Overview report of higher education study programmes in the field of Informatics in Lithuania undertaken April 2016

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In April 2016, the following 3 institutions and 4 programmes were evaluated by SKVC.

1. Šiauliai University Bachelor of Informatics and Master of Informatics
2. Klaipėdos University Bachelor of Informatics
3. Mykolas Romeris University Bachelor of Informatics

The evaluation as undertaken by the following panel of experts:

4. **Prof. Dr. Liz Bacon (team leader)** academic
5. **Prof. Dr. Helmar Burkhart,** academic
6. **Prof. Dr. Gerald Steinhardt,** academic
7. **Mr. Vaidas Repečka,** social partner
8. **Mr. Vytautas Mickevičius,** students' representative

This report summarises the general findings of the reviews, however individual institution reviews are available if more detail is required.

Programme aims and learning outcomes

The quality of how these were written varied across institutions, however in general the content of the degrees was considered appropriate for the title of the award. A common issue across all institutions was the extent to which final year bachelor theses and master theses delivered their intended learning outcomes. The focus of the work and dissertation was on practical skills and these were not appropriately balanced with a critical discussion of the work in the context of the scientific / academic literature, which is an important skill to learn as well as to ensure comparability with international standards. As a result of this marks awarded were considered too high at all institutions but to varying degrees.

Curriculum Design, Study process and Student Performance

The curriculum contents were considered acceptable for the title of the award, however rarely leading edge. All programmes would benefit from further influence from international and European standards. The latter for example, requires more extensive teaching of legal, social, ethical and professional issues, which were generally poorly covered. There were often

limited opportunities for students to engage with staff research although this did happen at all institutions. Interaction with social partners was generally good however some institutions had a more structured approach than others to management of the relationahip, so engagement was variable. However. social partners in all institutions had some opportunities to influence the curriculum. As a norm, students at all institutions receive clear specifications, grading criteria and timely feedback. All institutions had some good practice in the use of technology to enhance learning but this could be improved. All institutions need to enhance processes to ensure consistency of standards in assessments set and marks awarded, including ensuring a consistent student experience where the same module is taught by more than one tutor. As a norm, extensions awarded to students for assignments, and assessment standards, were defined by individual staff which introduces considerably variability in outcomes for the similar work. Institutions should introduce appropriate procedures and processes to address these issues. Student representation was generally very good with a number of both formal and informal opportunities to feedback to staff on issues. As a norm, where a problem could be solved, institutions generally responded rapidly to issues raised. In general, students at all institutions were overwhelming positive about their learning experience and support from staff. Student performance was in general very good, as was employment of graduates.

Staff

There was considerable variation in how well programmes met the legal requirements for staff but all were at or above threshold. However, all institutions would benefit from increasing the number of staff with PhDs and supporting staff in continuing their research post-PhD. All institutions had a relatively stable staff base with some staff working in industry and the knowledge brought from staff experience in industry was highly valued by students. Support for staff development was variable, some institutions able to offer more than others, but all institutions provided some funds for international travel to conferences and other staff development. Often collaboration for teaching, Erasmus exchanges and research were primarily localised to the region and all institutions would benefit from collaboration further afield and incentives to encourage this would be welcomed. It is clear all universities have ambitions to enhance collaborations but are restricted by financial considerations, however enhanced international research collaboration through joint funding bids would help progress this area. In general the staff:student ratios compared favourably with those found internationally.

Facilities and Learning Resources

Library

For the most part library facilities were very good however not all institutions had the expected full text databases for the discipline, such as the ACM Digital Library and IEEE Explore. Where this was the case, institutions were asked to address this urgently. In general a minority of library resources were available in English and these could be increased, given the dominance of literature in this language.

Computer Equipment

In terms of computer equipment, all institutions had a range of leading edge equipment and labs, through to very old equipment e.g. seven years. Despite this, there was only one institution where speed was considered a major problem and this needed to be addressed urgently.

Programme Management

All institutions had appropriate procedures for programme management although overall variable implementation and were sometimes labour intensive and manual. Stability of internal management structures was also variable. The extent to which staff came across as a team was also variable. In general, all institutions had good procedures in place for reviewing the content of programmes and an annual process for making updates.