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Vilniaus universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS VIEŠOSIOS POLITIKOS ANALIZĖ
(valstybinis kodas - 621L22009)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS *(state code - 621L22009)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius University

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Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Viešosios politikos analizė</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621L22009
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Politikos mokslai
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	Politikos mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2012-05-31

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Public Policy Analysis</i>
State code	621L22009
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Political Science
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Political Science
Date of registration of the study programme	31 May 2012

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

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

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The programme is **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	Selection of research publications of the academic staff
2.	Development plan of Vilnius university 2015-2017
3.	Methodological requirements for written assignments and final theses of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science, VU
4.	Alumni feedback survey results
5.	Selected sample of Minutes of the Study Programme Committee Meetings

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

Vilnius University (hereinafter also University or VU), founded in 1579, is the oldest and largest institution of higher education in Lithuania. Presently, the University has about 3670 employees and 21 000 students. The University implements study programmes of three study cycles in the areas of the humanities, social, physical, biomedical and technological sciences; students may enrol in more than 70 bachelor study programmes, 110 master and integrated study programmes and almost 30 doctoral study programmes.

The Institute of International Relations and Political Science (hereinafter also IIRPS or Institute) is a core academic unit of Vilnius University that implements 1 first cycle (*Political Science*), 6 second cycle (*International Relations and Diplomacy, European Studies, Contemporary Politics, Public Policy Analysis, and Eastern European and Russian Studies*), and 1 third cycle (*Political Science*) study programmes. The Institute has about 60 staff members and about 660 students.

The master programme *Public Policy Analysis* (hereinafter also PPA/SP or Programme) has been implemented for 4 years. In 2012 it went through registration and accreditation procedure. PPA/SP has 24¹ students (2015). The language of study programme is Lithuanian.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 21st September, 2016.

1. **Prof. Anu Toots (team leader)**, *Professor of Social Policy, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia;*
2. **Dr. Stefan Ganzle**, *Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Management, University of Agder, Norway;*
3. **Prof. Geoffrey Swain**, *Honorary Professor, Emeritus, University of Glasgow, Professor of European History, University of the West of England (until 2006), United Kingdom;*
4. **Ms. Judita Akromienė**, *director of public organization "Eurohouse", Lithuania;*
5. **Ms. Julija Stanaitytė**, *student of Kaunas University of Technology study programme Human Resource Management, Lithuania.*

Evaluation coordinator – Ms. Dovilė Žeimienė

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

According to the SER (p. 6), the Master programme *Public Policy Analysis* is designed “to prepare highly skilled experts with an advanced understanding of public policy (e.g., health care, education, social policy etc.) formation and reform processes, equipped with skills to identify problems and offer solutions, conduct independent high-quality research or professional expert analysis and provide recommendations based on empirical data for public policy-makers.” Three areas have been identified as meriting a specific focus: comparison between the approach taken in Lithuania and elsewhere, along with differences between super-national and sub-national organisation; critical reflection on the policy making process and its creative development; and the development of skills for evidence based policy making.

A conscious effort has been made to link the learning outcomes and competences of the study programme to the *Description of Study Cycles* (approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2011 November 21, No. V-2212), which include ability to work independently and take responsibility for one's actions (study outcomes No. 1.1 – 2.1),

¹ Based on admission statistics provided in SER, table 16.

social abilities (study outcome No. 1.2,2.1,7.1, 7.2), advanced research skills (study outcomes No. 2.2– 3.3), comprehensive theoretical knowledge of the discipline and ability to apply this knowledge (study outcomes No. 4.1 – 6.2), special abilities such as to provide sound, professional recommendations of public policy processes in contemporary political systems and ability to creatively solve specific practical issues (study outcome No. 6.1-7.2).

The learning outcomes were also developed in accordance with the *Descriptor of the Study Field of Political Science* approved by Order No V-828 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania [23rd of July 2015]. The descriptor specifies that upon completion of the second cycle studies of the study field of Political Science, students should have a specific knowledge of the ongoing scientific discussion in the selected political science specialisation (study outcomes No. 3.1-3.3), to be able to implement research projects of political phenomena, using methodological approaches and means available in the chosen field of specialisation (study outcomes No. 3.1,3.2,4.1,4.2); be able to communicate correctly in the official language and one of foreign language in writing and orally both with the experts in the field and with persons who are not professional experts in that field (study outcome No. 2.1).

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible. The generic and subject-specific competences and learning outcomes are set out clearly in Table 1 of the SER, and this is broken down to course level in the Study Plan Matrix on pp. 12-13. Within the SER, then, every effort has been made to ensure that the programme's aims and learning outcomes are consciously developed throughout the programme. The SER (chapter 1.2) outlines how the study programme and the learning outcomes are made available on the university and institute websites, as well as through recruitment initiatives. During the visit, no student raised the invisibility of the programme as an issue.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. As the SER makes clear, the programme has been developed in a competitive market where there are many similar courses offered by other institutions of higher education. However, this programme seeks to offer a clearer focus “on the development of in-depth methodological skills” needed for independent research, and offers student the opportunity to “take part in different research projects led by lecturers” (SER, p.10). The need for skilled and effective policy makers is self-evident in modern society, and the strong social partnerships involved in the implementation of the programme provides strong evidence on addressing the labour market need adequately. During the visit, the meeting with alumni and employers reinforced the picture of the close relationship between the academic programme and those working in the world of policy analysis, while the social partners present were clearly very active in such aspects as the defence of the Master thesis, and generally committed to the programme.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The Programme offers a combination of courses which are all of Master level in terms of the reading and participation expected, and in the way that they provide training in terms of methodology and research techniques for the final thesis. The list of dissertations written and the quality of the final dissertations themselves show clearly that students are expected to work at master's quality and are doing so. This impression based on SER was reinforced by the visit. The students were quick to praise the “methodological skills” they were offered and considered their courses “very specialised”; the use made of “counter-factual analysis” was particularly praised. Those students already employed in the field felt that the skills they were acquiring help them in their everyday jobs. All stressed the “high quality” reputation of the programme among their fellows, and welcomed the fact that many of their tutors were practitioners in the field. These comments were reinforced by the alumni who also

recognised the importance of methods' teaching and felt that the stress on methodology and research skills allows graduates feeling themselves "confident to work among high flyers". The alumni also confirmed that they had been involved in the research projects managed by their tutors.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and qualifications offered are compatible with each other. The overreaching MA programmes' reform, implemented in IIRPS in 2016 affected the PPA/SP programme to a lesser extent since it did not have a modular structure. Changes were made in the list of electives, which in overall, did not harm the consistency of the SP. The programme offers what it promises, with no mismatch between the learning outcomes, content and qualifications.

2.2. Curriculum design

The study programme design meets the legal requirements in terms of volume of the programme, credits, allocated to the MA thesis and focus on the study field. The PPA/SP has 50 ECTS assigned to the core subjects of the study field, and 25 credits – to electives. The number of electives has been cut substantially (from 54 to 25) in the course of 2016 reform, which is a positive development. Credits, allocated to the preparation (MA seminars 20 ECTS) and writing the MA thesis (20 ECTS) are sufficient by exceeding the national standard (no less than 30 ECTS). All subject courses (75 ECTS) are within the field of Political Science, which is in concordance with the programme aims and legal requirements but exceeds significantly the national requirement (no less than 60 ECTS). Such strong disciplinary approach has certainly many advantages, but leaves almost no room to develop in students understanding of interdisciplinarity. This impression has been confirmed during the meeting with alumni panel. Some of them voiced that when after graduation she had to work in a team with mathematicians it was quite difficult to find a common language. The Review team advises to think whether this concern can be addressed by widening the scope of electives.

The share of individual work significantly exceeds the legal standard (no less than 30%). According to the SER (p.16, table 3) in PPA/SP the individual work composes for compulsory courses 78,5% at average. This kind of curriculum design presumes that: a) students are well familiarised with self-guided learning and possess relevant skills from the very beginning of their studies; b) teaching staff is well skilled in guiding extensive amount of individual work. During the site visit the review panel made sure that both students and staff feel themselves confident in having such high portion of individual reading. One can conclude that "focus on lecturer guided self-study and development of the skills of autonomous study", declared as one of the key principles of TLA strategy is being successfully implemented into curriculum design.

Study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive. The proportion of compulsory and elective subjects is well balanced across the semesters; the total workload is equally 30 credits and 5 subjects per semester allowing studying full time. The content of compulsory subjects is not repetitive and covers all main aspects of the Public Policy process and analysis. The programme has been revised in 2016 and currently two different versions of the study plan are in effect. Second year students have electives within their own SP only; 3 or 4 subjects during the 3rd and 4th semesters respectively. As revealed during interviews, time to time an elective had to be cancelled due to the low number of participants. In result of latest reform all students admitted in 2016 have the same list of compulsory subjects and institute-wide list of electives. The proportion of compulsory and elective subjects is now better balanced across the semesters – there are more core subjects than electives, and the last semester is devoted to the MA thesis only. The choice of electives is wider and since the pool of students is larger, the effective delivery of optional subjects is more secured than previously. Students met by the

reviewers expressed their strong support to the new programme design that gives them more freedom in shaping their individual profile. The Review Team endorses the amended programme design.

The content of the subjects is adequate to the second cycle programmes; there are no introductory or very basic courses. Several compulsory courses include in their titles keyword *analysis* that indicates analytical and research-driven approach required for the second cycle study programmes. Members of the student panel confirmed that graduate studies are “more advanced” and do not repeat previous studies. Strong focus on research methods and analytical skills has been especially endorsed by students. For one of them (a graduate from the BA programme at IIRPS) a substantial amount of methods’ courses has been the decisive factor to continue with MA studies at the same institute.

The PPA/SP has an impressive amount of MA seminars (20 ECTS in total, 5 credits each semester) that serve as a good arena to develop skills of independent research and prepare for successful thesis writing. In order to achieve these goals students' work in Master's seminars comprises individual research work; work with a tutor as well as in the group of students and lecturers. (<http://www.tspmi.vu.lt/en/students/useful-information/methodical-requirements>).

The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The SP includes core topics, necessary for the achievement of profound theoretical knowledge in the field of public policy and political analysis. The Review Team appreciates that some of fundamental courses (*EU Public Policy; Welfare State*) have upgraded to the status of a compulsory subject and some others not that central to the learning outcomes (*Theory of State*) have moved to the block of electives. In sum, the amended PPA/SP looks more consistent and better streamlined.

Besides lectures, oriented mainly towards theoretical knowledge, strong emphasis is put on seminars and individual work aiming at developing analytical skills. As evidenced by the SER, course descriptions and interviews, the dominant learning tools are critical reading, analytical tasks and essay writing. Students estimate the workload as challenging (2 reading texts + some short analytical task per seminar class), but interesting and enriching. Essay writing is mostly a self-guided learning experience. Interviewed students explained that the topics and research questions are typically discussed in seminars but in writing proves they felt alone; the feedback tends to be short and not very substantial. Based on these observations the Review Team recommends putting more emphasis on teaching argumentation and academic writing skills. Furthermore, the essay writing process needs to be monitored more closely.

The SER stresses „strong emphasis on the development of students’ research skills ” (p.18) as one of the key strengths of the PPA/SP. Research competences ought to be achieved by several courses on advanced research methodologies in the field. However, SER and appendixes provide controversial information regarding to means occurring partly due to late curriculum reform. According to the SER” (p.14) “the Programme pays special attention to both qualitative and quantitative methods. None of the two effective study plans does include any subject on qualitative methodology. Inconsistencies can be found also in the subject lists, which differ across various documents (even if the amendments of 2016 are taken into account). According to the SER, “instead of one course *Analysis of Causal Inference* students will have two separate courses *Research design and qualitative methods for causal analysis* and *Quantitative methods for causal analysis*”. Yet, the Study Plan for 2016-17 has only the latter. The SER mentions topics “such as the contrafactual analysis, experiments, game theories”, out of these *Game theories* is an elective (6 ECTS), other topics are taught within the main courses on research methods. Interviews during the site visit gave the impression that there are several ongoing

changes related to the methodology and methods teaching. Students felt overall positive about the emphasis on research methods. They appreciated that their suggestions have been heard and now the SP provides more possibilities to acquire practical research skills. Also, both student and staff panels found it positive that an introductory course on research methods is available for students who do not have previous education in political science. The Review Panel endorses this opportunity, since less advanced students may face difficulties in passing some compulsory subjects (i.e. *Analysis of Causal Inference*, 1st semester).

Both students and staff saw the diversity of studentship as an advantage that poses interesting challenges. Interviews revealed that the issue is currently addressed via individual consultations and paired learning; both approaches were warmly welcomed by the students. However, the Review Team recommends introducing more comprehensive approach to supplementary studies, e.g. by making the list of bridging courses clearly visible in the Study plan. Presently, nor the SP neither the study plan specify whether and which bridging courses are available.

The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. The programme provides opportunities to gain good knowledge of contemporary theories of political science, public policy and ability to apply them. Moreover, generic skills are developed within various subject specific subjects.

The list of electives provides a wide range of options across various subtopics in political science. As explained in SER, in result of 2016 reform all MA level SPs have now the same list of electives for all students within the Institute. This decision was highly appreciated by strong majority of interviewed students and alumni. As the reform is in its very beginnings, a close attention should be paid that students will receive appropriate guidance in selecting electives that best contribute to their academic profiling. For this particular programme it is especially important, because the list of electives is somewhat skewed towards IR and political theory at the expense of economics and sectoral policies. Some economics courses (*Analysis of Macroeconomic Policy*, *Political Economy of European Integration*) have been dropped that is rather negative effect of the reform. It should be admitted, that the HEI seems to understand the importance teaching economic issues, but currently there is a clear deficit of this area in the programme.

The content of the programme reflects the latest achievements in political science and public policy. Core courses have a good selection of various sources. Most literature listed in the course descriptions is published later than 2000. At the same time, classical texts (Esping-Andersen, Sabbatier, Kingdon etc) are represented as well. Using books seems to be a dominant style, although peer reviewed journal articles can be found in some course descriptions as well. The Review Team advises to expand usage of high rank academic journals, especially for introducing latest research in the field.

2.3. Teaching staff

The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements. In several criteria the national requirements are exceeded. This is true for the percent of lecturers with a doctoral degree (93% against 80% required), congruence of teaching and research profiles (78,5% against 60%), ECTS taught by professors (38% against 20%). The share of experts with practical work experience is somewhat higher than standard (50% instead of 40% as upper limit allowed). The latter is due to the fact that several lecturers of the Programme work in parallel in think tanks and advisory enterprises (Public Policy and Management Institute; UAB Visionary Analytics, Ernst & Young). The Review Team believes that from the teaching perspective this is rather an advantage than disadvantage.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Teaching staff is delivering lectures and seminars in the area that corresponds to their qualification and research area. The SER (p. 5) lists among the main research areas of the Institute “public policy process and development of public administration in Lithuania after the EU enlargement” that builds a solid premise to link research and teaching activities of the staff members. A strong majority of them are active in doing research projects and publishing research results what ensures their competence in supervising students’ research work.

The number of the teaching staff is large enough to ensure learning outcomes. PPA/SP is implemented by 15 academic staff members, including 4 full professors, 5 associate professors, 5 lecturers and 1 assistant. The total number of engaged staff has increased from 10 persons in 2012 to 15 in 2015 due to new associate professors and lecturers with PhD. The proportion of students to teaching staff is very low – in 2015 there was less students admitted than there are staff members (9 /15). The ratio is somewhat higher if other IIRPS MA programmes are taken into account. A favourite student - teacher ratio has certainly several advantages but at the same time bears the risk of staff cuts due to the low number of students. Thus, some strategic plans are needed to increase the number of students and possible to widen the international study options by delivering some study courses in English.

The teaching staff turnover has been towards expansion that ensures an adequate provision of the programme. The stability of core staff since the registration of the programme is one of the PPA/SP strengths. The age distribution of staff is normal, majority of lecturers being in age 25-44.

The VU and IIRPS create adequate conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff. Standard requirements for academic positions are firmly kept, but personal preferences and carrier plans are also taken into account. Every staff member can annually negotiate his/her work plan and chose to orient himself/herself whether more towards research or towards teaching. Such a personal approach has been highly appreciated by the academic staff.

Since 2004 IIRPS applies the System of Motivation Promotion, which is intended to encourage teachers to increase their qualification. Each high rank scientific publication results in financial premium for the employee. Staff members, met by the panel were well aware of the system and found it being transparent and fair.

To enhance teaching skills of the academic staff, the IIRPS organises methodical and didactical seminars (Moodle, academic English, agent based modelling). As SER (p.21) describes, previously the professional development depended to a significant extent on individual initiative, but since 2016 IIRP organises regular training seminars (two to four times during the semester) for the employees. This is clearly a positive development. At the same time, further efforts are needed to increase take-up of professional training courses. As the interviews revealed, it is not easy for teaching staff to accommodate the provided training courses into their regular work schedules and therefore the attendance remains lower than the interest. Another area of improvement is the conference participation and staff mobility. According to SER (p.22, table 7 and p.23, table 9) very few lecturers have been in academic exchange and no one has participated at the conference (with paper) during 2013-15. Based on information in SER (p.23) and on staff interviews “budgets put some limits” on professional development. The Review Panel urges University administration to put every effort in order to secure adequate funds for conference participation, pedagogical in service training and academic mobility.

The teaching staff of the programme is involved in research directly related to the study programme being reviewed. According to SER, (table 10) during the period 2013-2015 the academic staff of PPA programme published 38 articles and book chapters, and 11 books. This is

quite substantial number. Most of articles have appeared in Lithuanian academic journals and edited volumes, some in top level international academic journals or publishing houses (*Journal of Common Market Studies, International Review of Administrative Sciences, European Policy Studies; Palgrave Macmillan, Sage*). The quantity and quality of publications varies across the staff members. Analysis of the CVs reveals that international research output is authored by 3-4 staff members (out of 15). Thus, more effort is needed to increase the number and expand the authorship of international publications. The recently introduced System of Motivation Promotion may well serve this purpose; another tool can be more active involvement of academic staff in international research projects.

3 national and 1 international R&D projects have been implemented by the PPA/SP academic staff in 2012-15. As the interviews revealed, researchers often face a hard trade off between applied analyses (which is in high demand) and academic research. The staff members felt that international publications are more highly valued by promotion system than national policy reports that they feel committed to compile as well. Some technical and ethical aspects (such as authorship in case of collective reports) have been mentioned as making the upgrading of policy reports onto academic articles difficult. The Review Panel recommends IIRPS and University management to provide relevant training on author's rights in order to facilitate the up scaling of staff's research productions.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

All lectures and seminars of the programme are arranged in the premises of the Institute. The premises and facilities for studies have been recently renovated and have basic equipment, i.e. the computer and multimedia projector. There are different types of rooms, both auditoriums and classrooms, available since the classes take place in the evenings. Considering that the student groups are small (9 to 15), the size of rooms seems adequate. As pointed out in SER, until now the issue of shortage of seminar and group work classrooms is addressed efficiently by the administration approaching lecturers individually. In addition, the IIRPS administration pointed out that the availability of classes in general might become more problematic because of the need to prolong classes for BA students due to increased admission.

The library is located in the premises of the Institute. It is rather small and closes at 6 pm. However, there are a few other spaces available for students' individual and group work, in particular two computer rooms with 50 computers open throughout the day and the winter garden. There are also other learning spaces provided by Vilnius University for its academic community, namely the Vilnius University library, located within walking distance from the Institute premises, that is open till 9 pm and the National Open Access Centre of Academic Communication and Information (Vilnius University), open 24 hours a day.

Apart from teaching and learning materials accessible to the students from the Institute library, they have also access to the materials of the Library of the Lithuanian Open Society Fund (which boasts the richest social sciences library in the region and contains 40 000 publications in English, Lithuanian, French, German and Russian languages) and Vilnius University Library (which subscribes major international digital academic databases such as JSTOR, Sage, Willey Online Library). The yearly budget allocated to update the materials (appr. 260 to 370 EUR) seems to satisfy the needs of course conveners (the resources are revised twice a year). Additionally, literature resources are acquired from ongoing research projects.

Usually, the reading materials are provided to students electronically by lecturers via email, Dropbox or Google Drive. Although the academic personnel is encouraged to use Moodle (last spring training was organized for them), it is not widely used yet. As pointed out in the self-

evaluation report, the absence of wireless internet in the premises of the Institute (Eduroam is accessible only in the library) is a drawback. It is recommended to address this issue at an earliest convenience and secure necessary funding from the central office of Vilnius University.

The programme does not include a professional internship into the official student's workload, apparently because the majority of students are employed during their studies. Probably for this particular reason, since 2012 only one programme student has participated in Erasmus+ short term work placement until now. As stated in SER and reiterated by the teachers and alumni during the meetings, the programme students are quite actively engaged in research activities which help them develop the skills relevant for their future jobs. Alumni expressed the opinion that, the internationalisation of the programme should be given more attention, in particular by expanding the network of partner institutions, especially international ones. The expansion of partnership network will speed up attractive carrier paths of graduates, especially in perspective of growing international competition at the high end jobs.

2.5. Study process and students performance assessment

Admission requirements are well- founded and publicly available on the IIRPS webpage and in the Rules of Admission to the Second Cycle Study Programmes of Vilnius University. The admission grade depends on the motivation letter supplemented by an interview (50 %) and diploma supplement (50%). This admission regulation is new, in order to get give an opportunity for students from different study fields to join the PPA/SP and increase the enrolment of students. The Review Team endorses the new regulation since bigger enrolment is an important area of improvement.

The organisation of study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Firstly, The PPA/SP has its own administrator of studies, who helps students to solve their problems related to the study process, individual plans, and mobility. Secondly, head of the SP committee involves students' representative in the SP development process. All relevant study information is provided on IIRPS or university webpage. The interviews with students' panel made clear that students were given adequate information about the recent curriculum reform, including the changed policy of electives. Besides this general satisfaction, students noted that electives are not evenly spread across the semesters. The study plan 2016/17 confirms this concern – there are 11 subjects available in fall and 16 in spring. Since students were not aware whether their study load can vary across semesters they opt sometimes for an elective which is not fitted to their academic interests. The choice of electives is further complicated by the fact that many course descriptors online are not updated in accordance of the reform of electives. The Review Team urges IIPRS administration to secure that all information at the website is properly updated and students are consulted on their rights and possibilities regarding the electives.

The programme flexibility has been positively mentioned by students, who, as a rule work full time. The possibility to have classes after workday was considered as a positive arrangement. High share of individual work, small groups and impossibility of free riding were similarly appreciated. Teacher – student communication is organised via various channels (Drobox, e-mail, social networks) and provides good support for achieving learning outcomes. However, students prefer to have all study materials in one place. Therefore, the Review Team advises using Moodle platform as a single entry point to all study materials.

Students are encouraged to participate in applied research activities. This occurs often in the framework of policy analyses carried out by the Public Policy and Management Institute (PPMI), where some staff members are employed. Several students have become employees of the PPMI

after graduation. Such a close link between the academia and think tank agency is clearly an advantage of the PPA/SP.

According to SER (p.34) academic staff introduces their research fields to the students and explain opportunities to get involved into research. Interviews with the students confirmed these practices – topics of the MA theses are based on the supervisors' research projects, some students have been invited to join an ongoing research project or write research papers. The overview of master theses revealed that the level is high, which was evidenced also by substantial proportion of high grades. 4 students out of 6 that participated at interviews expressed their interest in PhD studies (including 3 to continue in IIRPS). The Review Team endorses systematic efforts of the staff in engaging students into research; this is an area where PPA/SP clearly stands positively out.

Students have multiple opportunities to use mobility programs for one semester or one academic year for studies or internship abroad. VU has Erasmus co-operation with large number of universities in different countries. Unfortunately, the SER (p. 36, table 20) and students' responses demonstrate that these opportunities are not taken up. Since 2012 just one student has taken the internship abroad and one more, at average goes for studies. The reasons of non-participation are related to work and family obligations of the students. Based on these evidences the Review Team advises to enhance internationalisation of studies by bringing more international teaching staff and exchange students in.

Students have adequate academic and social support from the university staff. Teaching staff is available for consultations, their schedules are clear and could be easily found at the website. Besides that, students can get all relevant information from the study programme administrator. Administration support is well-organised and implemented through intense and regular communication. Students confirmed that they are familiar with all the information about academic support, by contacting with teachers during their consultation time. Those students, coming from different departments especially appreciated teachers' strong support and friendly advice in getting to the same level with the majority of students. The main form of social support is financial allocations. Students are able to get scholarships from the university and state.

The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. Assessment criteria are presented by lecturers during the first class and also states in the course descriptions, which are publicly available on IIRS webpage. Assessment criteria are oriented towards subject specific and general learning outcomes, which support achievement of SP learning outcomes. Interviewed students told that lecturers involve them in discussing the assessment process and sharing their thoughts about assessment components. Different assessment methods are being used in seminars such as active participation, essays, group or individual projects; the final form of assessment is usually exam. Around 50 % of the grade is composed of seminars participation, which students defined as positive thing, because in seminars students can get better understanding about the topics and practice their analytical skills. Regarding the assessment of seminar sessions there are discrepancies across the subjects in terms of balance between the assignments and rewards. The assessment of seminars was felt by students as not always fair across subject. Based on these observations the review panel advises to professionalise the assessment procedures including some formal rules about allocating hours and rewards for typical work tasks.

Professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers' expectations. Interviews and an alumni survey made by the IIRPS and Alumni association revealed that majority of graduates work in public institutions, academic or private sector in the position of analysts, researchers, advisors or journalists. A number of graduates are employed in media and

communication companies, think tanks, consulting companies. The unemployment among graduates is almost non-existing, which clearly demonstrates high quality of the PPA/SP.

2.6. Programme management

The responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the Public Policy Analysis (PPA) programme are clearly allocated. The bodies governing the study programme management are in place and operate in line with the VU mission statement and other university documents dealing with issues of quality insurance, such as *the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* and the *Vilnius University Quality Manual*. These documents are publicly available at <http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/90>.

According to the SER, Vilnius University (VU) is active in the professional development of its academic staff. Despite the efforts in ensuring the professional development of its academic staff, however, discussions with faculty have revealed that faculty development courses lack an overall strategic and long-term perspective.

The Study Programme Committee (SPC) and the Faculty Council (FC) are responsible for the management of the study programme. The SPC is the key body at the institute-level and is accountable to the FC. The SPC brings together representatives from academic staff, students and social partners. The university highly values input from stakeholders – practitioners from the public sector – for the development of the programmes. The SPC has also been central in providing the self-evaluation of programme which was perceived as a “bureaucratic exercise”. According to SPC members, the meetings are held regularly supplemented by “ad-hoc arrangements”, but also “dictated by the academic cycle”. In its work, the SPC can rely on a highly efficient study department as well as strong involvement of social partners. The PPA’s social partners provide very close links between the university on the one hand and the public policy think tanks and consultancies on the other, with several of the faculty and students also working for the latter.

The information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed both centrally by the Administration of Studies as well as by individual study programmes. The administration relies on the VU information system of studies which also collects information about the implementation of the study programme. Two feedback systems are in place: one managed by the VU, and another, by the IIRPS.

The outcomes of internal and external evaluation of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. Stakeholders, such as social partners, students and alumni, reported satisfaction with the 2016/17 curriculum reforms allowing students to opt from an institute-wide pool of electives. Students have perceived this change as a consequence of their input and feedback.

The evaluation and improvement processes involve various stakeholders, including, in particular, social partners. At VU, social partners are members of the board of trustees and are involved in the Study Programme Committee and the Commission of Final Thesis Defence. Social partners have expressed satisfaction with taking part in these activities.

Overall, the internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient. The SPC and the Administration work continuously on improving the measurement instrument and on encouraging students’ participation in surveys. The study programme has already started to address the low response rate among students by distributing and collecting questionnaires

during a class toward the end of a semester. By this change it is emphasised that regular feedback is an integral element of quality management in the study programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Review Team advises to make sure that there is sufficient number of appropriate options for the PPA/SP (e.g. subjects on Economics; sectoral policies) available in the institution-wide pool of electives. Distribution of available electives across the semesters gets also attention.
2. The Review Team strongly urges the management and academic staff to keep the study information permanently updated in all existing documents and channels. Wider use of Moodle as a single entry platform to the study materials is also recommended.
3. The Review Team suggests putting more emphasis on management and long-term perspective of staff professional training. In service training must not overlap with the regular classes of the academic staff.
4. The Review Team advises to ensure that regular meetings of the SPC guided by the strategic and long term goals become the backbone of study programme management.
5. The Review Team suggests the IIRPS and SPC to move out of the current comfort zone and to expand network of social partners beyond the circle of those who currently employ SP students and graduates.

IV. SUMMARY

The Institute of International Relations and Political Science (IIRPS) is responsible for six MA-level study programmes covering areas of Contemporary Politics, Eastern European and Russian Studies, International Relations and Diplomacy, Public Policy Analysis, European Studies and Politics and Media. The SP *Public Policy Analysis* (PPA/SP) has been one out of five under review.

PPA/SP has been implemented since 2012. It benefits from the favourable environment and capacity of the IIRPS, such as highly qualified staff, good literature resources, well established study guidelines and standards, and hard-work-oriented study culture. Beginning from the academic year 2016/17, several important changes of the study programme have been implemented, including merging electives of all IIRPS second cycle study programmes into one pool. MA students are thus granted greater flexibility in the sharpening their individual study profile or, alternatively in broadening their disciplinary perspective. So far, the reform enjoys strong support by all parties involved – students, teachers, alumni and employers. However, the effects of the reform need to be closely monitored and evaluated over the next few years.

The key objective of the programme is “to prepare highly skilled experts with an advanced understanding of public policy, formation and reform processes, equipped with skills to identify problems and offer solutions, conduct independent high-quality research or professional expert analysis and provide recommendations based on empirical data for public policy-makers.” (SER, p.6). The core and option structure is formed so as to develop that knowledge and the competences relevant to the fields of public policy analysis.

The review panel is positive about the ‘learning outcomes’ approach underlying the programme. Programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional

requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. The programme offers what it promises, with no mismatch between the learning outcomes, content and qualifications.

The content of the study subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies and are appropriate for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Keeping in mind the future employment areas of graduates it is advised to include more study subjects on Economics and various sectoral policies into academic programme. Students are widely encouraged to participate in applied research activities, to join research projects of academic staff and produce research articles. Public Policy and Management Institute where some staff members are employed serves as an effective base for internship and future employment of graduates. Such a close link between the academia and think tank agency is clearly an advantage of the PPA/SP.

A minor concern for the review panel is the arrangement for students that come from other departments or disciplines. Supplementary studies are based on individual and *ad hoc* counselling, which may be non sufficient to level up less advanced students. The review panel believes that these students might be confronted with a lack of methodological, analytical and data handling skills to cope with high load of individual work. The dropout rates, especially for 1st academic year confirm this assumption. Based on these observations, the review panel advises to keep close eye on the counselling system and practices in order to provide timely and adequate assistance for those in need.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Several core staff members are actively involved in practical policy analysis, which is a clear advantage of the PPA/SP. The staff publishes extensively in the area of their teaching. The review panel points out that national publications dominate over international ones and publishing activity is unequally distributed across the staff members. Based on these observations, the review panel advises the management to continue developing incentives aimed at increase of high level international publications, which have set up by the System of Motivation Promotion in early 2016. Besides these incentive structures, it is recommended to pay more attention to the comprehensive and long term outlook of academic staff development, which includes regular in service training, guidance in upgrading policy reports into high level academic publications, and planning of academic mobility. In sum, current *ad hoc* arrangement, driven by individual initiatives needs to be replaced by a coordinated system driven by organisational developmental goals.

Classrooms, computer facilities, software and media equipment of IIRPS are sufficient both in their size and quality. The library is not large, but handy. Moreover - electronic scientific databases are widely accessible and regularly used in the study process. Absence of the Wi-Fi in the Institute's building may pose some limitations to the internet based learning. The review panel believes that new social media tools (such as Facebook) cannot entirely compensate limited access to the Internet, as well as very modest use of web-based learning platforms (such as Moodle). Infrastructure for group work is somewhat limited. It is necessary to extend the number of small classrooms, computer labs and team-work spaces. The review panel advises the management to invest in facilities and digital learning resources, in particular infrastructure for group work and one-stop-shop learning platforms.

The admission requirements are well-specified. The university has implemented quality assurance procedures, including student feedback through regularly held surveys. The general assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. Regarding the assessment of seminar sessions there are discrepancies across the subjects in terms of balance between the assignments and rewards. The assessment of seminars was felt by students as not always fair across subject. Based on these observations the review panel advises to

professionalise the assessment procedures including some formal rules about allocating hours and rewards for typical work tasks.

The willingness of the social partners to contribute to the programme is impressive. They are involved in programme development, final theses defence, and in teaching. In order to successfully meet future challenges (such as the increasing competition at the labour market) the review panel recommends the IIRPS stepping out of the “conformity zone” where the PPA/SP is currently positioned, and to find novel collaboration partners both at domestic, regional and international arena.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Public Policy Analysis* (state code – 621L22009) at Vilnius University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	4
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	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.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. Anu Toots
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Dr. Stefan Ganzle
	Prof. Geoffrey Swain
	Ms. Judita Akromienė
	Ms. Julija Stanaitytė

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
VIEŠOSIOS POLITIKOS ANALIZĖ (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621L22009) 2016-11-10
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-225 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Viešosios politikos analizė* (valstybinis kodas – 621L22009) vertinama **teigiamai**.

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

* 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

Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų institutas (*TSPMI*) yra atsakingas už šešias magistrantūros studijų programas, apimančias šias sritis: *šiuolaikinės politikos studijos, rytų Europos ir Rusijos studijos, tarptautiniai santykiai ir diplomatija, Viešosios politikos analizė, Europos studijos ir politika ir medijos*. Studijų programa *Viešosios politikos analizė* yra viena iš penkių programų, kurios buvo vertinamos.

Studijų programa *Viešosios politikos analizė* vykdoma nuo 2012 m. Ji turi privilegiją būti dėstoma palankioje *TSPMI* aplinkoje ir naudotis jos pajėgumais. Tai aukštos kvalifikacijos darbuotojai, geri literatūros ištekliai, tvirtos studijų gairės ir standartai, į sunkų darbą (pastangas) orientuota studijų kultūra. Pradedant 2016–2017 akademisiais metais, atlikti keli svarbūs šios studijų programos pakeitimai, įskaitant tai, kad visų Instituto magistrantūros studijų programų pasirenkamieji dalykai sujungti į vieną bloką. Taigi magistrantūros studentams suteikiama daugiau lankstumo stiprinant individualų studijų profilį arba, kitaip tariant, išplečiant disciplinų prizmę. Šią reformą iki šiol tvirtai palaiko visos dalyvaujančios šalys – studentai, dėstytojai, absolventai ir darbdaviai. Tačiau akivaizdu, kad dar kelis metus reikia atidžiai stebėti ir vertinti jos poveikį.

Pagrindinis šios programos tikslas – „parengti aukštos kvalifikacijos, pažangiai mąstančius specialistus, suprantančius viešąją politiką, jos formavimo ir reformavimo procesus, gebančius

nustatyti problemas ir siūlyti sprendimus, savarankiškai atlikti kokybiškus mokslinius tyrimus ar profesionalią analizę ir teikti viešosios politikos formuotojams rekomendacijas, pagrįstas empiriniais duomenimis“ (savianalizės suvestinė, p. 6). Pagrindinių ir pasirenkamųjų dalykų visuma suformuota taip, kad studentai įgytų viešosios politikos analizės srities žinių bei gebėjimų.

Ekspertų grupė teigiamai vertina požiūrį į studijų rezultatus, kuriuo grindžiama ši programa. Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai pagrįsti akademiniais ir profesiniais reikalavimais, visuomenės ir darbo rinkos poreikiais. Ši programa suteikia tai, ką žada, ir neatitikimų tarp numatomų studijų rezultatų, turinio ir kvalifikacijų nėra.

Studijų dalykų turinys atitinka studijų rūšį ir pakopą ir yra tinkamas numatomiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti. Atsižvelgiant į absolventų būsimo darbo sritis, į šią studijų programą patariama įtraukti daugiau studijų dalykų, susijusių su ekonomika ir įvairių sektorių politika. Studentai labai skatinami dalyvauti mokslo taikomojoje veikloje, prisidėti prie dėstytojų vykdomų mokslinių tyrimų projektų ir teikti mokslinius straipsnius. Viešosios politikos ir vadybos institutas, kuriame dirba kai kurie (šios programos) dėstytojai, yra veiksminga praktikos ir būsima absolventų darbo bazė. Akivaizdu, kad šis artimas universiteto ir mokslinio instituto ryšys yra naudingas studijų programai *Viešosios politikos analizė*.

Nedidelį rūpestį ekspertų grupei kelia studentams, atėjusiems iš kitų katedrų arba susijusių su kitomis disciplinomis, taikoma tvarka. Papildomos studijos yra grindžiamos individualiu arba *ad hoc* konsultavimu, kurio gali nepakakti mažiau pažengusių studentų lygiui pakelti. Ekspertų grupė mano, kad šiems studentams gali pritrūkti metodologinių, analitinių ir duomenų tvarkymo įgūdžių, kad jie galėtų susidoroti su dideliu individualaus darbo krūviu. Studentų nubyėjimo, ypač pirmaisiais studijų metais, lygis, patvirtina šią prielaidą. Remdamasi šiais pastebėjimais, ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja labai atidžiai stebėti konsultavimo sistemą ir tai, kaip ji įgyvendinama, kad galėtų laiku suteikti tinkamą pagalbą tiems, kuriems jos reikia.

Dėstytojų kvalifikacija yra tinkama numatomiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti. Keli pagrindiniai dėstytojai aktyviai dalyvauja praktinės politikos analizės procese, o tai yra akivaizdžiai naudinga šiai studijų programai. Dėstytojai skelbia daug straipsnių iš jų mokymo srities. Ekspertų grupė pažymi, kad nacionalinių publikacijų yra daugiau nei tarptautinių, be to, dėstytojų aktyvumas publikavimo srityje nevienodas. Remdamasi šiais pastebėjimais, ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja vadovybei toliau plėtoti 2016 m. pradžioje pagal motyvacijos skatinimo sistemą numatytas priemones, kuriomis siekiama padidinti aukšto lygio tarptautinių publikacijų skaičių. Be šių priemonių, rekomenduojama daugiau dėmesio skirti visapusiško ir ilgalaikio dėstytojų tobulinimo, apimančio nuolatinį mokymą neatsitraukiant nuo darbo, konsultavimą dėl projektų rašymo, akademinio judumo planavimą, perspektyvai. Apibendrinant reikia pasakyti, kad dabartinę sistemą, kai dėstytojų profesinis tobulėjimas grindžiamas individualiais poreikiais, reikia pakeisti koordinuota sistema, kuri būtų orientuota į organizacijos plėtros tikslus.

TSPMI auditorijos, kompiuterinė technika, programinė įranga ir medijų įranga yra tinkama ir pakankama. Biblioteka nėra didelė, bet patogi. Be to, plačiai prieinamos elektroninės mokslinės bazės, kuriomis nuolat naudojamos studijų procese. Tai, kad Instituto pastate nėra belaidžio interneto (*Wi-Fi*), gali kažkiek trukdyti mokymuisi naudojantis internetu. Ekspertų grupė mano, kad naujos socialinių medijų priemonės (pavyzdžiui, *Facebook*) negali visiškai kompensuoti ribotos prieigos prie interneto ir nepakankamo naudojimosi internetinėmis mokymosi programomis (pvz., *Moodle*). Grupiniam darbui skirtos infrastruktūros mažoka. Būtina didinti mažų klasių, kompiuterių laboratorijų skaičių ir grupiniam darbui skirtą plotą. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja vadovybei investuoti į priemones (įrangą) ir skaitmeninius mokymosi išteklius,

ypač į grupiniam darbui skirtą infrastruktūrą ir vieno langelio principu veikiančias mokymosi platformas.

Priėmimo reikalavimai yra aiškūs. Universitetas įdiegė kokybės užtikrinimo procedūras, įskaitant studentų grįžtamąjį ryšį nuolat organizuojant apklausas. Bendroji studijų rezultatų vertinimo sistema yra aiški, tinkama ir viešai skelbiama. Kalbant apie seminarų vertinimą, pastebima, kad tarp atskirų dalykų nėra bendros sistemos skiriant užduotis ir jas vertinant. Studentai mano, kad ne visų dalykų seminarų įvertinamai yra teisingi ir suprantami. Remdamasi šiais pastebėjimais, ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja profesionaliai parengti vertinimo procedūras, nustatant kai kurias formalias taisykles dėl užduočių valandų paskirstymo ir užduočių vertinimo.

Socialinių partnerių noras prisidėti prie šios programos daro įspūdį. Socialiniai partneriai dalyvauja tobulinant programą, ginant baigiamuosius darbus, mažiau dalyvauja mokymo bei mentorystės srityje. Kad Institutas galėtų sėkmingai priimti būsimus iššūkius (pvz., didėjančią konkurenciją aukštojo mokslo srityje ir darbo rinkoje), ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja jam išeiti iš „komforto zonos“, kurioje dabar studijų programa yra, ir rasti naujų bendradarbiavimo partnerių vietas, regiono bei tarptautinėje arenoje.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja užtikrinti, kad visos institucijos pasirenkamųjų dalykų bloke būtų pakankamas studijų programai *Viešosios politikos analizė* tinkamų dalykų (pvz., ekonomikos, sektorinės politikos) skaičius. Taip pat reikia atkreipti dėmesį į turimų pasirenkamųjų dalykų paskirstymą per semestrus.
2. Ekspertų grupė primygtinai ragina vadovybę ir dėstytojus nuolat atnaujinti visuose esamuose dokumentuose esančią ir kitais kanalais teikiamą studijų informaciją. Rekomenduojama plačiau naudoti *Moodle*, kaip vienintelę programą, kurioje pateikiama studijų medžiaga.
3. Ekspertų grupė siūlo daugiau dėmesio skirti vadybai ir ilgalaikiai darbuotojų profesinio mokymo perspektyvai. Dėstytojų kvalifikacijos kėlimo kursų laikas neturi sutapti su jų paskaitų laiku.
4. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja užtikrinti, kad studijų programos komiteto pagrindu taptų reguliariai rengiami Studijų programos komiteto posėdžiai, numatantys strateginius ir ilgalaikius tikslus.
5. Institutui ir studijų programos komitetui ekspertų grupė pataria plėsti socialinių partnerių tinklą dabartinių Instituto studentų ir absolventų darbdavių gretas papildant naujais partneriais.

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

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)