



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

ALEKSANDRO STULGINSKIO UNIVERSITETO
(aukštosios mokyklos pavadinimas)
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "ŽELDININKYSTĖ"
(*valstybinis kodas – 6121IX007, 612D70003*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF "LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT"
(*state code – 6121IX007, 612D70003*)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at ALEKSANDRAS STULGINSKIS UNIVERSITY
(higher education institution)

Review' team:

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Želdininkystė</i>
Valstybinis kodas	6121IX007, 612D70003
Studijų sritis	Biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Žemės ūkio mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji (bakalauro)
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė – 4 metai
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Žemės ūkio mokslų bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2013.01.01

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Landscape Design and Management</i>
State code	6121IX007, 612D70003
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Agricultural Sciences
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	First (Bachelor)
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time – 4 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	240 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Agriculture
Date of registration of the study programme	03.01.2013

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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	List of student surveys / questionnaire for evaluation of study subjects/ courses
2	Brochures for the Scientific Events 2017 organized by ASU (Conferences, Seminars, Agricultural fair and other activities)

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

The Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU), previously known as Lithuanian University of Agriculture, is a state institution that includes five faculties in the area of Agricultural Sciences (Agronomy, Economics and Management, Forest Sciences and Ecology, Agricultural Engineering, Water and Land Management). The University cooperates with more than 120 foreign partners

(higher education institutions, their divisions, education, research and business institutions) regional, European and global academic organizations. The ASU has more than 4 700 students studying in the three cycles; 3 671 BSc students, 965 MSc students and 81 doctoral students.

The self-evaluation report (SER) of the first cycle (BSc) study programme in Landscape Design and Management (LDM) was carried out by a self-evaluation team of 8 members comprised of two associate professors, 3 lecturers, one student and two social partners. The SER was written in the period from October 2016 to January 2017 and it reflects the evaluation and data of the period 2013 to 2016. The SER of the Programme was in accordance with the Methodology for the evaluation of higher education study programmes and the 8 member group worked efficiently to present all the needed data and information.

External evaluation of the BSc LDM study programme is conducted for the first time.

The team of experts, assigned by the SKVC made the site visit in the Faculty of Agronomy in Kaunas. The team of experts reviewed in consecutive order the management and administration staff (on the previous day) and then followed the joint team of the SER group of both the Horticulture and Landscape Management programmes, the teaching staff, students and graduates (alumni) and the social partners/employers. The site visit was terminated with a tour in the premises of the Faculty of Agronomy, visiting laboratories, classrooms, drawing and models exhibition and other facilities used by the Programme.

The team wishes to express its appraisal to the SKVC for the good organization of the visit and the valuable presence and assistance of the evaluation coordinator.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 5th April 2017.

- 1. Prof. dr. Ioannis Vlahos (team leader)**, *professor Emeritus of Technological Educational Institute of Crete, Bologna expert at the Hellenic Ministry of Education, Greece.*
- 2. Prof. dr. Helena Korpelainen**, *head of the Dep. of Agriculture at of Agribusiness, University of Helsinki, Finland.*
- 3. Mr. Kevin Kendall**, *educational consultant, Director of RKK LTD., England.*
- 4. Ms. Alina Adomaitytė**, *Managing director at JSC Innoera, Lithuania.*
- 5. Mr. Gabrielius Jakutis**, *student of Vilnius University Faculty of Medicine, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

In the SER it is stated that the Landscape Design and Management programme was registered in 2013 (Order No SV6-1 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania) and it evolved originally from the study programme Gardening and Landscaping (2003 to 2010) which was renamed Landscaping between 2010 and 2013. The need for these changes were considered necessary in order to be in line with current market needs as the conducted surveys on the employment of graduates had shown. There is an extensive reference to the needs for specialized graduates that will cover the demand in the labour market for landscape specialists. The aims and LOs of this Programme, as presented here, justify the development of the present Programme under evaluation and it confers a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences by ASU.

An extensive description of the needs for landscaping specialists and the laws and regulations in Lithuania regarding the creation and management of green areas is given. The main legal document is the Law on Green Plantations of the Republic of Lithuania (No 1241, 28-06-2007) indicating that qualified specialists working in municipalities shall organize works of management, planning, creation, protection, arrangement and maintenance of green areas. The Lithuanian law on Landscaping requires that municipalities have to employ landscaping specialists that can carry out works of landscape management and cultivation. A survey conducted by ASU in 2011 among companies engaged in landscape architecture and landscaping business, revealed that a study programme for landscaping specialists is necessary and viable. The survey (52%) showed the need for training a number of 15 to 30 landscape specialists each year in order to fulfill the need for municipalities and design and landscaping companies.

The Programme is implemented in the Aleksandras Stulginskis University conferring a bachelor's degree in Agriculture sciences. In Lithuania, related study programmes are offered by the University of Klaipėda which confer a bachelor's degree in landscape design and landscape architecture respectively, and also by some colleges in Vilnius and Kaunas, whose programmes, as stated in the SER, are different from the one offered in ASU. The number of enrolled students is low in all of these programmes. The number of enrolled students in the Programme under evaluation is also very low for a BSc programme (average 10) – the number of admitted students from 2012, when the Programme was initiated, varies from 5 to 18 (average 10) which is a low number of students to justify a first cycle programme.

The content and rationale of the learning outcomes (LOs) of the Programme correspond to Level 6 of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework or Level 1 of the European Qualifications Framework. Programme Aims and LOs are described according to curriculum, however they are generally very broad in their description as well as repetitive in many parts. The Aims are presented

in 3 sub-aims (groups) and each sub-aim is composed of subjects that gradually lead to deeper specialization. However, the review team realized that there were courses, mostly in the second group, that were identical to those delivered in Agronomy first cycle, which to some degree is justified, but also due to the lack of specialized staff some of the subjects taught do not provide the students with the LOs mentioned in the SER.

The Aim of the Programme, as stated in the SER, is to prepare highly qualified specialists with a university degree, having knowledge of natural environment elements, landscaping design technologies and art of the shaping of spaces, capable of applying laws of the shaping of spaces when planning, adapting and rearranging landscape and elements of natural environment according to public needs, maintaining the balance between artificial elements created by humans and the nature, creatively organizing landscaping business and leading the management of landscapes. However, LOs are too broadly described and it is not certain if they really meet the requirements of the labour market and, as previously mentioned, they are partially similar to those of the Agronomy first cycle programmes. Also, the curriculum of the Programme, even though it covers the needs of the "Landscape Design" part of the study field, it does not include subjects that would justify the title of „Management“.

A final thesis is an independent experimental or applied research project.

There is a strong support and links between the University staff and the employers and employability for graduates is very satisfactory.

However, the title of the awarded degree, Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences, does not reflect the content of the Programme. The review team realizes that this is a discrepancy that needs to be attended exclusively by the Ministry of Science and Education by establishing a new field in the Classification of study fields as the field of Landscape is indeed a field between the Agricultural Sciences and Architecture. Current students also mentioned that they were misinformed about the title of their diploma, as the Programme was initially Landscaping /Greenery when they enrolled (2010-2013) and later changed to Landscape Design and Management, hence there is an issue raised regarding the recognition of their diploma as Bachelor's Degree in Landscape Design and Management, since it has not been officially recognized and labelled as a landscape design/architecture degree.

During the discussions the review team had with the groups of employers and other prominent stakeholders from Research centers, Botanical Gardens, and private companies, revealed that they consider the Programme valuable for the Lithuanian and local economy, however they emphasized the need for more practical training and development of social communication skills. Practical training is to be strengthened as both alumni and stakeholders noted during the interviews.

Graduates also stated that all are employed after graduation in research institutes, private firms or working in their own farms, evidently not as landscape specialists.

Strengths

1. The University and individual staff have strong links with and support of employers.
2. Employability and demand for graduates is good.

Weaknesses

1. The title of the Degree of Bachelor of Agricultural Science does not reflect the content Landscape Design and Management.
2. Programme Aims and LO are very general and complex, and do not link to the reality and requirements of the labour market.

2.2. Curriculum design

The structure of the Programme conforms to the ECTS system, meets the legal requirements and complies with the General Requirements of Lithuanian regulations for Higher Education. The Programme has duration of 4 years (8 terms). The volume, including training, educational and professional practice in landscaping and the final thesis as stated in the SER is 240 credits. However, in the tables provided, the total of ECTS credits shown is 238 and not distributed evenly (30 in each term, as required by the Bologna process) instead they range from 25 to 34 per semester. This discrepancy should be taken into consideration in a future revision.

Courses are distributed over the eight semesters in a logical sequence providing general university study subjects for general knowledge followed by the subjects of the major fields of Landscape and Horticulture and also subjects of deeper specialization that students can select according to their interests. Nonetheless, it was reported that the students need more professional practice to get deeper practical experience.

The study plan is said to be continuously updated intending to include new optional subjects at student's request. The review team although did not find evidence of such practice (also addressed in chapter 2.6). Also, the curriculum of the Programme should be monitored and improved by introducing courses that would better fulfill the set Aims and LOs of the Programme provided. The content of the Programme needs more attention in order to develop a programme that will correspond to the needs of the society and which will definitely achieve intended Aims and LOs. The curriculum development is connected with the recruitment of eligible and qualified teaching staff which is an absolute prerequisite for achieving this goal. In addition, there is a need for further internationalization of the curriculum introducing research papers in English.

The teaching/learning methods include contact hours and independent work. Contact hours comprise lectures, seminars, laboratory-based work, practicals, training practices, consultations,

examinations and the defence of final thesis. The SER states that studies are based on active teaching/learning methods, including case studies, problem solving, team work or individual tasks which are presented and discussed at workshops and seminars.

The final thesis is an independent work of experimental or applied nature that should demonstrate the ability of the students to apply the knowledge acquired on ornamental plants and drawing skills in order to solve special problems in Landscaping at different scales. However, the produced theses, as the review team saw samples of the students' work during the site visit, require a lot of preparation work and it is highly advisable to assign it as a full time job during specific period of time (e.g. last semester) and not to be combined with other course work during the study period.

Also, the review team found that many of the courses taught in the Programme are identical to those taught in the Agronomy first cycle study programme. Besides the General University Study Subjects, which are taught in the first semesters, there are also at least a dozen study subjects more which are common with those taught in the Agronomy BSc (e.g. Botany, Agroforestry, Plant Physiology, Land management, Horticulture, Floriculture, Soil management, etc). It would be advisable to teach these courses jointly in order to increase effectiveness in the University programme schedules.

Strengths

1. The curriculum enables students to gain skills in landscape design as well as science subjects.

Weaknesses

1. The curriculum needs to be developed and modified in order to better comply with the title, aims and learning outcomes of the Programme.
2. Students need more professional practice/experience.
3. Internationalisation of the curriculum/research papers in English.

2.3. Teaching staff

There are 31 teachers who teach on the Programme, including 3 professors, 16 associate professors, 10 lecturers plus 2 researchers and 2 assistants. The academic staff meet the general formal requirements set for first cycle study programmes, approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania.

Lecturers from all the faculties at the University (Forestry and Ecology; Water and Land Management; Economics and Management and Agriculture Engineering as well as from the Centre of Cultural Communication and Education) teach on this Programme but it is coordinated by the Institute of Agriculture and Food Sciences of the Faculty of Agronomy.

There are 46 students studying in the LDM in 2016-2017 academic years, with 12.1 students per one teacher position, but there is only 1.4 student per actual teacher, because there is not a single teacher teaching the LDM working in this Program full-time. Work in other study programs makes up the remaining part of their work. The average age of the teachers is currently 50 years so there is a need to ensure that in the future a greater range of experience and expertise is brought into the University.

The qualifications and experience of teaching staff are appropriate to the LOs of the Programme as far as the science and plant growing aspects of the Programme is concerned. Even though there is a sufficient number of lecturers for the design courses there should be more experienced and specialized teachers available to deliver the courses of the Programme in order to be in accord with its title: Landscape Design and Management

The level of English speaking among teaching staff is low, and this compounds the difficulty of internationalising the curriculum and enabling students to be prepared for employment in the modern world, and both to utilise research and new ideas from outside the country and to facilitate employment outside Lithuania. The University states that there are many opportunities for staff development both in Lithuania and in other countries, however not all teachers participate in this. This low participation rate was confirmed during the meeting with teaching staff for the Programme, and the low level of ability in speaking English was also very evident. The SER states that teachers' qualifications are evaluated every 5 years during the personal appraisal session, whereas it would be more usual in many other universities for this to happen annually to ensure currency of knowledge and skills. In this rapidly changing area, with the increasing use of new technology, particularly related to information technology and global positioning, it is vital that teaching is up to date with industry practice. Students also stated that some staff are not up to date with their knowledge and some do not use the University's virtual learning environment in their teaching. Students are instructed to complete course questionnaires at the end of every module which both evaluates the subject learnt and the quality of the teaching which is good practice, and has the potential to yield excellent information if response rates were higher. Many subjects examined by the review team had a very low or no response rate by students.

Although there is no formal method of evaluating the quality of teaching other than by course questionnaires completed by students at the end of each course, but students are generally satisfied with their teaching, learning and very satisfied with the level of support given by teaching staff.

Strengths

1. Good staff student relationships which results in good student support.

Weaknesses

1. High dependency on a small number of staff to teach the courses of the Programme.
2. Some staff are not up to date with their knowledge.
3. Lack of English understanding and speaking in teaching staff which restricts international relations.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The University has recently conducted infrastructure improvement works comprising replacing windows and repair work, purchasing new furniture and equipment and installing internet access. New and updated resources include a range of laboratory equipment for studies in soil and plant science which are appropriate to the subjects studied. New computer rooms have also been provided with internet access and appropriate specialised software installed for both technical subjects and for evaluating data from the final theses.

The University has also recently reconstructed the library, which includes reading rooms with 154 places. The SER states that the library has 156,402 textbooks, 141 periodicals and 19 subscribed databases with subscriptions to 29,000 magazines to support all subjects. Many of these are available in English. However, by comparison, only a small number of these are directly related to the subjects of landscape design and management, rather than for example, the science related to growing plants.

The University has an arboretum, a nursery garden of the Faculty of Forestry and ecology, a Pomological Garden, the Experimental Station, and the University Park and grounds which are all relevant to the growing plants aspect of this Programme, but are more limited on the practical aspects of landscape design. However both current students and graduates from the Programme state that the balance between ‘science’ subjects and ‘design’ subjects is about right, and having looked at the programme planning documents, the review team would concur with this view.

Students have facilities to learn and practise their drawing skills related to landscape design and subsequently have access to specialist software to design and transfer their ideas electronically. The review team were able to view some student work on posters that demonstrated that a good level of drawing and design skills have been achieved.

Employers in the landscape design industry are supportive of the Programme and believe there is a need for graduates. They provide visits, guest lectures, live projects and professional practice for students.

The arrangements for students’ professional practice currently meet the needs of the Programme which has a small number of students. If the number of students increases to meet the

potential demand, as indicated by employers, then the range of professional placements and practical design resources on site would need to be extended.

Strengths

1. New and updated equipment is appropriate to the Programme, particularly enabling glasshouse related research work.
2. Support from employers in the landscape design industry.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of practical resources to practice landscape design and management on site.
2. Small number of literature in English directly related to the subjects of landscape design and management.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The admission procedure follows those established at ASU. Information on the study programme is available on the ASU website and through promotional material and events. The numbers of admitted students have remained low (during last three years 8-12 new students/year). Information on the numbers of applicants having this Programme as their first choice was not available for the review team. The ratio of admitted and graduated students is low. For instance, among those admitted in 2010, 2011 and 2012 (in a comparable previous programme's version), the percentages were only 50%, 40% and 40%, respectively. These percentages may increase when some of the slower or part-time students finally graduate. The reasons are explained. Yet, there is space for improvement, e.g. measures to improve motivation, and increase supervision and tutoring, for instance, concerning the preparation of the final thesis. Enough qualified teachers are needed for thesis supervision as also for other parts of studies, such as design. Actions to increase student enrolment should be considered.

It was unclear to the review team, how the topic of the final thesis is decided and what is the schedule for the thesis work. The topic is sometimes chosen already during the second year of studies, but apparently it can be initiated later as well. Supervision arrangements and connections with on-going research projects at ASU are not clearly explained as well.

The students may study under a customized programme having changes in the Programme or forms of study, studies in other institutions etc. (addressed also in chapter 2.6). They also have possibilities for mobility, primarily through the ERASMUS programme. ASU has bilateral ERASMUS agreements with numerous institutions in Europe and elsewhere, which should provide ample possibilities for mobility. However, this Programme has not been especially popular, only 0-2 students per year. No incoming student mobility took place during the reporting period. There is a procedure for crediting studies conducted abroad. The students are said to have possibilities to join

contests and conferences in Lithuania, and sometimes also abroad. Participation in mobility programmes should be encouraged, even though students may have reasons, why such mobility does not feel attractive.

ASU provides support and information to students in different matters. Key information is available on websites and some information is available in the Dean's office. It would be good to have all important information of courses, exams, etc. in an electronic form and with an easy access. Different scholarships are available for students. They are granted on a competitive basis according to study outcomes or based on other selection criteria, which are not fully clear. The Career Centre provides training and career management services, and coordination and cooperation with employers and social partners. Additionally, the Career Centre provides psychological assistance, while other health care services are elsewhere. The presence of career-related services is highly important. The ASU Centre of Physical Training and Sports offers students good possibilities for physical training, and there are many cultural activities.

Methods and criteria for the evaluation of students' achievements are supposed to be explained for each course. However, it was unclear to the review team, how assessments are linked to the intended LOs. The interviewed students told that the criteria for assessment were not always available and known to students, and the students wanted more guidance in this. Such ambivalence in students' assessment may hamper the achievement of the intended LOs. Examination arrangements are explained quite clearly, while assessment procedures and the way the grades are collated should be developed and made fully transparent.

Strengths

1. Students have flexibility in their studies.
2. Students have good possibilities for international mobility.
3. Student services are comprehensive.

Weaknesses

1. Students do not get enough guidance on assessments, thus the study process insufficiently supports the achievement of the intended LOs.
2. Graduation rates, as at present, are low.
3. Mobility abroad is low.

2.6. Programme management

The SER was thorough and covered in detail all the necessary information needed by the experts for understanding the factual and qualitative aspects of the Programme. The required data for the preparation of the self-evaluation were collected from documents of the University and the departments, survey summaries, conducted studies and analyses.

The Dean's Office and the Faculty Institute (Institute of Agriculture and Food Sciences) are explained to manage the Programme. However, the description is unclear and lacks precise information on decision making, implementation, monitoring and quality assurance of the Programme. Therefore, it is difficult to judge how plausible and transparent the management processes are in practise.

The Study Programme Committee is assumed to have an important role in assessing and improving the Programme. However, its recruitment procedure and conflict mitigation aspects are not explained, while the tasks and roles of social stakeholders are described in good detail. It is positive, if the stakeholders have a strong role, although informal, in the work of the Study Programme Committee.

The Programme students may express their concerns and discuss them in the Dean's office, and that has also happened.

It is unclear, how much attention the management pays at different issues of the study process, such as recruitment, graduation rates, student satisfaction, employability of the graduates etc., and what kind of actions it has taken to really improve the Programme. An issue is the recognition/diploma of the Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Sciences, as it is insufficiently considered being a design/architecture degree. The students mentioned, for instance, that it is very difficult to continue for a Master's degree in a different university due to the diploma issue. The management should seriously consider how to improve the situation. Yet, based on the meetings with alumni and social partners, the Programme has a fair reputation and potential employers want to hire its graduates.

Despite good intentions to develop the study quality assurance system, there are still problems to be solved. For instance, the students may ask to include optional subjects into the curriculum, as has been done in the case of a new subject introduced at the students request (Homestead Landscape Design) or they may study under a customized programme, but it remains unclear how that is organized and monitored, and whether there are issues with the quality of such process and studies. Also, there is lack of formal methods to ensure the curriculum is up to date. Students' feedback (electronic surveys) was found not to be collected for all subjects, and general feedback for the whole Programme was not clearly available. It is also unclear how feedback from the staff and stakeholders is collected and used. Additionally, it would be beneficial to include also open questions in the questionnaires in order to collect concrete suggestions and points of improvement.

Summarizing, the review team would like to express a suggestion regarding the development and attractiveness of the Programme, for the management to consider. Given the

shortcomings that have been observed and presented throughout the evaluation process namely: low attendance, lack of staff, awarded title, compatibility with Agronomy first cycle, the need for Landscape specialists, etc, the experts wish to suggest to the management to consider transforming this first cycle programme into a second cycle programme of Agronomy with specialization in Landscape Horticulture and Design, or something similar. This may solve some of the problematic issues of the Programme.

Strengths

1. The Programme is quite well connected with the society.
2. Feedback systems are developing.
3. Students can have an impact on the programme (e.g. teachers) to some extent.

Weaknesses

1. The recruitment procedure and conflict mitigation aspects of the Study Programme Committee are insufficiently clear.
2. The recognition of the diploma is insufficiently considered.
3. Student feedback was found not to be collected for all subjects, and general feedback for the whole Programme is not clearly available.
4. It is unclear how feedback from the staff and stakeholders is collected and used as there is not a formal mechanism for it.
5. Lack of a formal method to ensure the curriculum is kept up to date.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Review the Programme title to ensure that it accurately reflects the content and the needs of individuals and employers.
2. Undertake the necessary legal action that will lead to recognition of the diploma of Landscape Design and Management.
3. Attract and hire skilled teaching staff to ensure that there is a suitable number of staff able to teach the design aspects of the Programme and support and strengthen the teaching methods and practical experience of the programme corresponding to its aims and LOs.
4. Establish a formal systematic mechanism for course monitoring and evaluation using relevant data, to ensure the curriculum continues to be relevant.
5. Review the timing and length of the practice period to ensure graduates are prepared for employment. Possibly consider providing more ECTS credits for this activity if the period is extended substantially.
6. Increase the internationalisation of the curriculum and increase the use of research papers in English.
7. Review staff recruitment and development to ensure that teaching staff have skills in English which can further promote international relations.
8. Review the provision of practical resources to support the design aspects of the Programme.
9. Investigate and address the reasons for low completion rates on the Programme.
10. Establish a formal mechanism to collect feedback from employers on the Programme aims and learning outcomes.
11. Improve transparency in Programme management to ensure that staff and students are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
12. Improve the quality assurance of the programme in general taking into consideration the above recommendations and consider the possibility of transforming the programme into a second cycle programme in Landscape Design that will provide Agronomy BSc graduates with an attractive choice of specialization.

IV. SUMMARY

The first cycle study programme *Landscape Design and Management* evolved in 2013 through changes in previous programmes. It was established in order to comply with current market needs for landscape specialists as the conducted surveys had shown. The degree conferred is a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences by ASU which is inconsistent with the content of the Programme leading to dissatisfaction and confusion among both students and employers. The number of enrolled students in the Programme is very low for a first cycle programme and students surveyed expressed their concern as there is no legal recognition of their title as landscape specialists.

There is a strong support and good links between the Programme's staff and the employers and the employability of graduates is very satisfactory as the Programme fulfils the needs of the labour market in landscape design. However, employers indicated that graduates should undergo more practical training and acquire social communication skills which are needed for this field.

The qualifications of teaching staff are appropriate to the learning outcomes of the Programme as far as the plant sciences aspects of the Programme is concerned but there is a small number of staff to teach the landscape design aspects. The competence level in English among the teaching staff is low, which hinders the update and internationalization of the curriculum and students are thus deprived of the opportunities to expand their knowledge and utilize new ideas from other countries.

The lecture rooms, computer classrooms and library as well as other learning facilities are well equipped. Students have special lab rooms to work and practise their landscape design using special software that gives them the ability to develop good levels of design and drawing skills. Digitalization of studies is progressing well and the virtual learning environment is widely used, although not by all teachers. Also, the provision of practical resources to support the design aspects of the Programme should be better.

There is some confusion among staff and students regarding programme management and it is recommended that the University improve transparency in programme management to ensure that staff and students are aware of their roles and responsibilities. In addition, the process of gathering feedback from staff students and stakeholders is inconsistent and it is strongly recommended that the University establish a formal systematic mechanism for course monitoring and evaluation using relevant data, to ensure the curriculum continues to be relevant.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Landscape Design and Management* (state code – 6121IX007, 612D70003) at Aleksandras Stulginskis 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	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	2
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	13

*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: Ioannis Vlahos

Grupės nariai:

Team members: Helena Korpelainen

Kevin Kendall

Alina Adomaitytė

Gabrielius Jakutis

**ALEKSANDRO STULGINSKIO UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS ŽELDININKYSTĖ (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 6121IX007) 2017-06-14
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-124 IŠRAŠAS**

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V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Aleksandro Stulginskio universiteto studijų programa *Želdininkystė* (valstybinis kodas – 6121IX007, 612D70003) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	2
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	2
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	2
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	13

* 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)

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IV. SANTRAUKA

Pirmosios pakopos studijų programa „Želdininkystė“ sudaryta 2013 m., kai buvo keičiamos ankstesnės programos. Ji buvo įsteigta siekiant patenkinti susidariusią želdininkystės specialistų paklausą, kurią atskleidė atliktos apklausos. Pripažįstamas laipsnis yra ASU suteikiamas žemės ūkio mokslo bakalauro laipsnis, kuris neatitinka programos turinio, todėl kyla studentų bei darbdavių nepasitenkinimas ir įnešama painiavos. Šią studijų programą pasirinkusių studentų skaičius yra labai mažas kaip pirmosios pakopos programai, o apklausti studentai išreiškė susirūpinimą, nes teisiškai jų profesija kaip želdininkystės specialisto sunkiai pripažįstama dėl suteikiamos profesinės kvalifikacijos.

Teikiama stipri parama ir palaikomi geri ryšiai tarp programos personalo ir darbdavių, absolventų įsidarbinimas yra pakankamas, nes programa tenkina želdininkystės specialistų

poreikį darbo rinkoje. Tačiau darbdaviai nurodė, kad absolventams reikėtų daugiau praktinio mokymo bei įgyti socialinės komunikacijos įgūdžių, kurių reikia šiai sričiai.

Dėstančiojo personalo kvalifikacijos atitinka numatomus programos studijų rezultatus, kurie susiję su pagal programą dėstomais augalininkystės aspektais, tačiau želdynų projektavimą dėsto mažai personalo. Dėstančiojo personalo anglų kalbos žinios yra menkos, kas trukdo atnaujinti programos sandarą ir suteikti jai tarptautiškumo, o studentai dėl to neturi galimybių išplėsti savo žinias ir panaudoti naujas idėjas iš kitų šalių.

Dėstymo auditorijos, kompiuterių klasės, biblioteka ir kitos mokymosi patalpos yra puikiai įrengtos. Studentai želdininkystės srityje dirba ir praktikuojasi specialiose laboratorijose naudodami programinę įrangą, kuri suteikia galimybę vystyti projektavimo bei piešimo įgūdžius. Daroma pažanga studijų skaitmeninimo klausimu, plačiai naudojama virtuali mokymosi aplinka, tačiau ne visų dėstytojų. Taip pat reikėtų tobulinti praktinių išteklių teikimą programos projektavimo sričiai.

Personalui ir studentams kyla painiava dėl programos vadybos, todėl universitetui rekomenduojama didinti programos vadybos skaidrumą siekiant, kad personalas ir studentai žinotų savo vaidmenis ir atsakomybę. Be to, grįžtamojo ryšio rinkimas iš personalo, studentų ir socialinių dalininkų nėra nuoseklus ir universitetui labai rekomenduojama įsteigti formalų sisteminių studijų dalykų stebėsenos ir vertinimo mechanizmą naudojant atitinkamus duomenis ir siekiant užtikrinti, kad programos sandara išliktų aktuali.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Peržiūrėti programos pavadinimą siekiant užtikrinti, kad jis tiksliai atspindėtų turinį ir asmenų bei darbdavių poreikius.
2. Imtis būtinųjų teisinių veiksmy, kad būtų pripažintas želdininkystės specialisto diplomats.
3. Pritraukti ir samdyti kvalifikuotą dėstantįjį personalą siekiant užtikrinti, kad būtų pakankamai personalo, gebančio dėstyti programos projektavimo aspektus, taip pat remti bei stiprinti dėstymo metodus ir programos praktiką, kuri atitiktų programos tikslus bei numatomus studijų rezultatus.
4. Įsteigti formalų sisteminių mechanizmą, kaip stebėti ir vertinti studijų dalykus, naudojant tiesiogiai susijusius duomenis tam, kad studijų programa ir toliau liktų aktuali.
5. Peržiūrėti praktikos laikotarpio laiką ir trukmę siekiant užtikrinti, kad absolventai būtų pasirengę darbai. Galbūt vertėtų apsvarstyti galimybę už šią veiklą suteikti daugiau kreditų, jei būtų gerokai pratęstas praktikos laikotarpis.

6. Sustiprinti programos sandaros tarptautiškumą ir skatinti studijuojant naudotis daugiau mokslinių leidinių anglų kalba.
7. Peržiūrėti personalo įdarbinimą ir tobulinimąsi siekiant užtikrinti, kad dėstytojai turėtų anglų kalbos įgūdžių, kas toliau skatintų tarptautinius santykius.
8. Peržiūrėti praktinių išteklių teikimą, kad jie paremtų programos projektavimo kryptį.
9. Ištirti, kodėl programą baigia nedaug studentų, ir imtis atitinkamų priemonių to priežastims panaikinti.
10. Nustatyti formalią darbdavių atsiliepimų apie programos tikslus ir numatomus studijų rezultatus rinkimo sistemą.
11. Didinti programos vadybos skaidrumą siekiant užtikrinti, kad personalas ir studentai žinotų savo vaidmenis ir atsakomybę.
12. Rekomenduojama gerinti bendrą programos kokybės užtikrinimą atsižvelgiant į pirmiau pateiktas rekomendacijas ir apsvarstyti galimybę transformuoti programą į antrosios pakopos želdininkystės programą, kaip patrauklią specializaciją agronomijos bakalauro absolventams.

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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)