



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Klaipėdos universiteto  
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "SOCIALINIS DARBAS"**  
*(valstybinis kodas – 6211JX089)*  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF "SOCIAL WORK" (state code -6211JX089)**  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Klaipėda University

**Review' team:**

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Socialinis darbas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	6211JX089
Studijų sritis (studijų krypčių grupė)*	Socialiniai mokslai ( <i>Socialiniai mokslai</i> )*
Studijų kryptis	Socialinis darbas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Socialinio darbo magistras (socialinių mokslų magistras)*
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2007-01-29

\* skliaustuose nurodomi nauji duomenys, kurie pasikeitė nuo 2017 m. sausio 1 d. įsigaliojus Studijų krypčių ir krypčių grupių, pagal kurias vyksta studijos aukštosiose mokyklose sąrašui bei Kvalifikacinių laipsnių sąrangai.

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## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Social work</i>
State code	6211JX0089
Study area (Group of study field)*	Social sciences ( <i>Social sciences</i> )*
Study field	Social work
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second (Master)
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time – 2 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of social work (Master of social sciences)*,
Date of registration of the study programme	29-01-2007

\* in brackets new data provided, valid from 1 January, 2017 after List of study fields and groups of study fields Framework of qualification degrees came into force.

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### ***1.1. Background of the evaluation process***

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

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

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (hereafter – SER) 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.

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

The Master of Social Work study Programme is being implemented in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Klaipeda University, which was established in 2000 and since then has become the biggest Faculty in the University with the highest number of students. The Programme was started at the Faculty in 2001 arising from consultation with foreign partners and knowledge of the experience of other Lithuanian universities. Currently, Klaipeda University which was

granted University rights in 1991, has 4500 students and is the largest centre of science and culture in the Western Lithuania region. The University implements studies of all cycles.

The mission of the Department of Social Work is to train highly skilled social work specialists capable of solving people's social problems and being able to accomplish scientific research which reveals the links between theory and practice. The Department focuses on the innovative development of Social Work and its interdisciplinary aspect in the context of the development of social welfare.

A self-evaluation group to analyse the implementation of the Programme and to prepare the SER was formed of seven people by Klaipeda University Rector's Order No. S-215.

The review team members after familiarizing themselves with the SER, visited the University and met with the administration of the Faculty, staff responsible for the preparation of the SER, teaching staff, students, alumni, employers and social partners. Also the review team visited the teaching spaces and facilities, library and other learning resources.

After the visit the review team members held a meeting in which the contents of the evaluation report were discussed further to represent the opinion of the whole group.

#### ***1.4. The Review Team***

The review team was completed according to the *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 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

1. **Damien Courtney (team leader)**, *Fellow Emeritus CIT, Former Head of Faculty, Business and Humanities, Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland.*
2. **Doc. dr. Marju Medar**, *Associate Professor, School of Governance, Law and Society, Tallinn University, Estonia.*
3. **Prof. dr. Skaidrite Gutmane**, *Professor, Rector, Latvian Christian Academy, Latvia*
4. **Saulius Davainis**, *Head of Social Activity Department, Republican Hospital of Kaunas, Lithuania.*
5. **Evelina Kripaitė**, *Student, Sociology and Criminology Study Programme, Vilnius University, Lithuania.*

## II PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### 2.1. *Programme aims and learning outcomes*

The aims of the Masters' Study in Social Work are to provide basic university education in the field of Social Work that complies with European standards and prepares specialists who are ready both theoretically and practically to engage in social work as an applied social activity; to advance the poli-functional character of Social Work as a new field of study and science in the context of the changing society; to develop professionals for analytical and project activities in the field of Social Work, in research and pedagogical work in the higher education system; and be able to adapt to various professional activity situations and meet requirements in the labour market. The Social Work study programme is designed for two years full-time studies. The aims of the Programme and the learning outcomes are developed as a second cycle university study Programme as reflected in the approach adopted in the SER.

**The aims of the programme and the learning outcomes are based on academic and professional requirements of the European Qualification Framework and the Lithuanian National Qualification Framework, and are linked to EU documents on social development. The aims of the programme and the learning outcomes are related to Lithuanian state strategies and labour market needs.** The Master of Social Work Study Programme is based, specifically, on the Bologna Process, the Dublin second cycle Descriptor(2004), the Lithuanian Science and Studies Act (2009), and is in line with the European Qualifications Framework Level 7 (2009), Research and Experimental (social, cultural) Development for 2013-2020 and the Description of the Social Work study field (2015). The aims and learning outcomes of the Study Programme are related to Lithuanian state strategies and labour market needs, and have been prepared taking account of the transformation of modern society and relevant development trends based, specifically, on the needs of Western Lithuania (Klaipeda and Taurage districts). This knowledge and related activities are demonstrated in the evaluation report and during the review meetings with administration, teachers, students, alumni and social partners it was confirmed that the goals of the programme are to prepare specialists who can professionally deal with social problems in Lithuania.

**KU Social Work programme meets the requirements outlined in the standards for social work education (Global Standards for Social Work Education, 2004)** developed by the International Association of Schools of Social Work and is in line with the objectives outlined in the European Association of Schools of Social Work Annual Plan, 2016-2020 which focuses on the revitalization of activities in the regions and improvement in the quality of social work studies. The KU Social Work programme has a good working relationship with the Association of Lithuanian Social Work with regard to the development of quality social work studies.

**Programme goals and objectives are consistent with Klaipeda University mission, goals and the strategy.** The evaluation report states that KU prioritises marine research and studies; history of the Baltic Sea region; culture and languages; education, health and social welfare, economics, politics, communications and arts. Special attention is given to issues related to the sustainable development of Western Lithuania and the city of Klaipeda, and the establishment of an integrated science, study and business centre (SER p. 7) **The Social Work Study Programme is related to the mission, operational objectives and strategy of the higher education institution which is understood by all its stakeholders.**

**The vision of the Faculty is based on the Scandinavian holistic approach to human health, including health care, healthy lifestyle, coherence with the social environment and quality of life, and is related to the mission of the Faculty of Health Sciences to train highly qualified specialists who can meet the needs of personal and public health services, to provide these services, and to carry out research activities to strengthen and protect human health and social well-being.**

**Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes described in the evaluation report correspond to the mission, operational objectives and strategy of the higher education institution.** The organizational structure allows the planning, organization and control of the implementation of the Study Programme as well as achieving intended learning outcomes. This was confirmed to the review team during meetings and discussions with the administration, teaching staff members, social partners and alumni.

**The compliance of Programme aim and intended learning outcomes with academic and professional requirements, as well as social and labour market demands are evident.** The

aim and learning outcomes outlined in the evaluation report indicate that graduates will work, essentially, in the Social Work field, will pursue and promote positive social change for individuals, groups and communities, and will perform functions that require deeper knowledge and universal theoretical preparation in the social work area. It was confirmed during the review meetings with alumni and social partners that graduates are working in different Social Work positions that require this kind of preparation, and expressed satisfaction with their work. The evaluation report outlines the good results in research and development activities achieved by teachers and students. Teachers display high competence levels in scientific research and internationalisation, and students likewise in their Masters' theses, as presented in the annexes.

The University has good relationships with Lithuanian ministries and with social partners regarding student practice and employment opportunities in the Western Lithuania region, including Family and Child Welfare, Children's Rights, Foster Homes, Social Support, Disability, Elderly, Psychiatric Care and Hospitals. The information provided by MOSTA (Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre) shows that the employability of Social Work graduates is very high. This was confirmed during the different meetings with the review team.

Graduates of the Social Work programme work in many regional and city social work institutions. The Department of Social Work (SWD) maintains regular contact with them through meetings of the Social Workers' Discussion Club (SWDC), conferences and festive events. The SER states that the best final theses of the Masters' programme are introduced to working professionals, thus ensuring the relationship between theory, knowledge and practice. The evaluation report indicates that 80 % of social workers in Klaipeda regional institutions and organizations are KU Social work graduates whilst 90-100% of students enrolled on the Masters' Social Work programme are working or beginning to work in the field of social work.

**Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are well defined, clear, complement each other and publicly accessible.** These are clearly described in the report. During the review meetings teaching staff, students and alumni expressed a good understanding of the learning outcome of this Programme. The objectives and expected outcomes were assessed as adequate and meeting the needs of the region, well based on national and international instruments.



**Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are linked to academic and professional requirements:** as clearly described in the SER. The aims of the Programme and intended learning outcomes define the knowledge and its application which is necessary for a social worker as outlined above. The teaching staff expressed a deep understanding of the academic and professional requirements of Social Work. There is a close relationship between theory and practice evident in the Programme.

**Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes correspond to the type and cycle of studies and the level of qualifications.** The Programme aims and objectives are consistent with the purpose of the Programme, the Regulations of the Study Field of Social Work (2015), and the Descriptor of General Requirements for Degree Programmes of Second Cycle (2014). The aim and objectives correspond to the terms presented in these documents. Graduates will work in the significant field of Social Work, and will ensure positive social change based on deeper knowledge and theory. The learning outcomes comply with the requirements set for a Masters' degree, are relevant for professional activities and can serve as the basis for the establishment of doctoral studies in Social Work in Lithuania.

**The title of the Programme, intended learning outcomes, the content and the qualification are described in the university documentation and confirmed through the results of the monitoring carried out by the administration and during the meetings with the review team.**

**The aim and the intended learning outcomes of the Study Programme are announced publicly** on the official KU website: (<http://www.ku.lt/>). ISO quality management standards are implemented for KU quality assurance

(see: <http://www.ku.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Sertifikatas-angl.9001.pdf>).

**The teachers together with the students of the Study Programme disseminate information on the Study Programme,** its content, goals, and learning outcomes. The SER and review team meetings with teachers and students indicated that students are welcome to discuss different academic issues of concern at the SWD and the Office of the Vice-Dean. The available services respond very much to the needs of student's individual work. Students can also use scientific literature, methodology materials on writing research papers, final theses and course papers of previous Social Work programme students, which are available at SWD and accumulated by

teachers of the Department. Information on the study programme, study modules, time schedules and deadlines is also available on the University website. Teachers' consultation hours are fixed for the whole term period, they are submitted to the SWD and put up on its notice board and website. The most popular form of consultation is a meeting and direct communication between a teacher and a student.

## ***2.2. Curriculum design***

**The programme structure:** is in line with and is based on Lithuanian higher education legislative requirements. The Programme has been developed within the Lithuanian Qualifications' Framework and accords fully with the European Bologna process requirements. The study Programme's aims, mission and study results are clear, attainable, verifiable and are positively evaluated by the review team. The aims of the Curriculum Design meet the higher educational system requirements in Lithuania and are oriented towards the development of high level Social Work professionals, both academically and in practice. The sustainability of the study programme and its Curriculum is confirmed by the relevance of the programme to the needs of the community and society in general.

**Study Subjects (modules):** The logic of the Masters' degree subjects' strengthens social and personal competence which is significant for professional and scientific activities, such as creativity, initiative, social responsibility and meta-learning. It consists of subjects/modules such as Research Work (1, 2, 3), Methodology of Social Research, Human Rights and Social Justice, combined with Technologies and Community Networks.

Cumulative grading consists of interim course assignments and final exam grades.

**The contents of subjects and study methods:** Curriculum Design methodology is aimed at the improvement of the content of the Masters' studies. The description of the Programme courses and expected learning outcomes throughout the Curriculum Design are clear. Problem-solving skills are mostly developed through the research-oriented study process and practical training. Curriculum Design shows rich possibilities of interaction with different disciplines in the Social Sciences (e.g. sociology, political science, communication sciences, medicine, psychology). The teaching staff who implement the Curriculum are research oriented and highly motivated. They

demonstrate good research activities and involvement in scientific research projects. The teaching staff scientific research work is closely related to the study courses they teach throughout the Curriculum. Practical training and internships are closely related in its content to the theory in the Curriculum. In the implementation of the Curriculum courses individual approach and feedback opportunities are provided for students. The Curriculum content and the awarded qualification highly correspond with the title of the study programme. Curriculum Design should contain a set of courses describing the European Social Agenda in detail as this is relevant to Social work.

The European idea of mutuality through the axiological approach should also be emphasized more.

**The scope of the programme:** a module on caritative social work should be linked to the main categories of the European Social Agenda, including mutuality, solidarity, subsidiarity, social cohesion and caritative cohesion. The interdisciplinary methodological approach would improve the innovative research orientation of the study programme.

**The content of the programme:** the Social Work subjects concentrate on helping people in crisis and in need. The subjects' content offers the possibility of acquiring knowledge and skills to perceive social phenomena in the context of cultural values and society's dynamics. The content gives the clear possibility for the graduate to manage social programmes and projects dedicated to the optimization of the social integration of disabled people. Students would like to have a course on professional speaking added to the curriculum. Graduates are strengthened through significant professional and scientific activities. The review team recognizes the quality of the Programme, but bringing disciplines together with a cross-disciplinary outcome would make for further improvement in the study Programme.

### ***2.3. Teaching staff***

**The teaching staff members from the assessed study programme meet the requirements provided for in legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and in the university requirements.** This is described in the evaluation report (SER p. 12).

**Teachers' qualifications are compliant with intended learning outcomes. Teachers' participation in scientific research complies with their scientific research areas.** The Programme is implemented by a team of 11 professional teachers, of whom 8 teachers have a doctorate (four of them have PhDs in Social Work). In the period under review two teachers defended dissertations in the field of Social Work at Lapland University in Finland. The teachers who have been working at the SWD since its establishment continue working in their chosen research areas. Their research activities are reflected in the teaching modules and are enriched through practical experience. All the teachers have defended doctoral theses in the field of Educational Sciences. This provides an opportunity to update the education aspects in the study process, to find new and innovative ways to enhance student motivation (SER p. 18, Annex 4).

**The Department conducts fundamental and applied scientific research and implements national and international projects.** Teachers are members of many international organizations and government bodies which have prepared significant documents in the field of Social Work. On the initiative of Prof. dr. Elvyra Aciene the Lithuanian Association of Social Work Schools was founded in 2015. She is the President of this association. The research, pedagogy and practice activities carried out at the SWD reveal the research topicality conducted by the Department teachers: *Interdisciplinary focus on social work development in the context of the reinforcement of social welfare*; the sub-themes are the following: *Innovations and professionalization of social work*; *Social policy and reducing social exclusion*; *Social risk groups and quality of life research*. The topicality of the SWD research and practice activities conform with the content of teaching modules and meet the aims and outcomes of the graduate Social Work programme. . All of this information about teachers' qualifications and research activities are presented in the evaluation report and its annexes (SER p. 14, Annexes 3, 4). It is clear to the review team that the teaching staff are close to their teaching areas, are well qualified and have strong links in teaching, pedagogy and research. They are some of the pioneers in this field of social work in Lithuania (Meeting with teaching staff).

**All the teachers implementing the Study Programme have experience of scientific research in the field of social sciences or professional activity in different professional platforms, social work institutions or non-governmental organisations.** This is evidenced by their

participation in a great number of projects that correspond to the fields of scientific interests of each teacher at the SWD. They include *AppSam – a project in the CareSam R&D Network* which is a project that has been initiated by Malmo University (Sweden), is an interdisciplinary project and opens new possibilities in international research collaboration, participation in the EU Commission Grundtvag programme project *PAT: Pet Assisted Therapy. Learning with Them* an award for participation in EPALE, Adult Education Platform for the promotion of activities has been received (Education Exchanges Support Foundation); participating in project, ‘Tackling Demand for Sexual Services of Trafficked Women and Girls – STOP TRAFFICK – HOME’, with partners from Ireland, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Finland and Lithuania; the programme DOLPHIN in cooperation with Dolphin Therapy Centre of Maritime Museum of Lithuania and also an increasing amount of Erasmus+ projects during 2015-2016, (SER p. 14).

SWD belongs to the framework of international cooperation and implements the Erasmus IP projects which provides international experience for lecturers and for students. In 2012 Erasmus IP *Entrepreneurship and Dynamics of Democracy Development in Europe* was implemented at Latvian Christian Academy; in 2014 Erasmus IP *Corporate Social Responsibility* was implemented at Mendel University in Brno (Czech Republic). SWD has a cooperation and academic exchange with the University of Šiauliai (SER p. 15). In the period under review 21 of the Department teachers visited foreign universities for lecturing and 13 visiting teachers came to KU in the context of the Erasmus programme.

The SWD has increased the quality of the study process, research and international profile (scientific publications for 2012-2016 are listed in the Department website). The teachers actively participate in national and international conferences. The SWD also organizes and holds national and international conferences and seminars (for example, *Professionalization of Social Work: Dynamics and Evolution*, was organized in 2013; *Social Dialogue as the Potential of Social Work Professionalization* in 2014). Many publications have been prepared during the period under review: 2 monographs, 4 methodology publications (on critical thinking, innovative methods and organization of practice activities), 1 project study, 1 study book, 1 textbook, 66 scientific publications in reviewed scientific journals (2 of them in ISI indexed publications, 30 of them in international peer-reviewed scientific journals); 50 presentations have been made at scientific conferences (35 among them in international). The University organizes English language courses for different levels of language proficiency. All of this information is presented in the evaluation report and its annexes (SER p. 14, 15; Annexes 3, 4).

**The teaching and research experience of academic staff is sufficient for the attainment of learning outcomes.** They are actively involved in research activity, increase their own professional development and disseminate their research results. The researchers of the SWD review doctoral dissertations, are supervisors for doctoral students, review scientific articles and are the members of editorial boards of prestigious Lithuanian and international scientific journals. They are organizers and participants of international events and actively participate in the activities of KU divisions (Senate, Committee on Ethics, Faculty Scientific Council, Attestation Committees, PhD Committees) on scientific, methodological and administrative matters (SER p. 14).

The active work of the teachers has been evaluated by students and society (in 2017 the magazine *Ratings* has named Prof. dr. E. Aciene of SWD as the most prominent, leading lecturer at KU; in 2016 during the celebration of KU 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the KU Rector awarded Prof. dr. E. Aciene with a Certificate of Appreciation and a Silver Medal for her input in training doctors of science: in recent years the highest number of doctoral students that worked under her supervision defended their doctoral dissertations and became doctors of social sciences (SER p. 14). The teachers' experience of pedagogical, scientific and practical activity were presented in evaluation report and during the visit.

The teachers are part of a good team engaged in research together in a positive atmosphere and environment. The positive institutional culture encourages the development of more projects and collaboration with its social partners. Students and alumni confirmed that teachers are high-level lecturers who teach well and supervise their Masters' theses effectively (Meeting with students and alumni).

**Cohort of academic staff is sufficient, and student-teacher ratio is appropriate.** The majority of teachers (70%) who deliver the courses in the programme are from SWD, while 30% of teachers come from other programmes. Out of all teachers who implement this programme five are professors and six are associate professors. This ratio meets the requirements outlined in *Descriptor of the Field of Social Work which provides that no less than 20% of teachers of MA programmes have to deliver subject-specific modules.* During the recent period, the number of teachers having a doctoral degree at SWD increased which specifies that at least half of the study modules in the Programme have to be taught by recognized scholars. During the period under

review, the qualifications and the appropriate number of the certified teachers have ensured the achievement of intended general and special outcomes that are specified in the study programme. The achievement of study outcomes is guaranteed by the fact that all the SWD teachers have a long-term and versatile quantum of professional competence. The current ratio of teachers and students provides for quality delivery of lectures and seminars, supervision of final theses and the provision of individual consultation.

**The ratio between the academic staff and students is enough to afford teachers the opportunity of dealing with students individually and supporting them reaching their learning outcomes.** All this information is presented in the evaluation report and annexes (SER p. 16) and confirmed by administration staff and teachers during the review meetings.

**The qualifications of the academic staff on the Programme are ensured by applying the University systems of competition and evaluation.** All the candidates for a teacher's position are appointed in accordance with a publicly announced competition. Candidates for teaching positions are assessed by the Commission that is formed by the University Senate. The SWD staff were recruited with reference to the research fields related to the academic modules in the study programme, the links of their scientific competence to applied research, their scientific publications and their academic background. The teachers are appointed for a period of five years, after which they have to complete a further assessment at the Recruitment and Competition Commission. During the assessment, a teacher's pedagogical and research activities are evaluated taking account of their research output (in research journals and participation in national and international scientific events on social work issues), results of student surveys about teachers' abilities to teach a study subject, assessment by the chair and SWD colleagues, as well as the quality of their academic activity (SER p. 13).

The SER (annexes 3, 4) and review meetings indicate that teachers working in the Study Programme have extensive pedagogical, research and practical experience, and are able to convey high-quality knowledge and experience to students, as well as to their networks and their connections with social work. It was confirmed during the review meetings that teachers use the MOODLE system in their teaching, which enhances the opportunity for students to learn. All study material is available in Moodle. Teachers are good supervisors and offer their students individual consultation and advice. All Skype meetings are available for students.

**The academic work of the Programme planned for teachers is in accordance with the principles of the pedagogical workload approved by the Senate for academic and research staff of Klaipeda University.** The distribution of teachers' workload is regulated in the *Description of the teachers' workload for 2016-2017 (2016, KU Senate Resolution No. 11-49)*. The analysis of the workload distribution for SWD teachers has shown that the average workload (hrs/week) of a full-time teacher conforms to *Description* requirements (full-time is 36 hrs/week and consists of:

- 1) contact hours (lectures, seminars, workshops, lab works, internship, exams) – 10-14 hrs;
- 2) methodological work (preparation for classroom work, organization and control of students' independent work) – 10-12 hrs;
- 3) research and/or artistic work – 10-16 hrs).

The hours for methodological work and scientific research activities are distributed by teachers with reference to individual preferences. The individual workloads of SWD teachers as specified in the *Description*, may deviate from the SWD average by no more than 10% depending on teachers' individual results of their academic and methodological output (SER p. 16).

During the review period the workload of full-time teachers fluctuated between 750-800 hrs. This conforms to the *Description* requirements. Currently, the increased number of positions occupied is determined by the stable number of Masters' students and the growing number of foreign students undertaking Bachelor studies (SER p. 17).

The teachers' professional development is discussed at SWD meetings: teachers share their experience gained in study trips, seminars and conferences, as well as annual reports summarising teachers' working experience which are compiled by the teachers and the SWD at the end of each year. The social work competence of the Programme teachers is presented in the teachers' curriculum vitae.

There is a good understanding of research inspired teaching and professional development. The diversity of staff which implements the graduate Programme of Social Work, as well as teacher-subject-specific and methodology competences are in conformity with the international requirements, the Regulations stipulated by Lithuanian Legal Acts and Resolutions of Klaipeda University.



There is an increase in the scientific potential of teachers of the Department of Social Work, long-term pedagogical, wide-range practical and consultative experience; generation balance is maintained, professional academic continuity is ensured.

There is an increase in the scientific research and internationalisation which are strong aspects of teacher competences. The scientific co-operation of teaching staff, pedagogical and practical activities of lecturers is praiseworthy. This enables the study process to connect theory and practice. Formal contact with Lapland University, Finland is also to be commended (Scandinavian model).

The study process is alive and creative, reflecting the changes and challenges of social work.

Active scientific research activities conducted by SWD teachers include the participation in national and international projects, review of doctoral dissertations, supervision of doctoral studies, active participation in the activities of various international organizations. There is evidence of good publications (e.g. annual journal "Tiltai").

Staff are highly qualified, many have PhDs and have a SW background. Department teachers systematically participate in training courses that lead to higher qualifications, prepare reports and present at international conferences, and teach at foreign universities.

There is a good emotional atmosphere and good collaborative relationships between staff, students and social partners.

There is need to increase the attractiveness of the profession and the number of students, to develop supervision services, and to strengthen the status of the social work profession in society through influencing opinion in social networks, media, conducting research, publications, public lectures and conferences. These developments have been taking place since 2016.

Teachers have accumulated valuable scientific and practical experience. It is important, therefore, to share the results in the pursuit of high-quality studies. It is planned to renew the

tradition of methodical thematic seminars which would concentrate on team-work issues and meet new challenges in society.

Teacher participation in research activities should be expanded by inviting foreign teachers to engage in academic and research collaboration.

#### ***2.4. Facilities and learning resources***

***The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality.***

The Master of Social Work study Programme is implemented at the Faculty of Health Sciences. Students have proper conditions for attending shared lectures and completing their individual work tasks. For general and special education disciplines the SWD uses 18 classrooms with suitable equipment such as video projectors, display screens, magnetic boards and free Wi-Fi. The Aula Magna premises are equipped with a conference hall and two large classrooms with teleconferencing equipment. All the premises comply with the hygiene requirements. However, the Faculty environment isn't sufficiently adapted for disabled people even though library facilities are. Creative ways should be found to facilitate this whilst respecting the local planning requirements for preserved buildings.

Klaipeda's University Library is customized for readers with special needs. There is such equipment as a stationary electronic video magnifier, keyboards designed for visually impaired readers and text translators in audio format. The library facilities are customized for disabled people. The construction of the library through a public private partnership is a good example of cooperation with business.

***The teaching and learning equipment (laboratory and computer equipment, consumables) are adequate both in size and quality.***

All the SWD classrooms can seat over 470 students and the Aula Magna premises are fitted for 600 people at any time. There are 4 computerized classrooms in the Faculty each equipped with 10 computers. Students have proper facilities for using a virtual learning environment. An Office

of Social Work Practice and Consulting where students develop their social work practical skills and competencies has been functioning in the Faculty of Health since 2016. The Office is equipped with all the necessary equipment for teaching.

***The higher education institution has adequate arrangements for students' practice*** which relate to the Bachelor of Social Work Programme.

The SWD collaborates closely with different social work institutions in the Klaipeda region. Many Klaipeda's University graduates are working in NGOs, youth centres, hospitals, child care homes, social services centres and the municipality.

Whilst there is not any internship for Masters' students the closeness of the relationships with these bodies, which was confirmed by the social partners during the review meeting, is relevant.

***Teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible.***

The basic materials for the implementation of the Programme are available at the Faculty's Library and in the Martynas Mazvydas reading room. Literature for social work studies is constantly updated with new books and journals. The collection of traditional documents for Social Work studies was supplemented by 2500 units, during 2012-2016. The SWD teachers collaborate with Library staff when ordering new Social Work literature. Students and teachers can access subscribed databases from the KU network and also from home, using the server. Students and staff can also benefit from the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library (eLABa) which owns a registry of Lithuanian scientists' scientific publications. Subscribed databases such as *Academic Search Complete*, *Sae Journals*, *PsycARTICLES*, *SocINDEX with Full-Text*, *Taylor & Francis*, *Wiley Online Library*, *Education Source* are recommended as part of the Programme operation. During the review, however, it became clear that the student use of some of these resources was inadequate as their final theses would have benefitted by referring to more databases and foreign language literature.

## ***2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment***

***Entrance requirements are well-founded, consistent and transparent.*** Students are admitted to the study Programme by a competitive score which consists of the sum of the average grade of the diploma supplement and that for the final thesis. The admission to the Programme is approved by the Senate on the basis of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania documents. The Programme is of 2 years duration for full-time students, it doesn't have any part-time ones. It has 120 ECTS credits. College students can take bridging courses for up to one-year's duration (30 ECTS credits). The analysis of the ratio between the student admission and student graduation numbers has shown that 76% of Master students' successfully complete their studies and graduate (SER p. 21).

***Organization of the study process ensures proper implementation of the programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*** The studies process includes qualitative teaching, invitations to practice placements and interesting assignments. There is personal and institutional motivation. Graduates noted that they always have the possibility of returning to their Alma Mater to discuss any issues and questions. There is regular communication between those from Klaipeda University and other universities and institutions.

***Students are encouraged to take part in scientific, research activities*** by involving them in scientific-practical seminars and the preparation of joint publications with teachers and reports for scientific conferences. Students are involved in research about deinstitutionalization. In the first semester they have a subject on the methodology of social work research. Student start writing their final theses in the first semester.

***Students are provided conditions to take part in mobility programmes.***

There are opportunities for student mobility provided by the University. They can participate in the Erasmus+ mobility programme, but they confirmed at the review meeting that they seldom participate in it due to family and employment reasons.

***The higher education institution ensures proper academic and social support.***

Academic and social support for students is ensured by the University. Students are informed about the study process, scientific literature, information related to seminars and conferences and other necessary details. Students receive grants to support their achievements in academic, scientific and social activities. Students must pay some money for their studies, but state loans are another financial support for paying tuition fee, for accommodation and for studying in foreign countries. Students are highly motivated and feel part of the University.

***The system of assessing student achievements is clear, public and appropriate to assess the learning outcomes.***

The University Statute and Study Regulations (2010) determine how students are assessed for all study-cycles. Different teachers have different student assessment methods but the principles of validity, clarity, impartiality and reliability are observed. Student knowledge is assessed by a cumulative evaluation scheme, but the exam weighting must be at least 50% of the final score.

The type of assessment used varies according to the subject, e.g. social research methods, group work, movie reviews (how they communicate, how they produce information). Students advocated using more reflective assessment. In general, they are satisfied with the different forms of assessment used.

***Professional activities of the majority of programme graduates correspond to the expectations of programme operators and employers.***

A teacher's task is to prepare students to use their acquired knowledge to make changes in society. Alumni state that what is very good about the Programme is that it provides a very wide range of knowledge from which students can choose what they want and need. Students were never left alone when encountering difficult situations, they always had the support necessary and could ask questions and talk through any of their problems.

***The programme corresponds to the state's economic, social, cultural and future development needs.***

The Social Work study Programme was one of the first established in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Its vision is based on the Scandinavian holistic approach to human health, including health care and healthy lifestyle, coherence with the social environment and the quality of life.

The Programme is oriented toward scientific research work and developing professional social workers' competences. The training of social work professionals is related to the needs of the labour market through their studies and research.

*Fair learning environment is ensured* by order of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures *Regarding the codes of ethics at science and educational institutions, their implementation and monitoring recommendations* and by Klaipeda University's Study Regulations. Teachers are advised not to tolerate any unfair learning and not to overstate any exam grade. They should seek to improve the academic atmosphere by providing opportunities for students to optimize their achievements through their course studies.

*Students are provided opportunities to make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures.*

## **2.6. Programme management**

*Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated.*

The main principles of process management and distribution of duties are regulated under the University Statute. Activities of the Faculty are organized by the Faculty Council, which is the topmost self-governance body, the Dean and the Deans' Office. The SWD and the Head of the Department are directly responsible for the Programme implementation. Whilst the University promotes the principle of self-governance the review team is not satisfied that the Programme management and Faculty strategy are sufficiently related. It is important to note, however, that the University's academic strategy ensures compatibility with the Bologna process and that the Senate determines the University quality assurance through its study regulations.

*Data and other information regarding programme implementation are collected and analysed periodically.*

It should be emphasized that regular meetings, i.e. – twice a month, of the Department are intended to discuss the implementation of the Programme. Staff recruitment strategies, the content of internships, collaboration with stakeholders, graduate prospects and other actual Programme management questions are also considered during SWD meetings. The distance-

learning process and management remains problematic and requires further attention and a solution.

***The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme.***

The Social Work study Programme was evaluated by international external assessment in 2010 and as indicated in the SER the SWD accepted the outcome as an opportunity to further upgrade it. The Department and Social Workers' Discussion Club also hold regular discussions on the issues of Programme assessment. The self-assessment, as specified in the SER, is understood as a continuous process that ensures continuous Programme quality monitoring.

***The evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders.***

One aspect of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the Programme quality is ensured by the involvement of stakeholders in quality assessment and the promotion of equal opportunities and tolerance. The role of the Study Programme Committee which comprises academic staff, students and social partners is monitoring and administration update of the Programme and new study modules. It is not, however, the main decision-maker regarding the management of the Programme because responsibility for the study process, assessment and some other aspects of Programme execution lies beyond their remit. Whilst all stakeholders are involved in the Programme management, the SWD's contribution is the largest. The review team was assured by the students that they met, that they have the opportunity to express to the University their opinions and any issues of concern to them.

***The internal quality assurance measures are effective and efficient.***

The SER states that the efficiency of the Programme quality assurance is ensured by the internal self-assessment process i.e. regular feedback, module updates and the professional development of staff. It should be added that a lot of attention is paid to the assessment and development of lecturers' didactic competences. It was emphasized during the review meeting that one of the Programme's self-assessment aspects is the stakeholder feedback from the Social Workers' Discussion Club.

*The information about the study programme is public, relevant and easily accessible.*

Information about the aim and objectives of the Programme, documents that regulate management standards and process, admission procedures and study subjects are publicly available on the University website (<http://ku.lt/>). Information is also provided by teachers, alumni, social partners and students themselves.

## **2.7. Examples of excellence**

**High level of regional cooperation and social partnership.** There is a strong community of teaching specialists, graduates and social partners in and for the region of Western Lithuania. A good emotional atmosphere in KU facilitates good collaborative relationships with business enterprises and the return of graduates to consider issues, the development of joint projects and the pursuit of higher studies. The construction of the library through a public private partnership is a good example of cooperation with business.

**Teaching staff are highly qualified and active in scientific research and international projects and activities.** The Department of Social Work scientific potential is increasing. Teachers have a wide range of practical and consultative experience. Internationalization is also one of the teaching staff's competences and it strengthens sustained academic collaboration between the Department of Social Work and foreign universities such as the University of Lapland (Finland).

**Students are impressed with the good learning and teaching atmosphere, and positive study environment.** They are provided with the opportunity to receive highly qualified counselling on all issue related to their studies.

**The Social Work study programme teachers' initiative** founded the Association of Lithuanian Social Work Schools. Teaching staff actively participate in working groups of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Ministry of Health Care, in the preparation of documents as well as in training programmes of the Lithuanian Social Workers Association and the Association of Lithuanian Social Work Schools.



### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Considering the high level of scientific and practice potential of the Department of Social Work teachers it is recommended that they share this experience to enhance the social work profession as a means of making society stronger.
2. Methodological seminars as an instrument for teachers to update the formulation of the learning outcomes and assessment should be enhanced further.
3. Following the very well adapted library facilities for students with special needs, the Faculty environment requires adaptation to meet the needs of students with a disability.
4. The implementation of a fair learning environment should be promoted not only by the efforts of teachers but also by the contribution of students.
5. Considering that the Programme has been recognised as corresponding to the level of an international study programme, the European idea of mutuality through an axiological approach should be emphasized more. Curriculum design should contain a set of courses describing in detail the European Social Agenda relevant to Social Work.
6. Student mobility is recommended to consolidate the Programme's international level of study.
7. In accordance with the principle of self-governance, as expressed in the self-evaluation report, the Faculty strategy and the Programme's management team and operation should be more closely aligned.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

Klaipeda University currently is the largest centre of science and culture in the Western Lithuania region. The University has a commendable reputation and provides good examples of collaboration with business enterprises and social partners. Students, alumni, teaching staff and the whole academic community are satisfied with the University. This was evident to the review team.

The Master of Social Work Study (MSW) Programme meets the requirements set for University studies and is oriented to second cycle study programme objectives and Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework, based on learning outcomes. The MSW Study Programme was ranked by the magazine *Reitingai* in 2016-2017 as a Programme of European level standard and this Programme is in the list of graduate Programmes recommended for studies. The Programme is linked well to societal and labour market needs, fulfils the University regional mission which is attractive for students who choose to study it.

The Programme title, aim, content and intended learning outcomes are closely interconnected, clear and well-defined. Further coherent implementation of the MSW Study Programme could contribute to the development with other Lithuanian universities of a third-cycle joint-degree doctoral programme. The Association of Lithuanian Social Work Schools was established as a result of the initiative of SWD teachers and represents a good example of cooperation with others higher education institutions.

Curriculum design includes different subjects in the Social Sciences field such as political science, communication and psychology which is designed to develop a wider attitude of students towards the social processes taking place in society.

The wide range of teachers' practical and consultative experience should be shared as a means of strengthening the image of the Social Work profession in society. Teachers are highly motivated and their scientific, project and research activities should be further developed and strengthened. The review team experienced a good atmosphere amongst the teaching staff and graduates. A good relationship with the University is one of the reason why graduates continue to deepen their scientific activities and return to their Alma Mater for further teaching and PhDs studies.

The implementation of the Programme is supported through sufficient material resources including a well-equipped library, accessibility to use well-known electronic databases and well-known social work literature. Library is very well adjusted for students with special needs, however Faculty facilities need to be improved for access by students with a disability.

Student knowledge is assessed by a cumulative evaluation scheme which is based on the principles of validity, clarity, impartiality and reliability. Different teachers have different students' assessment methods but students are always advised of the assessment criteria and know them. Teachers are motivated to uphold a fair learning environment.

Programme management is very effective all the stakeholders are included in the management process with most responsibility resting with the SWD. The Faculty and the Programme would benefit from greater engagement by top management and the highest level of administration. For optimal and comprehensive management assurance, and in accordance with the principle of collegiality, it would be appropriate to allocate more responsibilities to stakeholders who would welcome more involvement. It is clear to the review team that all of the stakeholders are positive about the Programme and want to cooperate with each other in the pursuit of common aims.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Social work* (state code – 6211JX089) at Klaipeda University is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	4
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	4
6.	Programme management	3
	<b>Total:</b>	21

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

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

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

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

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