STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus pedagoginio universiteto

PROGRAMOS *ŠIUOLAIKINĖ FILOSOFINĖ ANTROPOLOGIJA* (621V50003, ankstesnis – 62401H101) VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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EVALUATION REPORT

OF *CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY* (621V50003, previous – 62401H101) STUDY PROGRAMME

at Vilnius Pedagogical University

Grupės vadovas: Team Leader:	Prof. dr. Krister Segerberg
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. dr. Olli Loukola Prof. dr. Tomas Kačerauskas Prof. dr. Anna Estany Dr. Michael Brady Mindaugas Grajauskas

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	***Šiuolaikinė filosofinė antropologija***
Valstybinis kodas	621V50003 (ankstesnis – 62401H101)
Studijų sritis	Humanitariniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Filosofija
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Filosofijos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	

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INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	***Contemporary philosophical anhropology***
State code	621V50003 (previous – 62401H101)
Study area	Humanities
Study field	Philosophy
Kind of the study programme	University
Level of studies	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full – time (2)
Scope of the study programme	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of philosophy
Date of registration of the study programme	

Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

The programme being evaluated is the Masters degree in Contemporary Philosophical Anthropology. The aim of the programme is to train and educate students to a higher level of philosophy, with particular focus on the question 'what is man?' The programme, as well as having this distinctive focus, employs a wide range of philosophical specialisations and paradigms in addressing the central question.

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 of those involved at VPU for their hospitality and consideration.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

Whilst most of the aims and learning outcomes are very good, the panel thought that the first aim of the programme was problematic, in so far as the programme does not provide a professional qualification to become a teacher. The description talks of providing 'students with preparation to teach in a qualified way'; and this might give the impression that a professional qualification is one of the results of the programme. The panel thought that this was potentially misleading, and in any case should be rather clearer. The panel raised the issue of the content of the programme – that is, why it was focused on philosophical anthropology – and in feedback learned that schools in Lithuania have this teaching focus, so there is this connection between the research focus of the masters and teaching. Nevertheless, this does not remove the important question of whether the programme provides a teaching qualification.

The panel thought that the description of the programme as leading to a research masters was clear and convincing. Nevertheless, the panel has a worry that the aims might be too broad, including professional competence for teaching, research training, preparing for the doctorate, etc. This broad focus might be a preparation for very many subjects in the humanities. As such, perhaps the Department might think about whether the programme aims could be defined more narrowly – perhaps towards the professional competences.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market, especially in so far as the programme aims to prepare students to be teachings in philosophy. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered – although see the first paragraph above for worries concerning 'qualifications.'

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and qualifications are compatible with each other – again, subject to the panels concerns about the lack of a professional teaching qualification at the end of the programme.

Having said this, the programme has obvious strengths: the teachers on the programme are also authors of school course books and teaching aids, and have experience and expertise in teaching at both high school and university level, so this provides a good grounding in philosophical pedagogy. There is a strong and valuable connection with work outside of the University, and

not just with teachers and teaching; the distinctive aim of the programme, and its link with the content of philosophy as taught in high schools and gymnasiums, is also very welcome.

In addition to the worries raised above, however, the panel would like to add that the person responsible for the programme and its content was available to the team only in one meeting and only for a short period of time. This was regrettable, given the central role that this person plays in the shape, content and delivery of the programme.

Main strengths and weaknesses
+ The programme design reflects expertise gained from teaching at high school.
- No professional teaching qualification at the end of programme.
- Aims of programme might be too broad.

2. Curriculum design

In general the curriculum was good. However, the panel thought that it was not entirely clear how elective studies are comprised. In addition, there was a lack of courses on scientific anthropology, in the sense of anthropology as a social science, and this might be of concern. Finally, the panel thought that the programme might be too narrowly focused on postmodern anthropology; as such, it does not 'reflect the latest achievements' in anthropology. After delivering the preliminary report, the panel received a response from VPU, and we are encouraged by the plan to include a course in Philosophy of Mind here, as a step to broaden and update the programme.

Main strengths and weaknesses
+ The subjects and modules are clearly defined.
- There is a lack of courses on scientific anthropology.
- The programme might be too narrowly focused on postmodern anthropology.

3. Staff

The study programme is provided by staff meeting legal requirements, and the qualifications of the teaching staff are more than adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Members of staff have considerable experience and expertise in teaching, and in writing and publishing course texts, teaching aids, and the like, which are widely used in high schools and gymnasiums. The staff on the MA are research active and have a good publication record. Staff are active internationally, attending conferences, and are involved in national education programmes. They are also valued as external experts and on editorial boards.

The number of teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes, although there is a worry that staff have too high a workload. If this persists as a long-term problem, then it will have a negative impact on learning and teaching. Having said that, turnover of staff for the MA is low.

The university ensures some provision for the professional development of teaching staff. Staff are encouraged to present papers and attend international conferences, and to publish their own research and materials directly relevant to teaching in high schools. However, the panel did think that there ought to be more in the way of formal structures for professional development, such as sabbatical leave schemes, mentoring schemes, and the like. Perhaps the Department and University as a whole might like to think about how best to implement this.

Although the staff involved in the programme are active in research in many areas of philosophy, there did not seem to be too much focus in the staff research profile on the topic of the MA,

namely 'what is man?' or 'what is a human being?' Might there be a closer link between the research publications of the staff and this particular topic, to warrant the focus?

Main strengths and weaknesses
+ Staff on programme are authors of teaching texts and aids.
+ Staff are very active in research, and very experienced in teaching.
- University does not provide enough formal structures for professional development.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises for studies seem to be suitable and adequate for their purposes. The students seem satisfied with the spaces and arrangements on offer. There is sufficient number 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 all the present teaching purposes. The library is impressive and has spaces reserved for various kinds of literary activities. Its collections seem to be of good European standard, and the students and staff are provided access to all the central electronic databases and philosophical publications.

Main strengths and weaknesses
+ The premises, facilities and equipment are suitable and sufficient for the purposes of the program
+ The library collections and electronic databases are adequate, and the library spaces are functional.

5. Study process and student assessment

There was very good feedback from meetings with students and graduates about the high quality of teaching, and of the student experience in general, at VPU. The issue raised in §1 about the professional qualification would seem to be relevant to the process and outcome of study, however. In addition, the panel thought that there could be more clarity regarding the requirements and/or personal/academic profile for accepting students on to the MA programme.

An important point of improvement concerns the student mobility and exchange. In the SE-report there is no record of any international exchanges to have taken place within the MA-program.

Main strengths and weaknesses
+ The program has a great asset in the support of its employers, graduates and students.
- Issues within student intake, study process and assessment could be clarified and made more transparent if the question of professional qualification, addressed in §1 above, could be settled.
- Improvements are needed within international mobility and exchange.

6. Programme management

In the meeting with administrators the panel were told that the programme is operating under the requirements and demands of market competition. The panel think that this is a potential worry, and would like the University to think about the possible effects this might have on the teaching and learning experience, and on the skills to be provided for the students. The panel also thought

that students and stakeholders might be more involved in the process of reviewing and improving the programme.

Main strengths and weaknesses

\+ Monitoring of the implementation of the programme is clearly allocated.

\+ Data on the implementation of the programme is regularly collected and analyzed.

\+ Good external links with employers

\- The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are not used enough for the improvement of the programme.

\- The changes of the programme are not enough motivated.

\- The evaluation and improvement process does not involve enough the students and stakeholders.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) The main recommendation the panel wishes to make is that the Department and University think carefully about the description of the programme, in light of the fact that it does not lead to or result in a professional qualification. The response from VPU concentrated in particular on this recommendation, and therefore a clarification is in order here. The main worry of the panel is the following: What is the status of students coming from outside of VPU wanting to study MA? The programme promises them partial competences in teaching but does not provide them with professional qualification at the end of the MA. For the students who have acquired it as part of their BA-degree in VPU, this naturally poses no problem.

(2) The Department should think about how to improve student mobility and exchange.

(3) The Department should provide clear and detailed information on formal structures for staff support and development.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Contemporary philosophical anthropology*. (state code – 621V50003; previous code – 62401H101)) 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	4
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	**19**

*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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