



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS VERSLO KOLEGIJOS

VEIKLOS VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF VILNIUS BUSINESS COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION.....	3
III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	4
IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING	8
V. RESEARCH AND ART.....	11
VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.....	13
VII. GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15
VIII. JUDGEMENT.....	16
ANNEX. VILNIUS BUSINESS COLLEGE RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW REPORT.....	17

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The review of the **Vilnius Business College (referred to below as “VBC” or “the College”)** was organised by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania, in its role as the Authorized Agency prescribed by Lithuanian law. The review was conducted in accordance with the prescribed methodology according to the Procedure for the External Review in Higher Education approved by Government Resolution No. 1317 of 22 September, 2010.
2. The College submitted a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) with Annexes, and further documentation as requested by the review team. The review team visited the College from 6th-8th May, 2014 and conducted several meetings with the College and was showed around the premises and learning resources.
3. The Self-Assessment report was translated into English but lacked self-reflection and self-evaluation. Greater statistical evidence and quality indicators would be useful. Further detailed information was requested beforehand and the College supplemented its documents during the site visit. This is the third time that the College has taken part in an institutional-level external review. The SAR required more evidence of the outcomes of the previous review in 2006.
4. **The panel recommends that it would be beneficial for the College to develop further its capacity for effective self-analysis.**
5. The review explored the four principal areas of the College’s activity as set out in the ‘Methodology for Conducting an Institutional Review in Higher Education’ (referred to below as “the Methodology”): strategic planning, academic studies and life-long learning, research and/or art activities, and impact on regional and national development. Within each area of activity reference was made to the criteria set out in the Methodology and the lists of sub-criteria in reaching the review panel’s decision.
6. The experts have also been presented with the results of the evaluation of learning resources and associated infrastructure conducted by MOSTA and with the evaluation decision of 22nd June, 2012. It should be noted that for the layman the MOSTA results were very difficult to interpret and accompanying report to explain this information is also required. The MOSTA report does not raise issues of disability access or facilities within the College.
7. The expert team consisted of: Team Leader: Prof. Dr. Johann Schneider; Team Members: Dr. Lukas Andreas Scherer, Dr. Zoltan Sipos, Benas Adomavičius, Eglė Seiliūtė; Review Secretary: Trevor Clark.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

8. The Vilnius Business College (formerly E. Rasteniënės Language and Management College) was established in 1989 and was one of the few private higher education institutions in Lithuania.
9. Following the Law on Higher Education and Research (2009), the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania approved the new Statute of the College. In 2001, the College was giv-

en the status of non-university higher education establishment and entitled the right to issue non-state recognised academic degree certificates. Since 2007, the College was given the right to issue certificates in professional Bachelor's degrees in Physical, Social and Humanities Sciences. In 2007, the College was successfully assessed by the commission for external quality assessment by the SKVC – the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

10. The College is one of the smallest in Lithuania and consists of the Department of Information Technologies, Department of Economics and Business Management and the Department of Foreign Languages. There are 8 first cycle study programmes: Business Management and Marketing (43 full-time, 67 part-time students); Finance and Accounting (19 full-time, 20 part-time); Applied English Language (58 full-time, 41 part-time); Programming and Internet Technologies (39 full-time, 4 part-time); Hospitality Industry (44 full-time); Media and Computer games (17 full-time); English for New Media (9 full-time, 6 part-time); Transport Business Management taught in the study language Lithuanian and Russian (21 full-time, 18 part-time)
11. There are 77 teachers employed at the College. The part-time teachers are working professionals who enhance the learning experience with current and up to date work practice.
12. The mission of the College is “To enhance opportunities for professional and personal development for each and every student by coherently combining high quality of studies, business-oriented learning experiences, innovative study methods and by promoting ideas of sustainable development and lifelong learning“. This is reflected in its 2002-2013 3rd Edition Strategic Action Plan.
13. The College aim is “*to consolidate its unique position as a small college offering a personalised approach to students; providing employees with well qualified, self-motivated, critical thinking and decision oriented staff. The College is guided by its core beliefs in operating within an environment which is open to new ideas and challenges. This is within an environment of transparency and respect with all members of the community, operating with a growing awareness of its shared values*”.

III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

14. The national and internal forecasts for student recruitment entering into higher education institutions in Lithuania are challenging. Within a decreasing demographic profile and high migration it is estimated that the student numbers entering Higher Education are set to decrease by 50% by 2020. It is clear that the conditions for the future development of the College are adverse. The number of part-time students has already more decreased from 458 enrolments in 2007 to 156 in 2013 although the number of full-time students has increased from 136 to 250 in 2013.
15. VBC has a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2008-2013 and 2014-2020, which is based on its mission statement integrated with national regulations, strategies and European goals of the Bologna Process. The plan places emphasis on quality and innovation-oriented studies, the goals of sustainable development, life-long-learning, student professional and personal development, under-pinning national and regional development and the integration of the Lithuanian higher education into the European Education Area. The latter includes the en-

- hancement of international mobility.
16. VBC has sole owner/shareholder, who is also the director as well as a one-person governing body. The Academic board acts as a self-governing body but in reality all responsibilities are highly centralised.
 17. The Academic Board has full responsibility for the areas of studies and scientific activities. However, the panel has the view that the initiatives come from the management. Consequently, the board discusses the presentations and then provides advice and necessary approvals as appropriate. The Board does not appear to take advantage of the opportunities from the local network to provide more strategic guidance to VBC. There was limited evidence that the Board challenge the decision-making policy within VBC and explicitly concerning strategic issues.
 18. The use of management tools, such as a PEST and SWOT analysis is a starting point for the updating of the SAP. This enables the College to set up priorities, define strategic goals and plan corresponding objectives and actions.
 19. Less attention is given to the analysis of educational market and competing institutions. It is recommended that customers (markets/segments), competitors (their offers, strengths/weaknesses), businesses (employers of the students and their needs), should be included in future considerations when preparing strategic plan.
 20. **There is little evidence that the recommendation of the previous review which recommended introducing an improved methodology for the research of the demand and market of specialist programmes has been developed.**
 21. The College has had a mixed success with some programmes being established but lack of demand has resulted in some cancellations. It is fully recognised the difficulty of anticipating market demand and the activity of competitors. There is commercial sensitivity in publishing future strategic developments. Consequently, these developments are not included in the SAP, yet as long as it does not include these future proposals it will be problematic planning for them.
 22. The College Activity Plans provides an annual specification of the SAP and provides the road map for delivering the SAP with the allocation of human and physical resources. However, in some cases the connection of goals, resources and action to be taken on this could be more clearly articulated to make the planning process more transparent.
 23. An annual review is conducted and supplemented to reflect the constantly changing external factors. The SWOT analysis is also updated regularly taking into account internal and external developments.
 24. The monitoring of the implementation is organized directly by the annual discussion in the meeting of management review and indirectly by the Quality Management System. The College community and interested parties are participating and are consequently informed by using formal and non-formal communications and procedures. Information is also presented publicly according to higher education legal acts.
 25. A similar designed SAP has been produced for 2014-2020. The view is that the planning horizon is too long, given the nature of rapid change in the education environment in Lithuania. At present the new SAP does not include information about when particular KPI's should be achieved.
 26. **The panel recommends shortening the SAP period. Instead of using fixed standard planning horizon, a rolling horizon could be intro-**

duced, that should be reviewed at least every 2 years.

27. Starting with the project “Efficiency of VBC studies” the college introduced and improved its quality management systems (QMS) using the ISO 9001:2008 and EFQM excellence model. The existing procedures and processes assessed by the both external auditor (ISO 9001:2008) responsible evaluator (EFQM) are positively evaluated. Thus, both approaches and models might be considered to be combined, aligned and to be continued. Therefore the internal quality assurance system doesn’t comply completely with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) requirements. The impression given was that the College was an approved ISO centre and this was not the case.
28. It is planned to integrate all the monitoring indicators into one system. External institutions carry out MOSTA and EFQM and SAP and QMS are internal systems although all these different systems have the broadly the same focus: quality improvement for the learning experience. Internally they have different organisational status and to combine these systems as far as possible could make the quality policy more effective and efficient.
29. However given all this the quality system operates in a less structured manner to enable it to be effective and flexible. It is important to ensure this is as holistic as possible and not lose important inputs. For example, the panel saw that the participation of the students in the board is not according to the statutes of the college and participation of the social partners and graduates should be more structured.
30. **The panel recommends reconstructing the QMS on the basis of the ESG Part 1, with tailor-made supplements of other methods and eventually a balanced scorecard.**
31. The College uses a system of key performance indicators (KPI) although some are difficult to quantify and there is a need for updating, in particular regarding KPI for future scientific activities. Some indicators are now redundant and should be focused on the most essential strategic activities with clearly defined measurable outputs.
32. VBC has changed its organizational structure according to respond to its SAP goals and chosen priorities. This was one of the recommendations of the previous accreditation and the organisational change has been appropriate and positively received by staff and students alike.
33. As a small institution there are a lot of informal channels and many different responsibilities for one staff member. Consequently, this can sometimes cause a blockage in decision making and information sharing, as highlighted in the SAR, as a potential problem.
34. There is limited collaboration with other Colleges in Vilnius and then only used to reduce costs by mutual use of resources. Due to commercial confidentiality and competitor activity developing strategic partnerships remains up to now only as an issue of internal discussion. To stay independent with a specific and successful place in the market place or to look for deeper collaboration with other higher education institutions, even from abroad, is an important strategic issue.
35. The College future faces a challenging and complex time. Consequently, the single line management structure with a sole owner and director has great strengths but corresponding weaknesses. The panel is convinced, that up to now the system works quite well, but that for the future a change is needed as the system of checks and balance needs to be strengthened. The College should consider whether more external member of the Academic Board or a change in the statutes could be an appropriate way to improve the situation.

36. Management processes and procedures are clearly defined and operational. The respective responsibilities are clear and appropriate for flexible reaction to changes in the relevant environments. The stakeholders are participating on different levels in a sufficient extent.
37. College values and main guiding principles are the base for its policies on human resource management. A special procedure “Management of Human Resources” is adopted and makes sure, that all the employees obtain the required qualifications. The demand for training and personnel development is periodically estimated and the corresponding measures are provided. This was re-enforced by the staff members, that they had appropriate opportunities to personal development and special training.
38. The economic activities are based on various legal acts and treaties. The allocation of the financial resources is a result of discussions and negotiations between the departments and the management according to the monitoring of the actions plans. The external assessment carried out by the MOSTA assessed that the “Efficiency of the use of funds allocated from the state budget” as positive and the review concurred with this evaluation.
39. Due to decreasing number of student population from 594 students in 2007 to 406 in 2013, there has been declining revenue while increasing fixed and variable costs. Additional revenue streams such as EU funding are also facing budget reductions. Consequently, the long-term financial viability of VBC remains unclear.
40. Within the state financing higher education institutions system in Lithuania, a requirement for funding is that a private College has to define a niche study programmes offered which is not offered by a state institution in order to attract state financed students or students from abroad. In order to for the Colleges to maintain its unique position in the market place, VBC has remained small, flexible and responsive and has advantages in this respect. Questions have to be asked over the long-term financial viability of the institution. The expert team is not convinced yet that there is a clear visible strategy.
41. VBC applies the Code of Academic and General Ethics that is published in College prospectus. It also established a Disputes Commission to cover students complains but as yet has been used because there have been informal ways to solve any issues. From discussions there was little awareness of possible problems concerning the possibility of unethical behaviour in general. The only issue raised was plagiarism.
42. According to the Statute, the Director is also responsible for all the financial activities and given the other roles this could also rise to a conflict of interests. Consequently, with the demographic and economic situation the College faces an economic risk. The College is not alone here and the same applies for many small institutions in Lithuania and not all of them probably can survive. However, the panel is of the view the College has demonstrated an important and local niche in the market but over the longer term must develop an effectual financial and marketing strategy for the College.

Recommendations:

1. The College should redefine its System of Quality Assurance building on its current systems to develop a consistent system integrating the European Standards and Guidelines.
2. The College should improve the Strategic Action Plan by including the analysis of the educational market and concentrating on the essential key performance indicators. The KPI should include quantitative data from the last 3 to 5 years supplemented by market and

company oriented research activities. The Annual Action Plans should include timescales allocate human and physical resources and clearly identify roles and responsibilities in a clear strategic and consistent manner.

3. The College should develop a consistent marketing strategy to include growth and business development opportunities which profile clearly its unique position within the market plan, for the future development and survival of the College. This should be fully supported by a risk-analysis and appropriate allocation of resources such as the development of a dedicated Business development unit. This profile should be made publicly visible in order to establish a brand on the educational market.
4. The College should define a collaboration strategy regarding local, regional and further partners in order to increase its market impact, number of students and to share existing infrastructure and facilities.

Judgement on the area: Strategic Management is given a positive evaluation.

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

43. All the study programmes of VBC are accredited by SKVC and comply with its mission to *“enhance opportunities for professional and personal development for all learners. The programmes provide flexibility by combining high standard studies that respond the real-life business needs using innovative learning methods, and promoting ideas of sustainable development and life-long learning”*. It complies also with the SAP where the current study programmes and the future developments are defined and the study programmes are in line with Lithuanian Government strategies (fostering internationalisation, information society, tourism, transport industry, and sustainability). Newly established goals as sustainability, integrity and the entrepreneurship stimulated by European and national politics are in the most, integrated into the curricula.
44. There is a positive response from full and part-time students in all aspects of teaching learning, pastoral and academic support. The panel was impressed by the familiar and trusted relationship between the lecturers and students with the students being articulate and enthusiastic regarding their learning experience.
45. In particular, the small study-groups, the intensive contact to the teachers and the short and fast ways for solving problems were mentioned. The pastoral care taken by VBC was cited as a particular strength of the College. The positive view of the College was re-enforced by students’ words of mouth recommendation to other potential students.
46. Teachers use the common modern teaching methods and a new and specific method is the peer to peer approach, developed by a Finnish university. This has been adapted by the College via an intensive partnership. It is planned to install this method into all of the programmes.
47. Unpopular programmes like the Mobile Technologies and Robotics were cancelled and new programmes have been offered. Future employers have participated in the design of new and the improvement of old programmes with a willingness of partners and graduates

to continue to do this. Given the good will expressed by the large and comprehensive social partners, more should be done to ensure the review and preparation of programmes is less selective and arbitrary and should become more systematic.

48. Most of the programmes are competing with offers of other Lithuanian higher education institutions, and only a few e.g. Applied English Language, English Language for Media or Transport Business Management taught in Russian are unique to the Higher Education sector. VBC has adopted a strategy to attract more foreign students in particular from Russian speaking countries. It is important to develop a specific profile while maintaining its culture at the same time.
49. Part-time and full-time study programmes are established and currently distance learning is also being integrated into some programmes. Despite the decreasing number of part-time students the programmes are viable. Recruitment can change according to the economic situation and local developments.
50. Selective course studies are implemented for students, graduates or professionals to complement or renew their qualification. VBC provides non-formal and non-degree education. The college develops individual study schedules, which enable learners the possibility to combine studies with work. The recognition of prior learning is established with the acceptance of modules and study results acquired in other recognized higher education institutions. The teaching staff was keen to offer this flexibility for external clients or students.
51. A special focus is laid on the recognition of non-formal and self-learning by implementing the system for the formalizing of competences obtained by non-formal means. As a result of an international project appropriate regulations are set up and in practice.
52. VBC monitors and analyses the reasons for student dropout. 70% - 100% (depending of the study programmes) are underachievement and is on par with other higher education institutions in Lithuania. In order to provide greater support for students who are facing difficulties the college provides increased pastoral care, tutorial support and even adjusting the study programmes where appropriate to allow students to study part time.
53. The College is exploring recruitment in the International market and has up to now limited success by establishing new programmes in English and Russian. The number of students in these programmes is low but the intention is to increase substantially, albeit in the face of already well established international competition in this area. Offering joint-programmes in cooperation with other higher education institutions could strengthen international attractiveness. However, the intention is to remain a small but discernible College with a specific profile. It aims for closer cooperation with other higher education institutions for a more efficient use of resources, but not in content-related co-operation.
54. All the study programmes are external accredited by SKVC. Surveys on students, employees, employers and graduates are performed on a regular basis. The results are used for the improvement of quality, updating of existing programmes and creating of new study programmes. Whilst employers and graduates give recommendations concerning the needs of the labour market student's feedback is mostly used to improve the teaching methods and pedagogical abilities. Programmes have been developed to provide student flexibility to enable a combination of studies and work.
55. Once a year an external institution collates Lithuanian graduate data survey using electronic questionnaires and the results are used for assessing the VBC activities. The results are very positive indicating the lowest graduate unemployment levels in comparison to other institu-

tions in Lithuania. Further College base surveys indicate that most graduates are employed at the appropriate level. Further activity is carried out with social partners to look at employability and what are the expected competences of graduates who were in general satisfied with the graduates they received.

56. The College collaborates and participates with academic, social and business partners in and they play an active and important role in the College. All these partners are involved on different levels in a formal and informal way in the process of development of new and the improvement of existing study programmes. Employers participate in the Academic board, teaching, give specific lectures, organize student's practices, and provide topics for the final theses and project-related EU-programmes. There are 57 contracts of academic collaboration.
57. Study programmes comply with the requirement of the Bologna process and ECTS. Student international mobility is one main strategic goal. Up to now there are more outgoings than incoming students (2013: 17:1) and the same is true for teaching staff members (2013: 22:19). The mobility is mainly financed by EU-programmes. To improve the situation and to become more integrated in the European Area of Higher Education increasingly modules are taught in English and some study programmes are provided totally in English or Russian language.
58. The teaching staffs are encouraged with students to participate in a number of European mobility programmes such as ERASMUS, Nordplus, and Grundvig. The recommendation of the previous evaluation "to prepare for international studies" is being fulfilled.
59. Historically, VBC has offered a few non-formal certified education programmes. Presently, the number of participant is very low because there is a strong competition on this market. The college has considerable strengths in this area with its social networks as mentioned above. However, in its self this is not enough and the College needs to market these opportunities to local business and commerce more effectively and to be publicly recognisable as a provider. Little progress has been made on non-formal programmes. The College is aware of the issue but needs a stronger focus on this business opportunity.
60. The newly formed Department of Communication and International Relations provides information in foreign language through many communication channels. However, word of mouth recommendation by present and former graduates remains a powerful marketing tool.
61. To improve that situation it is planned to offer more modules in foreign languages and make VBC more visible on an international level. VBC collaborates with other higher education institutions and the Lithuanian Government by attending International student recruitment fairs. Of course, VBC is not alone and directly competing with other Lithuanian higher education institutions and other European and International Institutions in attracting foreign students. This competition can often be well established with an extensive marketing budget, long established networks and all the supporting requirements such as international Alumni, pastoral support and purpose built accommodation. This is a highly competitive market and the College has to find a special profile in order to become successful in this area.
62. The learning resources were positively assessed by MOSTA, although no mention is made regarding disability access and consideration should be given how this might be addressed given that the college is located on the 4th floor.

63. There was no mention of the Lithuanian Qualification Framework (LQF) or the European Qualification Framework either in the document review or within group discussions. The EQF is an important reference point, and particularly important for the recruitment of International students.
64. The college is very well suited to provide LQF Level 5 – short cycle programmes. Learning at this level can provide an important entry into Higher Education and further progression often to Degree level. The College offers the appropriate environment to support learners from a varied and wide background, such as return to learn, more adults and even those who have not succeeded as well in the school environment. These types of programmes are particularly effective for these learners in other member states but unfortunately under the current Lithuanian state law this is not allowed.

Recommendations:

1. The College should prepare more new and various programmes for non-formal continuous education.
2. The College should develop more new educational programmes in the field of formal education with the innovative philosophy and niche marketing strategy of the college.
3. The College should promote to Government the importance of the development of Level 5 learning.
4. The College should develop a more systematic approach to market research and business development opportunities.
5. The College should extend their co-operation with further higher education institutions in order to deliver dual and joint degrees.
6. The College has an effective informal relationship with its former students and should build on this to integrate and to support the activities of the Alumni association.

Judgement on the area: Academic Studies and Lifelong Learning is given positive evaluation.

V. RESEARCH AND ART

65. VBC has defined four topic areas of applied scientific activities in its statutes (12.3) and SAP linked by information technologies as
 - Implementation of project activities and applied scientific research by actively participating in national and international projects.
 - Encouraging the participation of academic community in local and international events.
 - Integrating applied scientific research into study process.
 - Extending collaborations with business and business associated structures.
66. All the four topics are interdisciplinary and based on the overlapping fields of study. The

topics match the national priorities for economic (business), IT-technologies and cultural (languages) development. Some examples of this activity include: the development of SME with the focus on Business Management Informatics; formal and non-formal education combining sociology, informatics, translation and philology; secure WEB technologies and artificial intelligence systems in linguistic. The future SAP has ambitious plans to increase the number of applied research activities an increase by 200% and the number of college affiliation published articles by 25%.

67. The range of subjects is applicable in the field of education and science and business. Up to now the focus of activities lies on publishing articles in scientific journals and their acceptance by the international reviewers. Consequently, this is the only qualitative evaluation criteria.
68. VBC, with a consortium of European partners, edit the international reviewed scientific journal *Innovative Infotechnologies for Science, Business and Education* and has organised 7 annual international conferences under the same topic. Staff members also contribute to further international conferences. This can also be seen as sort of tenuous evaluation. The same is true for the large number of scientific articles published in international scientific journals by staff members, most of them related to one of the four established topics for scientific activities.
69. Another part of scientific activities relates to the final theses when student's research focuses on market and business problems in collaboration with companies. VBC would like to see greater planned activity for increase participation but feels restrained due to lack of financial support from the state and the companies themselves.
70. The College participates in 17 international projects as coordinator or partner concerning one of the four areas of scientific activity. Some of these projects relate to the field of higher education itself for improving e.g. e-learning modules, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for training the trainers, internationalisation of study programmes, transforming higher education in high technologies or design and implementation of the formal system of acquired non-formal skills and competencies.
71. Other projects have a direct impact on the regional development concerning e.g. problems of re-integration into the labour market or of training of adult immigrants. All the topics of scientific activities comply with Lithuanian priorities as laid down in the respective official documents, in particular the enhancement of the Lithuanian residents' ability to use the ICT, development of the electronic content and services and development of the ICT infrastructure. Integration inside the College and in the social environment is a newly established objective of VBC. One project was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the promotion of Lithuania's Networks in EU. Again, the budget is a concern as the reimbursed costs for projects are increasing.
72. The previous review emphasized the need to analyse the regional and business subjects demand. Whilst many of the projects concern regional demands in adult education and integration, the situation concerning the business subjects has changed only a little and there continues to be very limited business demand for research and development. In particular small and medium sized companies are not used to investing money in these activities. This is not only a problem for VBC. Nevertheless, the panel has the view that this market is worth exploring by taking the initiative for first steps to change the situation and provides important additional funds.

73. The academic staff informed the panel that scientific activities are intrinsically motivated and there is no need for an incentive system. The current activities are heavily weighted in the direction of articles and conferences and it could be useful to have some incentives to seek out companies and other possible clients for applied research and development.
74. The panel suggests building up an internal agency for knowledge transfer and business development to combine all service offers of the College and works as a broker between the College and potential clients.

Recommendations:

1. The College should use its collaboration with social partners and graduates to extend the activities of applied sciences focussed on regional and business subjects demand.
2. The College should promote applied research more actively by organising workshops and transfer oriented conferences or establishing a centralized responsibility for knowledge transfer.
3. The College should promote students interest in research more intensively.

Judgement on the area: Research and Art Activities is given a positive evaluation.

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

75. The College has a strong relationship with local social partners and the recognition of the impact on regional and national development is part of the College Mission and the SAP. The main impact is related with studies, applied research and the collaboration with social partners, who are concerned with regional and national demands. The high employment-rate, the results of the surveys on graduates and the feedback given by social partners show, that there is a positive impact in this concern. Special focus in this respect lies on the issue of social integration (integration of different groups of students), the principle of sustainability (integrated as subjects into study programmes) and the growth of competences of entrepreneurship (as a particular subject in business studies). This impact is positively assessed by the usual stakeholder surveys and as sufficient by the EFQM analysis in 2012 and 2013.
76. The newly established study programme Transport Business Management taught in Russian takes into account the close relation of Lithuanian transport business with Russian speaking markets and can have a positive impact on regional development. In particular students practice and their final thesis have a regular focus onto actual demands of the state, economic and social development. Social partners suggest topics for final theses. The same is true for lecturer's scientific activities. In this way, VBC helps to popularise science and to build up a science based society as well.
77. Two international projects are focussed on social integration and the College supports students with special needs and complicated social background. This can be seen as an im-

portant contribution for social integration having in mind that VBC is a small and specialised institution and, therefore, the impact is limited.

78. By means of the ADUQUA (Quality Assurance in Integration Training for Adult Migrants) project, migration issues are reflected and the College supports the societal integration of different social groups. The life-long learning project is aimed to help migrants and welfare receiving persons to learn languages and develop communication skills.
79. By means of the RELESE (Reintegration into Labour market through Entrepreneurship Skills Enhancement) project courses, VBC supported the reintegration into job market. In 2009, a non-formal professional training program for retired officers and soldiers, in collaborations with the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was a contribution for social integration. There are some other non-formal programmes of adult education but with a limited number of participants.
80. **The panel recommends extending the range of non-formal programmes of adult education.**
81. The College supports and the students volunteer in social events, study fairs, social actions, sports and cultural events. An excellent example is the “I am responsible” campaign about environmental issues. The public are invited into the college for cultural and technology events which have been organised by social partners. International conferences are open for everyone and all interested people had the opportunity to attend. The sixth conference was included in the programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the council of the European Union 2013.
82. The Academic and administrative staff members are members of various state and regional associations, organisations and unions, although it is difficult to assess what impact this has on VBC. The College encourages and supports these activities, but more structure and maybe some form of incentives could ensure that these activities raise the profile and the benefits the College can bring to for local, regional and national development.
83. VBC uses some quantitative indicators to measure the impact set in the SAP. The number of participants in these events is included in the system of KPI. Despite the problems of outcome measurement in a multifactor area, these activities did have a positive impact on the regional and national development

Recommendations:

1. The College should explore how part-time faculty members could be used towards developing strategic alliances with university partners for student progression to offer master training programmes to the graduates and other collaborative activities for improving educational opportunities in favour of the region.
2. The College should consider the creation of an Advisory Board with specific responsibility to support the College in developing the curriculum to provide rapid reactions to market challenges and regional demands.
3. The College needs to fully utilise the evident goodwill from former graduates and as a matter of urgency, needs to establish a fully operational Alumni Association, in order to benefit and structure the influence into and from the social environment.

Judgement on the area: Impact on Regional and National Development is given a positive evaluation.

VII. GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

84. Ironically the major strength of the College is also its potential weakness and that is its size. VBC is a small, close and friendly institution. The study groups are small and consequently the individual support is excellent and well appreciated by the students and graduates. The institution is therefore very flexible and innovative and management goes often the shortest and informal way. The identification of the staff members is high and the contacts to external partners easy to handle and non-bureaucratic.
85. However, the size of VBC brings challenging threats and risks. The economic and demographic situation facing the Higher Education sector in Lithuania are very challenging. With the growing competition for students in Lithuania VBC has to find an attractive and sustainable niche. VBC should develop business oriented and financed applied research and development (R&D). The market could be increased with further non-formal programmes offered as additional rewarding activities and funds. Great analysis of the relevant markets, systemising of the involvement of partners and graduates as important resources of information and stimuli now need to be considered. The QMS has to be adapted to the manageable demands of the institution and to concentrate on relevant KPI applying an adequate timeframe finally the College should consider its management structure and the relative strengths but weaknesses of a sole owner /directorate role. To extend the activities while still remain a close and intimate institution is the most important challenge to face VBC.

For future evaluation/accreditation the following recommendations are given:

1. It is recommended that the Self Evaluation Reports should provide greater information for evaluation and assessment with more quantitative information in all the four fields of observation. The statistical data such as student recruitment, retention and achievement data should be presented in a standard format.
2. It is recommended that the law is changed to allow non-university higher education establishment be allowed to deliver Level 5 accredited programmes. This would allow a broader group of learners into higher learning opportunities with the opportunity for further progression to degree and higher programmes. This is common practice in EU Member states. The College is very well suited to cater for this type of learner.
3. It is recommended that issues of Alumni management should be explicitly mentioned.
4. The MOSTA indicators are very specific and facility oriented, however mostly with no or little connectivity to the strategy. If there should be an advantage of MOSTA indicator, then the higher education institutions are invited to align these indicators with the strategy.

VIII. JUDGEMENT

Vilnius Business College of Higher Education is given positive evaluation

Grupės vadovas:
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Eglė Seiliūtė

Vertinimo sekretorius:
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ANNEX. VILNIUS BUSINESS COLLEGE RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW REPORT



VILNIAUS VERSLO KOLEGIJA

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Duomenys kaupiami ir saugomi Juridinių asmenų registre, kodas 191807983

Acting Director Nora Skaburskiene
Centre for Studies Quality Assessment

22-08-2014 No. R-108A

ON INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF VILNIUS BUSINESS COLLEGE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

We thank you sincerely for the Institutional Review Report that has provided us with a fresh impetus to think over and reconsider all components in the activities of College.

We would like to offer only one point of observation on Item 27 that in the Review Report runs like this: „*The impression given was that the College was an approved ISO centre and this was not the case*“. In fact, while doing both writing our Self-assessment Report and answering to the experts face to face, we tried to say that the System of Quality Management in College, represented by the responsibilities of the Quality Department, is based on the principled requirements of ISO 9001:2008 – as the target for guidance in practice in all College activities.

With the aim of perfecting the Internal System of College Quality Management in mind, in 2011, the target was set to introduce separate elements of quality management of ISO9001 standard (within the framework of the project „*Increasing Effect Indicators of Studies at Vilnius Business College*“).

On completing the project, in 2013 an external audit was carried out (by the independent EOQ Quality Auditor Alvyra Stočkutė), and the conclusion of the audit was: „*The system of internal quality management of studies in the public institution Vilnius Business College in principle meets the requirements of LST EN ISO 9001:2008, the system successfully functions in practice, it is monitored and managed, and it enables to achieve the targeted quality aims*“. Thus we relied on the above-mentioned conclusion of the auditor when we stated that we apply elements of the system ISO 9001:2008.

We would also like to note that in Lithuanian the name of the Department of Communication and International Relations (Item 60) is „*Komunikacijos ir tarptautinių ryšių skyrius*“.

We thank you again for a most thorough and matter-of-fact Institutional Review Report of Vilnius Business College.

Yours sincerely,
Director

Jolanta Skirgailė

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