group work as well as lectures. As evidenced by both student thesis topics and syllabi, the programme reflects current information and trends in organizational psychology. On-site training is also offered, such as recent seminars on outcome based learning, available to those who want to attend.

In sum, study subjects and models are spread evenly and their themes are not repetitive. The content of the subjects and modules is consistent with the type and level of studies and appropriate for intended learning outcomes. The scope is sufficient and the content reflects the state of the art and science in organizational psychology. Curriculum design for this programme is of a high standard.

3. Staff

The programme is staffed by teachers from several areas, including Clinical and Organizational Psychology as well as General Psychology, Economics and Law Faculty members. All appear to have excellent qualifications and background experience to help ensure learning outcomes are met and nearly all have a doctorate, as is appropriate for teaching at the MA level. One obvious concern at present, however, is the lack of anyone at the full professor rank to lead the programme due to a very recent retirement of a senior faculty member, and this needs to be rectified immediately in order to remain in compliance with Lithuanian university guidelines and legal requirements. With such an outstanding cadre of Associate Professors, it should not be difficult to find someone worthy of promotion. It should also be noted that this lack of a full professor would not be sufficient cause to leave an otherwise-excellent programme without accreditation. According to the discussion of our expert group, the staff function quite well and deliver an excellent programme at present so, despite the violation of Lithuanian legal requirements, this would not be a concern in most of our home countries.

Many of the teachers who staff the programme are active scientists working in the field and are also involved with local businesses in addition to chairing multiple student theses and dissertations and fulfilling leadership roles in international professional groups. These connections to both the work community and the international academic community in areas and associations directly related to organizational psychology are a plus, provided sufficient time, support and resources are provided to faculty to excel in all dimensions (teaching, service, student mentoring and practice). The staff should be commended for their dedication and their willingness to contribute to their students, the community and their profession. They are extremely hard-working and dedicated, and do seem capable of and willing to maintain the considerable demands placed on them.

The full-time programme staff currently includes 7 associate professors and 3 doctoral level lecturers. In addition, 1 associate professor, 4 doctoral lecturers and 2 lecturers with primary employment in other settings deliver classes. As mentioned, staff from General Psychology, Economics and Law are involved in teaching, so at least 17 people are involved with course delivery. This interdisciplinary blend seems to be an advantage for students, and the student to faculty ratio is excellent, something the students appreciate.

Opportunities for professional development and training are available, as teachers go on long-term and short-term visits to universities and research centres in other countries, attend and host national and international conferences and workshops, and have access to publications and materials to remain current in the discipline. The c.v.s show that staff are high on scholarly productivity relevant to the discipline.

In sum, according to the team's assessment, qualifications of teaching staff, number of teaching staff, stability of teaching staff and quality of staff research are all more than adequate for this programme to be delivered. We do, however, recommend that Vilnius University appoints a full professor within the next year, perhaps from among the high quality existing staff, in order to meet the national legal requirements.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Facilities and learning resources are satisfactory. Access to data bases, journals and books is on a par with institutions in other parts of Europe and the U.S. and students have the resources they need for a positive learning experience. Integration with businesses and workplaces, as well as internet accessibility for staff and students, goes a long way, even in light of the limited office and classroom space, to allowing a good programme to function. Although a wider range of laboratory equipment would be optimal, it seems as if labs and equipment, as well as library resources and journals, are adequate. The majority of data bases, including PSYCHarticles, MEDLINE, Science Direct, those of major publishers such as Springer and Wiley, and other appropriate sources are available not just on campus, but to the university community from wherever they are. The library is not only beautiful, but modern and well-planned in terms of resources.

In sum, premises are more than adequate in terms of size and quality. Appropriate equipment is available and adequate arrangements for practice are in place. Teaching materials are adequate and accessible. Facilities and learning resources are excellent.

5. Study process and student assessment

Admission requirements (successful completion of a BA psychology degree at VU or completion of exams to verify mastery of necessary concepts) are well explained and, at least within this programme, students are aware of these requirements. However, care must be taken, on this programme and others, to ensure that the admission requirements are not discriminatory against any group of students, for example those from other institutions in Lithuania or elsewhere.

The organisation of the curriculum does seem to help the study process facilitate mastery of learning outcomes among the students, and this is supplemented by a variety of available extracurricular activities and associations. It appears students are encouraged to present their work in professional venues and attend professional conferences, both within and outside Lithuania. Teaching staff even go the extra mile to bring high quality conferences here for students and staff to attend, such as the recent Lithuanian Psychological Conference and the upcoming EUROPLAT conference this summer.

Both staff and students are adequately involved in applied research activities, and staff have published many books, articles and other material. It also appears that students have a variety of international experiences with student mobility programmes and placements. Recently, for

example, individual students completed practicums or studies in several countries including Austria, UK, Belgium, Germany and Sweden through Erasmus. Upon their return, they share their experiences and lead class discussions on what they have learned from their experiences. There are also opportunities to interact with other students and professionals in Russia and throughout Europe as well as in the U.S. and Australia.

The level of academic and social support available to students is satisfactory. Assessment scales are public and students seem to understand how they are assessed, although some would prefer additional feedback on exam results. As a specialization programme, the workplace practicum and thesis are key assessment components and, based on the documentation presented, it appears students who have completed the programme are competent and meet expectations, demonstrating that the desired outcomes have been achieved. Based on employment outcomes, pursuit of doctoral degrees and other information given, it appears graduates are successful and demonstrate mastery of the programme's goals and objectives.

Knowledge, application and creative generation of new ideas are fostered among students by the tasks and modules inherent to the programme. A variety of continuous assessment activities are in place, including filming and critiquing of interview skills, formative and summative feedback on tasks and practicums, product-based learning and problem-solving tasks.

Students maintain long-term relationships with their teachers and the University, often providing internship opportunities to future students, providing supervision or serving as guest lecturers, returning to complete doctoral work and otherwise supporting the programme long after they graduate. One recommendation which would meet a desire expressed both by staff and local business managers, is pursuing development of formal partnerships that allow for systematic programme input and development, training opportunities or other mutually beneficial activities.

In sum, admission processes are clear though may need some justification. The organization of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of learning outcomes. Students are encouraged to participate in research and applied research activities. Students have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes and the higher education institution ensures an adequate level of support. The assessment system is reasonably clear, but systematic monitoring to align all learning outcomes with assessment will improve this even more. The professional activity of graduates is notable, as is the continuing contact graduates have with this particular programme.

6. Programme management

The Organizational Psychology master's programme is implemented and managed by the Department of Clinical and Organizational Psychology of the Vilnius University Philosophy Faculty. It is supervised by the Organizational Study Programme Committee, which currently includes a student and a social partner along with 3 associate professors who teach in the programme. The work of the committee seems clearly delegated. Several other groups and individuals are also involved in programme implementation and oversight, including the Vice-Dean for Studies, Academic Commission and the Council of the Faculty of Philosophy, the Centre for Quality Management, the Directorate of Studies, Dean's Office, Student Representatives, and the Centre of Assessment. Administrators appear to know their staff well, and these multiple groups responsible for management function together surprisingly well.

Staff self-governance and autonomy is apparent, but so is teamwork and a strong desire to work together for the good of the community, the students and the institution. This aspect appears very good in how well it functions to monitor and implement the programme. Students also seem to be involved in the process, and contributed to the current self-study. It appears several sources of data and assessment points are available to assist in programme analysis and decision making processes, and as described in the report, they seem well-coordinated. Evidence of using data to make informed programme changes for ongoing improvement is also noted as a strength. Evaluative data collection used to improve the programme is evident, and the process involves a variety of stakeholders in the process. This could become more systematic and further improved through development of formal partnerships with local businesses and stakeholders, as previously mentioned. The problem-solving and data collection skills stressed in the programme seem to be modelled well by the programme staff and administration currently, and this is laudable. Faculty collaboration is also a strength. There is mutual respect evident and comfortable, supportive teamwork and open communication is apparent among teaching staff and administration as well as students.

In sum, responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of programme implementation are clearly designated and data is available for ongoing programme improvement. This process does involve stakeholders, although there is some room for improvement through development of systematic and ongoing partnerships.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the self-study and the match to Lithuanian and Europsy requirements, this programme seems to compare quite favourably to others around the world and uses data-driven assessment to adjust the curriculum quite well. Teaching staff have the privilege of working with outstanding students and in a beautiful and well-maintained environment. A few recommendations based on our visit to make the programme even better follow:

1. Slightly more emphasis on business and management and slightly less review of material covered at the BA level is recommended within the curriculum.
2. Maximize and expand observation and practice components. Intertwine experiences with possible placements throughout the entire two years of the programme and (if possible) expand the final placement to allow for one year of practice after two years of study, as recommended by Europsy standards
3. Revise the optional vs. mandatory courses and rethink how to integrate optional subjects into the student experience.
4. Continue to develop clear, collaborative training relationships in site placements as well as forming more structured long-term partnerships with local businesses.
5. Train and support all staff in aligning their courses to clear outcomes consistent with the programme mission.
6. Ensure that the entrance requirements are fair to all students.
7. Most importantly, bring the staff requirements into compliance with Lithuanian requirements immediately by adding a full professor to lead the programme.

Following these recommendations should make a good programme even better. This is clearly among the highest-quality organizational psychology programmes in this part of the world, and on a par with many in the international arena. The University needs to ensure it remains so and continues to improve. Hence there is an urgent need to maintain compliance with local standards regarding staffing by rectifying the recent retirement of the full professor who previously oversaw this programme.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Organizational Psychology* (state codes – 62406S105, 621S15001) 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	4
3.	Staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process, student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	20

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

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