



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto  
**PROGRAMOS *FILOSOFIJA* (612V50003, ankstesnis –  
61201H102)**  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF *PHILOSOPHY* (612V50003, previous – 61201H102)**  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Vytautas Magnus University

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Studijų programos pavadinimas                        | <b><i>Filosofija</i></b>           |
| Valstybinis kodas                                    | 612V50003 (ankstesnis - 61201H102) |
| Studijų sritis                                       | Humanitariniai mokslai             |
| Studijų kryptis                                      | Filosofija                         |
| Studijų programos rūšis                              | Universitetinės                    |
| Studijų pakopa                                       | Pirmoji                            |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais)                        | Nuolatinės (4)                     |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais                  | 240                                |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Filosofijos bakalauras             |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data                 | <b>1997 gegužės 19</b>             |

## INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

|   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Name of the study programme                         | <b><i>Philosophy</i></b>         |
| State code  | 612V50003 (previous - 61201H102) |
| Study area  | Humanities                       |
| Study field   | Philosophy                       |
| Kind of the study programme                         | University                       |
| Level of studies                                    | First cycle                      |
| Study mode (length in years)                        | Full-time (4)                    |
| Scope of the study programme                        | 240                              |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Bachelor of Philosophy           |
| Date of registration of the study programme         | 19 May, 1997                     |

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The programme being evaluated is the Bachelors in Philosophy at Vytautas Magnus University. The aim of the programme is to educate students in Philosophy at the Bachelors level and to enable them to become specialists in classical and contemporary philosophy. The programme of Philosophy is managed by the Department of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, with input from Faculties of Political Science and Law, the Department of Lithuanian Language, and the Centre for Foreign Languages.

The expert panel met administrators of the Faculty, the authors of the self-assessment report, academic staff, students, and employers. The panel asked questions and received feedback from all of the groups. The self-assessment report provided a suitable basis for the evaluation. The panel members were shown the teaching rooms, computer facilities, and library. The panel would like to thank all involved at VMU for their hospitality and consideration.

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

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

The aims and learning outcomes are clear, well-defined and accessible. The aims are concise and yet comprehensive. The panel were impressed by the way the programme seeks to address different periods within the history of philosophy *and* different areas of philosophy. This balance between the historical issues and contemporary arguments and approaches is very welcome. (There was a worry as to whether the curriculum design actually reflects an equilibrium between these two approaches; this will be discussed below.)

The aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional requirements. Perhaps more could be said in the document about the value of philosophy. There was, however, no real statement of how the programme aims to meet public and employer needs. Perhaps this could be included in future self-assessment documents. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. Finally, the panel felt that name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

#### *Main strengths and weaknesses*

+ Very good balance between history of philosophy and contemporary philosophical subjects.

- No statement of how programme aims to meet public and employer needs.

### *2. Curriculum design*

The panel thought that the Bachelors curriculum achieved a good balance between the philosophical subjects that students take, and the other subjects required by the University. The panel was also impressed by the option that students have to study – at no extra cost – different subjects throughout the institution. The panel thought that the subjects and modules were clearly defined.

The panel did, however, have some worries about the curriculum. One is that the content of the courses ‘The History of Ancient Philosophy’ and ‘The Sources of Ancient Philosophy’ are, if not exactly the same, very similar. As such, there is a worry of some repetition in several subjects. A second, more general worry is that there seems to be too much concentration on or focus on

historical topics. Indeed, even subjects which are not explicitly ‘The History Of...’ subjects, such as ethics and aesthetics, are given a historical treatment. As such, the panel strongly recommends that the Department think about cutting down on the number of historical courses, and introducing more core courses in contemporary topics. It should be noted that feedback from students was overwhelmingly in favour of such a move as well, as the report notes later. Finally, the panel thought that the programme did not reflect the latest achievements in science and technology, and this too is something that the Department might want to think about including when the curriculum is redesigned.

#### ***Main strengths and weaknesses***

- + The subjects and modules are clearly defined.
- + Good balance between the philosophical subjects and the other subjects required by the University.
- Too much concentration on, or focus on historical topics.
- The programme does not reflect the latest achievements in science and technology.

### ***3. Staff***

The study programme is provided by the staff meeting legal requirements, and the qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. The staff are very experienced, and very active in producing research: they have between them published over 120 articles, 6 monographs, and 9 educational books in the last few years. Moreover, the teaching staff of the programme are involved in research that is directly related to the programme of study. (The panel did think that the staff should seek to publish more research with international publishing houses and in international journals, however.) Staff attend international conferences and present research. Staff are also active in the wider academic culture, and very active in society outside of the University.

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes, and staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme. The panel were worried, however, that the workload for staff is rather high, and so had a general worry that high workload will, in the long run, have a negative impact on learning and teaching. The panel thinks that this is something that the Faculty and University needs to keep in mind. Similarly, perhaps some of the staff teach too broad a range of courses; for instance, one person seems to have responsibility for all of the central areas in analytic philosophy.

One weakness was that there was no clear description in the self-assessment document of support structures for professional development, including teaching and research. In feedback from staff the panel discovered that some structures do exist. With regard to research, it was reported that some research funding comes from central foundations rather than the University, but that there were also University-funded research clusters than can provide research opportunities and money. This form of cluster scheme appears to be a form of sabbatical scheme, and it is to be welcomed as a way of providing research time for staff. Nevertheless, the advertising and promotion of such schemes could be improved. Similarly, support for teaching – such as mentoring by other members of staff – should be more prominent.

There are other areas where improvements could be made. The panel had the impression that while staff are very active in large society, some are perhaps not as engaged with the programme. More reflection on teaching methods and teaching technologies would also be good. In addition, 30% of the courses seem to be taught by assistants, rather than professors or doctors, and this struck the panel as rather too high a figure. Finally, the representation of staff at the

evaluation could have been better: only four staff were present, and two of these were from other departments/faculties.

***Main strengths and weaknesses***

- + Staff are very experienced and very research active.
- + Staff involved in wider academic culture and in society beyond University.
- High workload for staff.
- No clear description of formal support structures for staff.
- High percentage of courses taught by assistants.

***4. Facilities and learning resources***

The premises for teaching and learning seem to be suitable and adequate for their purposes. There is sufficient number and availability of lecture rooms and seminar rooms for various kinds of audiences, they are mostly well located, and their quality enables efficient and productive teaching and learning. The facilities are provided with appropriate teaching and presentation equipment, and the computer equipment available is sufficient for the present teaching purposes. The library collections seem to be of good European standard, and students and staff are provided access to the central electronic databases and philosophical publications. The panel did note that electronic subscriptions might be a possible solution if there are periodic shortages of textbooks; and the panel also thought that certain Lithuanian philosophical journals were lacking.

***Main strengths and weaknesses***

- + Premises and equipment are suitable, adequate and sufficient for the purposes of the program.
- + Library collections and electronic databases are appropriate.
- There are periodic shortages of textbooks and lack of certain Lithuanian philosophical journals.

***5. Study process and student assessment***

Student assessment procedures were transparent, and there was good communication between teachers and students, and in particular when it came to teachers' explaining the Aims and Learning Outcomes. Feedback from students indicated that there is good provision of and advice about research and study materials. Students have the possibility to engage in scientific activities, and there are studentships and language classes available. The panel therefore felt that there was good support for students within the Department, and in the University. The student body was impressively active, putting on events such as cinema shows, publishing a philosophy journal. But students did request more practical assistance on writing – for instance, on how to write essays, bibliographies, and the like.

One important area where there could be improvement concerns student mobility and exchange. The department has only a small number of international exchange universities, and the existing contracts could be utilized more efficiently. International cooperation in general, at university level is impressive (236 universities), yet this cooperation does not seem to extend to the BA-program. There is five outgoing but no incoming students mentioned in the SE-report.

***Main strengths and weaknesses***

- + Communication between students and teachers seems to be working and efficient.
- + The student body is active and resourceful.
- More practical assistance on academic writing should be provided.

- Improvements are needed within international cooperation, especially in mobility and exchange.

## **6. Programme management**

Programme management appeared to be fine. There was a clear structure for improving the programme. One weakness was that the process of evaluation and improvement does not seem to involve students and stakeholders, and so perhaps the Department and University could think of ways in which this could be effectively done.

### ***Main strengths and weaknesses***

- + Monitoring of the implementation of the programme is clearly allocated
- + Data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analyzed
- The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are not used enough for the improvement of the programme
- The evaluation and improvement process does not involve enough the students and stakeholders

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

(1) The Department should think of ways in which to improve international activities, especially in exchange and mobility, as part of the program itself but also as a prerequisite for the professional skills of the staff and the teachers.

(2) The Department should think of ways of promoting and advertising support structures for staff, such as sabbatical schemes, mentoring schemes, help with applications for research clusters, and so forth.

(3) There is a need for teaching staff to keep up to date with, and welcome the opportunity to deploy, new teaching methods and technologies. The panel felt that although the teachers in general seem to be very active, they would profit from a thorough reflection of their pedagogical and didactic methods.

#### IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Philosophy* (612V5003, (previous code – 61201H102)) is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.*

| No. | Evaluation Area   | Evaluation Area in Points* |
|-----|---|----------------------------|
| 1.  | Programme aims and learning outcomes  | 3                          |
| 2.  | Curriculum design   | 3                          |
| 3.  | Staff   | 3                          |
| 4.  | Material resources  | 3                          |
| 5.  | Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment) | 3                          |
| 6.  | Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)                             | 3                          |
|     | <b>Total:</b>   | <b>18</b>                  |

\*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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