



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus universiteto  
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "EUROPOS EKONOMINĖS STUDIJOS"**  
*(valstybinis kodas – 621L60006 (6211JX016))*  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF "EUROPEAN ECONOMIC STUDIES"**  
*(state code – 621L60006 (6211JX016))*  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Vilnius University

**Review' team:**

1. **Prof. dr. Tiiu Paas (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Prof. dr. Jose Maria Gil Roig,** *academic,*
3. **Prof. dr. Rohit Sonika,** *academic,*
4. **Mrs Vilija Jankauskienė,** *representative of social partners'*
5. **Mr Martynas Rekštys,** *students' representative.*

**Evaluation coordinator -**

*Ms Aleksandra Tomaševskaja*

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Report language – English

## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Europos ekonominės studijos</i>
Valstybinis kodas	6211JX016 (621L60006)
Studijų krypčių grupė	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Ekonomika (J01)
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė, 1,5 metai
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Socialinių mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	ĮSAK-225, 2002-06-14

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## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>European Economic Studies</i>
State code	6211JX016 (621L60006)
Group of study field	Social sciences
Study field	Economics (J01)
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time, 1,5 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	90 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master in Economics (since 2017 admission, Master of Social Sciences)
Date of registration of the study programme	ĮSAK-225, 14 <sup>th</sup> June, 2002

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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 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. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	Protocols of administrative meetings regarding study programmes and their changes.
2	List of thesis topics.

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

Vilnius University (hereinafter: VU), founded in 1579, is the oldest and largest institution of higher education in Lithuania. The University comprises 19 core academic units: 11 faculties, six institutes (with two of them of the faculty status), three research and study centres, and eight core non-academic units. The University implements study programmes of three study cycles in the

areas of the humanities, social, physical, biomedical, and technological sciences; the total number of undergraduate (bachelor's) study programmes is 76, and the number of graduate (master's) and integrated study programmes is 106. Doctoral students may study in almost 30 areas of science, and residents in more than 50 study programmes.

The Faculty of Economics (EF) was set up in 1940. The EF operates in compliance with the Statute of Vilnius University and is administered by the Council and the Dean. Currently, the EF has 9 Departments: those of Accounting and Auditing, Economic Informatics, Economic Policy, Finance, Qualitative Methods and Modelling, Marketing, Theoretical Economics, and Management, as well as the Centre of Economic Expertise and the Lab of Economic Information which carries out research and implements studies in respective fields.

The EF implements three first-cycle study programmes, as well as 17 second-cycle study programmes. The EF also implements doctoral studies in two fields: Economics (04S) and Management and Administration (03S).

Current programme has been established on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2002. This programme underwent last evaluation in 2013 It had received an evaluation of 6 years without any conditions. This evaluation report is based on the self-evaluation report (SER), prepared by the self-evaluation group, and backed up by information gathered from the meetings the expert team had with self-evaluation group, teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners.

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

The review team was completed according *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 4<sup>th</sup> of October.

1. **Prof. Tiiu Paas (team leader)**, *professor, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Tartu, Estonia.*
2. **Prof. Jose Maria Gil Roig**, *professor, Technical University of Catalonia, Spain and director, Centre for Research in Agro-food and Development Economics UPC-IRTA (CREDA).*
3. **Prof. dr. Rohit Sonika**, *visiting professor, Aalto University, Finland.*
4. **Dr. Vilija Jankauskienė**, *Lead of business development at UAB "Palink", Lithuania.*
5. **Mr Martynas Rekštys**, *student of ISM University Management And Economics, Economics and politics bachelor study programme.*

## **II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS**

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

The final aim of this Master is to prepare future professionals that could develop their professional career, and can work “in an academic or research field, continue in the doctoral studies of Economics or work in the EU institutions; governmental institutions participating in the EU institutional activities; municipalities implementing European integration projects; business companies developing and implementing European development projects; and consulting companies developing the EU support programmes” (SER). Almost all students are already working in the public or the private sector while studying. Teaching only takes place during evenings of workdays, starting from 17. The programme aims and learning outcomes are linked to the mission and vision of the Faculty and, from an academic perspective, are generally in harmony with the focus of the programme. The anticipated learning outcomes are geared towards the development of six competencies: three of which refer to general skills, with the remaining three targeted towards professional development in the field of Economic Policy. Each generic and specific study programme’s competency has two learning outcomes, thereby leading to the identification of 12 learning outcomes for the entire programme. Additionally, study subjects/modules have their own associated individual learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are publicly available and have been defined in compliance with legal framework and regulations. May be for a three-semester programme, the list of learning outcomes could be seen as too large. On the contrary, the review panel believes that in a programme like this, which contains “European economics” in the title, a learning outcome related to internationalization is a must. Students should be able to work in a more international environment with internships in European institutions.

It appears that the learning outcomes are well understood, particularly by academic staff. The expert commission noticed during the meeting that students do not seem to understand the concept of learning outcomes, and their apparent lack of awareness regarding the meaning and relevance of learning outcomes suggests a communication deficit that should be addressed as a priority. The review panel gathered from the meetings that teachers use the first lecture to explain the content of their courses and how students are going to be evaluated. However, the review team believes that they should establish a clearly identifiable link between examinations/assignment tests/projects and specific learning outcomes. This would help students appreciate the importance of the study programme in this regard to the fuller extend. Relying on the conversation with current students, it is evident that these links are not always clearly established and students do not fully understand the relations between expected learning outcome and the content of the programme.

Finally, learning outcomes are periodically revised by the SPC (Study programme committee). However, there is not any evidence on how this revision is done and what changes have been introduced. In the future, the SPC should introduce a structural approach to the meetings, in which there would be schedules – this would make decisions on learning outcomes trackable. Even though the list of changes has been presented to the review panel, it was not clear what was the source of the issues raised, and if the implementation of the remedies has been successful.

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

The scope of the Study Programme Economics makes up 90 credits. In that sense the programme structure is in line with the legislative requirements offering amount of credits that is necessary for obtaining a Master's degree (according to the regulations, the scope of credits should be between 90-120). In the documentation provided to the external panel, it was explicitly mentioned that the Curriculum has been shortened from 120 to 90 ECTS to accommodate to the “demands of the labour market and the wishes of the applicants, as well as the experience of graduate programmes implemented abroad. Due to the shorter duration of studies, students can earlier enter the labour market with the acquired qualification and have more possibilities to compete in it”. The review panel has difficulties understanding the logic of this reasoning, as the most important issue is the quality of the programme and the acquired skills by students and not its duration.

The curriculum is structured to 3 semesters. Each semester consists of 30 ECTS from which 25 come from compulsory courses and one course is chosen by students from a choice set. The review panel believes from the documents provided, that the number of choices for taking several courses is large. However, students and alumni showed that the number of real choices was significantly reduced (may be because the number of students was too small). Therefore, review panel finds that documentation and reality does not match. On the other side, the review panel recommends informing students about possibilities of elective courses.

Although the documentation provides a description of the logic of the programme, this review panel wants to raise some concerns about the structure of the programme that the SPC should consider in the future. There is a lack of courses on sound economic and quantitative methods background, which seem to be necessary to carry out any policy analysis. We strongly suggest that the first semester should be addressed to upgrade the knowledge students have from their Bachelor. Intermediate microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics could be the core

for this first semester. Those topics are not new for the EF as they are part of specific courses taught in other Masters, like in the Master on Economic Analysis.

EU Economic policy analysis requires a good understanding of analytical tools. However, in the light of the programme, the external panel believes that the learning outcome 4.1 (*The ability to choose and apply qualitative and quantitative research methods for the conducting of economic research and for problem solution, SER*) is difficult to achieve. The only course specifically addressed to quantitative methods is an elective course in the first semester, which does not seem to be enough. The content of Thesis project I and II does not consider upgraded analytical tools. In many cases, students in the Master Thesis use some tools that have been studied during the Bachelor (time series analysis). In addition, in cases when they use new analytical tools, the students recognized that it takes a huge effort to understand them as they were not covered in the courses.

In some cases, the differentiation between compulsory and elective courses seems a bit arbitrary. For instance, Financial and Managing Accounting or Project Management are compulsory while EU Transport Policy or the CAP are electives. Same confusion applies to some EU policies – they are taught as compulsory or electives, with no justification provided. The SPC could re-think a bit about the structure of the programme. In review panel's opinion, elective courses should provide students any specialization taking into account their future perspectives. As for example, there should be electives designed specifically for people who are looking into deepening their knowledge in EU economic policies or banking. Finally, the external panel has observed that one third of the programme of this master is coincident with the Master on Economic Policy.

In some courses, the content is very ambitious with 10 to 15 topics. In these courses the objectives are optimistic and the learning outcomes are ambitious in the context of the time allocated for their achievement. It can be confirmed that the content of subjects/modules is appropriate for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, but there is insufficient time to allow for a proper student understanding of the theoretical underpinning and its integration with the practical application of the acquired learning. The hours of self-directed study are also somewhat unrealistic, in view of students' commitments and working activity.

In order to achieve the purpose of the programme, in terms of learning outcomes and associated competencies, various teaching/learning methods (as specified in the documents provided and in our conversation with the teaching staff) have been deployed and refined. Such methods are generally appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. However, the review of the Final Master Theses by the panel found evidence of a theoretical deficit (e.g. too few citations from international academic papers), as well as references to non-scholarly

publications. Such final theses are the main instrument providing for a proper integration of theory and practice. On the basis of the sample assessed, the overall quality of student work is open to improvement.

In general, the procedure for the Master Thesis is adequate, although it is hard to think that one student in the first semester has a clear idea about the topic they are interested in. In any case, students are happy with this structure in order to finish the Master Thesis in 3 semesters. However, the panel thinks that even keeping the structure of three courses of 10 ECTS each, the content of courses could be modified. Currently, in the first semester, students choose the topic (normally from those offered by the teaching staff), read the theory (or the current situation of a specified policy at Lithuania, the EU or at any other country) and write this part of the thesis. In the second semester, the student looks for data, applies the research method and writes the methodology. During the last semester, the student obtains the results and completes the writing of the master thesis. Although this structure allows the students to finish the final thesis in 3 semesters, this panel thinks that this system does not contribute to development of good research skills, as mentioned above.

The first semester should be allocated to teaching how to write an academic paper: the title, the abstract, the introduction, the literature review, the methodological framework, the discussion of results, the conclusions and the list of references. Students should be provided with a number of examples and make some exercises. Then, the students should choose the topic (ideally related to their current work or interest) and should write why they have chosen this topic, why it is relevant and other information. During the second semester, the Thesis Project course should be addressed to carry out the literature review (based on academic papers published in high impact journals): how the student's topic has been tackled in the past literature and what kind of methodological frameworks have been used (pros and cons). At the end of the second semester, the student should deliver a Master Research Plan, including the literature review and the methodological framework chosen. The last semester should be allocated to estimate the model and to write the results and conclusions.

Taking into account the nature of the study programme and the main title, the internalization of the program is one of its main weaknesses. Similar masters in other EU countries are entirely taught in English. In this case, the number of courses in English should increase substantially. Another suggestion would be to include a working visit to EU institutions with some potential internships for full time students, which could be attracted in the future (this issue will be discussed in Sections 2.5 and 2.6).

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

The staff recruitment process is well documented and regulated. The institution acknowledges the difficulty being experienced in recruiting and retaining permanent staff in the absence of financial incentives to remain. It is understood that the government does not allow the provision of any such incentive. All members of the academic staff team have the necessary qualifications and experience for a second cycle type of studies. It is interesting to note that all except one of the teaching staff hold a PhD.

The number of lecturers is more than adequate and the fields of specialization cover the full range of teaching topics along the three teaching semesters. A very positive aspect is the staff involvement in different trainings and courses for staff's professional development. VU is doing a great job in improving its staff's teaching and research skills. However, the implementation of new teaching tools as the Moodle platform is far from being generalized. Email, teachers own web sites and Moodle are the main tools to communicate with students. As mentioned before, the generalization of the Moodle and all its potential applications should be an issue in the next period. In any case, students, although prefer Moodle, are happy with the use of any of the tools mentioned above.

There is also a good equilibrium between experienced and younger researchers although research productivity levels are unequally distributed in favour of the younger. Additionally, there is a good combination of permanent and part-time staff. The programme is also quite flexible to invite employers or social partners as lecturers for specific topics.

In the context of teaching and learning methodologies, the practice of using Lithuanian case studies is good practice. In general, most of the teachers use this approach and students declared to be satisfied with it. It is advisable to use not only Lithuanian, but also international cases to broaden the scope of the students. In any case, the use of case studies is useful when the students have enough theoretical skills, which should be enforced during the first semester. The problem-solving approach used in case studies should be extended into all practical subject areas and implemented when the student is involved in preparing course assignments. Finally, this practice should be taking into account in the final evaluation of the courses. Teachers should also focus on the enhancement of students' evaluative skills largely, based upon analysis, creativity, reflection, and the systematic consideration of alternative approaches to problem solving and decision-making.

While the number of teachers taking up internships is increasing, and more opportunities for practice abroad are becoming available each year, there is still a deficit in the quality of research work undertaken by members of the academic staff team. Staff publications and the participation of teachers in conferences (including the presentation of scientific papers) are adequate. However,

there is a deficit of quality research, which, on the other hand, is translated into the average quality of the final master theses. The objective for the next period should be to increase the quality and the internationalization by 1) increasing the papers published in journal with high impact factor (Thomson Reuters ISI or SCOPUS); 2) increasing the number of papers with international co-authors; and 3) Increasing the participation in international projects (at least in international proposals such as ERANET or H2020).

Amongst the positive features are the ratio of teachers to students, the age distribution of teachers, the practical skills and experience, which many members of academic staff have amassed over the years. Stronger professional cooperation and collaboration between programme staff and social partners is another area where potential for improvement can be identified.

International mobility is still a due. Currently is quite low and in all cases it only covers a short period (weeks). Efforts should be addressed to allow teachers for longer research stays in foreign countries. The EF should be more active in advertising financial possibilities. Teachers should contact researchers from other countries working in similar topics to explore possibilities to be accepted as visiting scholars.

Notwithstanding the scope for improvements identified in this report, it can be stated from the evidence available that staff qualifications, knowledge and skills are generally adequate to ensure the attainment of programme aims and learning outcomes.

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

The University and the faculty of Economics provide an appropriate infrastructure to aid the academic learning process and enable students to develop relevant practical skills. Classrooms and laboratories are well equipped, while hardware and software are continuously updated and upgraded. The use of the Moodle virtual learning environment by both full-time and part-time students is to be welcomed. However, it is apparent that the system needs further development, with extra study material added for the benefit of students. The somewhat limited current use of the platform suggests the necessity for a plan to encourage more teachers to become involved in the Moodle system.

The library consists of a central facility to which all students have access. It is a modern building opened 24 hours the 7 days of the week. The library is quite well equipped in textbooks with many copies of the suggested books in the reference lists of the different courses. Moreover, the library has bought all the relevant databases in the economics field (EBSCO, ECONLIT, etc). Students are well aware of such facilities and use them. Each year, a material resource assessment is carried out for the purpose of reviewing learning resources and publications. However, the library

has only SPSS statistics software programme available, which is not critically viewed by the review panel.

The faculty also has some of the most relevant statistical software, mainly, R, SPSS and Eviews available for the students. However, as meetings with students and alumni showed, there is no common software to be used. The election of the software heavily depends on the teacher. There is not any homogenous decision across departments. Teachers could try to homogenize the use of a unique software, available for use in the different courses in the future. As R is available, this could be the software used as it is free and students could download it in their computers.

Access to economic data is relevant in this master. In our visit to the library and in our meeting with social partners, we have checked that there is a good access to Lithuanian data (some agreement with the Ministry of Finance and the bank of Lithuania exist for this purpose). Access to EU data is also possible.

The SER report, supported by information gathered and observations made while visiting the University, confirms that the facilities and learning resources available for the programme are great for achieving the programme goals and learning outcomes and easily accessible. As it was aforementioned, the only criticism would be to homogenize the choice of software packages.

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

The admission requirements are clear, well-founded, publicly available and in accordance with legal requirements. The number of students has significantly decreased from 2012 to 2015 (from 19 to 5 students). The number of registered students arrived at a minimum of 5 students, the lowest over the analysed period. This means a 75% reduction in the number of registered students from the previous year. The situation in 2017 has hardly improved as during the staff meeting, the external panel was informed that the number of new incoming students was 8. The reduction of the number of registered students is much higher than in the cases of VU (32%) and the EF (17%). The SER does not provide a convincing explanation for this drop.

The factors responsible for this situation are worthy of formal identification and analysis by Study Programme Committee (SPC). It is important to know if the last increase shows a changing trend or it is only an exception to the declining rate between 2012 and 2015. Demographic trends are not the only responsible for such decrease. Maybe the programme has lost some attractiveness for part-time students (students working while studying) in comparison to other masters taught in the EF which has a similar programme, like the master in Economic Policy; maybe there are better programs outside VU and these reasons will remain unclear until they are going to be addressed. The staff also suggested that the number of students has been reduced, as there are fewer incentives

to work in the public sector because salaries are not very competitive. In any case, a more detailed research about the potential demand for this Master should be undertaken.

The student attrition rate has remained constant over the last 5 years around 20-22%, with the exception of 2013 (7.7%). What can be observed in the last year is that the master has been able to attract fewer but better prepared students. Competitive scores for EES students in 2016 were significantly higher than the Faculty average.

During the study process, various modern teaching and learning methods are deployed. The staff provided individual examples during the meeting, although not in all courses were possible. Students appreciate the use of case studies as they provide a more practical orientation. The number of contacting hours in each course is 48 hours and there is a significant amount of self-study. The homework could be better guided and explained in the course description at the beginning of the semester.

However, the range of assessment tools and techniques appears contradictory with the teaching tools and the case study approach followed by the teachers. In most of the courses, the exam accounts for 70-80% of the final grade. Further integration of programme learning outcomes with the course content and assessment methods is required. The outcome would be a richer learning experience for students arising from their participation in a programme with a more-focused orientation.

The internalization of the programme is very low. Most students do not have an incentive to leave the programme to spend a semester in a foreign country as they are working. A long stay would generate the loss of their jobs. During the meeting, employers also declared a low availability to allow students to go abroad. Staff mobility is also low and, in many cases, the length of the stay is about one week. The participation of foreign guest teachers is minimal. However, in a master on European Economic studies, the degree of internationalization should be higher to provide students a more global international perspective.

The final outcome of the master is the Master Thesis. We have arisen some issues in section 2.2. In general, students are quite happy with the structure of the Master Thesis in three semesters. However, some alumni recognized that they have difficulties to deal with the topic due to the lack of knowledge about research methods. This panel thinks that the structure in three semesters could be maintained. However, the work in each semester should be changed, as it was mentioned before. Students should work with real articles to analyse some cues about how to write the different parts of the academic paper. During the first semester, students should choose their topic, which, to a certain extent, should be related to their professional activity. The review panel encourages that the students should choose the topic and justify why they have chosen it. The second semester should

be allocated to the literature review (how other people have tackled the same topic) and the selection of the appropriate research tool, as well as to collect the needed and available data. At the end of the second semester, students should deliver the research plan for their thesis. During the final semester, students have to estimate the models and to write the results.

This panel has revised some of the Master Thesis. In all cases, the thesis' structure corresponds with the work done in each semester, which is not the proper way to present a research work. The literature review is relatively poor and, with few exceptions, the number of cited academic papers in scientific journals is very limited. The most used tools are linear regressions and time series models. All of them are written in Lithuanian and the English abstract is not very informative. The panel suggest including an extended executive summary in English. Finally, it does not seem that the students have properly justified why the topic of their Master Thesis is important.

As mentioned above, it is evident that students are aware of, but are not using all possibilities that the library offers to them, because in most examples of course work seen by the panel there are limited references to scientific journals or papers. Staff should encourage students to use these resources more effectively, and reward such efforts by the allocation of higher marks in examinations and assessment tests.

While the SPC welcomes feedback on all aspects of the programme, students had difficulty in identifying for the panel any changes, which might have been implemented as a result of requests or suggestions from them.

Employers value EES students and think that the programme should continue. The competition is going to be harder but some promotion to attract new potential students is needed.

Finally, VU provides students quite good social support and adequately facilitates students non-academic activities as arts, sports and other.

## ***2.6. Programme management***

After reading the documentation provided, it appears that responsibilities for decision-making and the monitoring of programme implementation have been allocated clearly within the overall VU management system. The quality assurance of the EES Master is adequately monitored by the VU regulation. The programme follows the criteria settled down for the whole University. VU periodically carries out the monitoring, and evaluation of all study programmes. The quality is assured through internal and external programme evaluation. In the case of Lithuania, the external evaluation means an international committee, while in many other countries, this internationalization is absent. In addition to the VU regulations, some of the specific rules and

procedures exist at the Faculty level which apply to all programmes (the Study Programme Committee and the Faculty Council).

Internally, the BE Master is managed by the Study Programme Committee which is formed by different categories of the teaching staff, plus one students' representative. It is stated by the Self-evaluation Group that feedback information and data on the implementation of the programme is collected regularly and analysed by the SPC. Procedures are clearly explained in the SER. The panel was not made aware regarding what has changed after the analysis of this feedback (measures adopted in case of students' low performance, actions adopted from feedback from students' surveys, actions to improve the quality of applicants, changes in the programme, etc.). Consequently, it could not be concluded formally that sufficient evidence exists to confirm a methodical and systematic approach to the management of the outcomes of internal and external reviews. No information is provided about the regularity of the SPC meets. Stakeholders are also involved in the SPC, but the SER does not specify their role and to what extent effectively contributes to the programme development. Social partners declared that relationships are mostly informal.

The SER only provides very limited information about student's assessment of the programme. Overall scores from the EES recent graduates' survey are provided for the last three years (2014-16). In general, in most of the items scores are a bit lower than all masters averages (in all of them in 2016). Second, in most of the items, at least in the most relevant related to the quality of the programme, the scores have decreased between 2014 and 2016. However, the SER does not provide any information about potential reasons and if some measures were adopted. No information is provided about the results from surveys carried out at the end of each semester on how students value the different courses. More detailed results should be included in an appendix.

Finally, this review panel is a bit critical on how the SER provided to them has been elaborated. The number of students has been decreased significantly during the last years, which opens a question mark about the future sustainability of the programme. In the SER, the Study Programme Committee merely refers to demographic trends to explain the decrease in the number of students, which in opinion of this review panel, only marginally explains the current situation.

The external panel strongly suggests that, in the near future, the SPC should undertake a deeper investigation about the future demand for this programme. From our meetings with students and stakeholders it is evident that this programme does not provide different skills and learning outcomes than those provided in other masters at the EF. More precisely, the master in Economic policy share a significant number of courses with the EES. This master could be re-formulated as a specialization of the master in Economic policy, as an example. There are other potential

alternatives such as to re-formulate the content of the programme by 1) incorporating more courses in English and on quantitative tools to target it to full time students trying also to attract some international students; 2) incorporating internships in EU institutions; 3) promoting exchanges with similar programmes in other countries and other. Yet providing suggestions is out of the scope of this evaluation. It is the SPC, which should consider this issue and adopt the required measures to guarantee the future sustainability of this programme.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS\***

1. The SPC should undertake a deep investigation about the causes of the decreasing number of registered students in this programme and adopt the needed measures to guarantee the future sustainability of this Master.
2. The external panel, with the information provided, suggests that this Programme should be re-formulated as a specialization of the master in Economic Policy, which has been assessed in the same session. Other alternatives may exist, but more information about the future potential demand is needed, as well as a prospective study about similar programmes in other countries.
3. An expanded involvement in research and scientific activities is highly desirable amongst members of academic staff. Moreover, teaching staff are advised to adopt a more critical approach to student work, which does not contain evidence of analysis, synthesis and a review of alternative approaches to problem solving and decision-making.
4. If this programme is maintained, the external panel would recommend that a re-design of the curriculum. The first semester should be addressed to upgrade the background knowledge students have from their Bachelor. Intermediate microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics could be the core for this first semester.
5. Further integration of programme learning outcomes with the course content and assessment methods is required. The outcome would be a richer learning experience for students arising from their participation in a programme with a more-focused orientation.
6. The review panel believes that the process of writing a thesis can be improved. The more specific allocation of duties and processes would improve the quality of theses.
7. Although students know the library and online resources related to academic journals, it is evident, from Master Theses, that they are not using them. Staff could encourage students to use these resources more effectively, and reward such efforts by the allocation of higher marks in examinations and assessment tests.
8. Activities from the SPC could be better formalized. Minutes from each meeting should be made available at Faculty and University levels with the inclusion of participants and agenda. Actions agreed and timing should be included. Involvement of social partners could become more formal.

## **IV. SUMMARY**

### **Programme aims and learning outcomes**

The general aim on the programme and the expected learning outcomes are clearly settled. Learning outcomes are publicly available and they defined in compliance with the legal framework and regulations. However, the review panel noticed that students do not always fully understand the relations between the expected learning outcomes and the content of studies. Additional activities for the improving of current situation are necessary. Learning outcomes are regularly discussed and revised by the programme committee. However, there is lack of clear system of how the revision of the learning outcomes reflects in the implementation and development of the study programme. Some improvements in that field are necessary considering also that students educational background is not homogenous and the competition for attracting students to the programmes is increasing.

### **Curriculum design**

The structure of the programme is in line with legislative requirements. However, taking into account the aims and learning outcomes of the programme, the review panel detected a lack of courses on sound economic and quantitative methods background. Intermediate microeconomics, macroeconomics and econometrics should be the core for the first semester. The insufficient provision of analytical tools seems to have created difficulties and/or disincentives for students to undertake the research of sufficient level in their master theses. On the basis of the sample of master theses assessed, the overall quality of student work is open to improvement. In general, the procedure for the Master Thesis is adequate and students are happy with this structure. However, the panel thinks that even keeping the structure of three courses of 10 ECTS each, the content of courses should be modified.

What appears to be a wide range of elective subjects, sometimes end up with a reduced number of real elective choices. Furthermore, the justification for a course to be compulsory or elective should be better justified. Elective courses should provide students any specialization taking into account their future perspectives. The external panel has observed that one third of the programme of this master is coincident with the Master on Economic Policy. Finally, taking into account the nature of the study programme and the main title, the internalization of the program is one of its main weaknesses.

### **Staff**

The teaching staff meets all legal requirements for the second cycle studies. They are experienced and possess necessary qualifications to ensure a proper implementation of the programme. In fact, the programme operates with more than adequate number of academic staff, especially after

reducing its scope to three semesters. A more unified way of communicating with students is suggested, although it does not produce any harm for the learning study process. The positive aspect is a balance between young and experienced member staff, although the focus on research is a little bit uneven. Case studies are very welcomed teaching method, although EES programme should put more emphasis on international problems supplementing the domestic focus. To enhance evaluative skills of students, evaluation of the experience gained in more practical subjects should include greater variety of assignments rather than focusing on exams. VU creates sufficient preconditions for the successful development of professional and academic skills of professors, however, additional efforts should be made in enhancing international cooperation and mobility of the teaching staff.

### **Facilities and learning resources**

The University and the Faculty of Economics provide an appropriate infrastructure for the development and implementation of the Economic Policy programme. Classrooms and laboratories are well equipped, while hardware and software are continuously updated and upgraded. The faculty makes available to students some of the most relevant statistical software, mainly, R, SPSS and Eviews. The library consists of a central facility to which all students have good access. It is a modern building opened 24 hours the 7 days of the week. The library is well equipped in textbooks with many copies of the suggested books in the reference lists of the different courses. The library also has necessary databases in the economics field (EBSCO, ECONLIT, etc). In conclusion, the SER report, supported by information gathered during the site visit, confirm that the facilities and learning resources available for the programme are adequate and accessible.

### **Study process and student assessment**

The admission requirements comply with all legal demands and are clearly formulated and publicly available in the VU website. Although the average competitive score of new students has increased, the programme has experienced a severe decrease in its number of students. The factors responsible for this situation are worthy of formal identification and analysis by Study Programme Committee (SPC) and a more detailed research about the potential demand for this Master should be undertaken.

Meetings and documentation provide sufficient evidences that modern teaching and learning methods are used. Students appreciate the use of case studies as they provide a more practical orientation. However, the range of assessment tools and techniques appears contradictory with the teaching tools and the case study approach followed by the teachers. In most of the courses, the exam accounts for 70-80% of the final grade. Further integration of programme learning outcomes

with the course content and assessment methods is required. The system of supervising and guiding of final thesis preparation process needs for additional investigations and some improvements.

Rigid labour market and the priorities of students are the main reasons for low level of international mobility. However, tackling this issue is inevitable for the programme like EES, and the alternative student mobility and internationalization opportunities should be incorporated with respect to natural barriers. Students have opportunity to raise issues in relation to the content and the implementation of the programme, although a more structured framework of collecting feedback and addressing the challenges should be implemented. Despite the areas of improvement, the programme corresponds to the mission of the faculty, societal needs, and the expectations of graduates.

### **Programme management**

The centralized framework for the process of programme management is settled up by VU with clearly distributed responsibilities. The EES SPC is responsible for the regular monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the programme. The quality is assured through internal and external programme evaluation. Despite some changes undertaken, and the formal collection of the feedback at the end of each semester, the review panel is concerned about the systematic approach and the efficiency of the work carried out by the SPC. Procedures are clearly explained in the SER. However, the panel was not made aware regarding what has changed after the analysis of this feedback. Stakeholders are also involved in the SPC, but the SER does not specify their role and to what extent effectively contributes to the programme development.

The number of enrolees to the programme has dropped significantly, which opens a question mark about the future sustainability of the programme. However, no systematic analysis about its reasons and consequences have been made. Finally, it seems that the programme lacks uniqueness in terms of topics covered and the learning goals aimed, that, in fact, overlap with other alternative programmes offered by VU FE. In the near future, the SPC should undertake a deeper investigation about the future demand for this programme, which should include a re-formulation of the EES as a specialization of the master in Economic policy, as an example.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *European Economic Studies* (state code – 6211JX016 (621L60006) at Vilnius 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	3
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	2
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>17</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.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Tiiu Paas
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Jose Maria Gil Roig
	Rohit Sonika
	Vilija Jankauskienė
	Martynas Rekštys

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS  
EUROPOS EKONOMINĖS STUDIJOS (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 6211JX012)  
2017-12-28 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-260 IŠRAŠAS**

&lt;...&gt;

**V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS**

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Europos ekonominės studijos* (valstybinis kodas – 6211JX016) vertinama **teigiamai**.

<b>Eil. Nr.</b>	<b>Vertinimo sritis</b>	<b>Srities įvertinimas, balais*</b>
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	<b>Iš viso:</b>	<b>17</b>

\* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

&lt;...&gt;

**IV. SANTRAUKA****Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai**

Bendrasis studijų programos tikslas ir numatomi studijų rezultatai aiškiai apibrėžti. Studijų rezultatai viešai prieinami ir apibrėžti laikantis teisės aktų ir reglamentų nustatytų reikalavimų. Tačiau ekspertų grupė pastebėjo, kad studentai ne visada supranta numatomų studijų rezultatų ir studijų turinio ryšį. Reikia numatyti papildomas priemones dabartinei situacijai pagerinti. Studijų programos komitetas reguliariai svarsto ir peržiūri studijų rezultatus, tačiau trūksta aiškios sistemos, kaip studijų rezultatų peržiūra atsispindi studijų programos vykdymo ir tobulinimo procese. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad studentų išsilavinimas nevienodas, o konkurencija pritraukti studentams į programas didėja, būtina šią sritį tam tikrais aspektais patobulinti.

**Programos sandara**

Programos struktūra atitinka teisės aktų nustatytus reikalavimus. Tačiau, atsižvelgusi į šios studijų programos tikslus ir studijų rezultatus, ekspertų grupė nustatė, kad trūksta dalykų, skirtų ugdyti gerus ekonominių ir kiekybinių metodų pagrindus. Vidutinio sunkumo mikroekonomika, makroekonomika ir ekonometrija turėtų sudaryti pirmo semestro pagrindą. Atrodo, kad analitinių priemonių trūkumas apsunkina ir (arba) trukdo studentams atlikti tinkamo lygio mokslinius tyrimus rengiant magistro darbus. Vadovaujantis įvertintų magistro baigiamųjų darbų pavyzdžiais galima sakyti, kad bendra studentų darbų kokybė gali būti tobulinama. Apskritai, magistro baigiamųjų darbų tvarka tinkama, studentai ja patenkinti. Tačiau ekspertų grupė mano, kad net išlaikant struktūrą, kuomet trims dalykams skiriama po 10 ECTS, kursų turinį reikėtų keisti.

Atrodo, kad pasirenkamųjų dalykų yra daugybė, tačiau, kai reikia rinktis, realus jų pasirinkimo skaičius sumažėja. Be to, reikia geriau pagrįsti, kodėl dalykas privalomasis arba pasirenkamasis. Pasirenkamieji dalykai turėtų suteikti studentams tam tikrą specializaciją, atsižvelgiant į jų ateities perspektyvas. Ekspertų grupė pastebėjo, kad trečdalis šios magistro studijų programos sutampa su magistro studijų programa Ekonomikos politika. Galiausiai, atsižvelgiant į studijų programos pobūdį ir pagrindinį pavadinimą, programos internalizavimas yra vienas iš pagrindinių jos trūkumų.

### **Personalas**

Dėstytojai atitinka visus teisės aktais nustatytus reikalavimus, keliamus antrosios pakopos studijoms. Jie yra patyrę, turi reikiamą kvalifikaciją tinkamam studijų programos vykdymui užtikrinti. Tiesą sakant, studijų programą vykdo daugiau nei pakankamai dėstytojų, ypač kai jos vykdymas buvo sutrumpintas iki trijų semestrų. Siūloma daugiau suvienodinti bendravimo su studentais būdą, nors mokymosi procesui tai jokios žalos nedaro. Teigiamas aspektas – jaunų ir patyrusių personalo narių pusiausvyra, nors dėmesys moksliniams tyrimams šiek tiek nevienodas. Atvejų analizė – labai tinkamas mokymo metodas, nors programoje Europos ekonominės studijos daugiau dėmesio turėtų būti skiriama tarptautinėms problemoms, kurios papildytų esančias šalies viduje. Siekiant sustiprinti studentų vertinamus įgūdžius, siūloma išplėsti daugiau praktinių dalykų metu įgytos patirties vertinimą ir vertinti daugiau užduočių, o ne tik per egzaminus. VU sudaro tinkamas galimybes sėkmingai gerinti dėstytojų profesinius ir akademinis įgūdžius, tačiau reikėtų papildomai stiprinti tarptautinį bendradarbiavimą ir dėstytojų judumą.

### **Materialioji bazė**

Universiteto ir Ekonomikos fakulteto infrastruktūra, skirta studijų programai Ekonomikos politika kurti ir vykdyti, yra tinkama. Auditorijos ir laboratorijos gerai įrengtos, aparatinė ir programinė įranga nuolat atnaujinama. Fakultetas suteikia studentams galimybes naudoti pačią tinkamiausią statistinę programinę įrangą, daugiausia R, SPSS ir Eviews. Biblioteka yra centriniame pastate, prie kurio visi studentai turi gerą prieigą. Tai šiuolaikinis pastatas, atidarytas 24 valandas per parą, 7

dienas per savaitę. Biblioteka gerai aprūpinta knygomis, daug įvairių dalykų rekomenduojamos literatūros egzempliorių. Bibliotekoje taip pat yra būtinos ekonomikos srities duomenų bazės (EBSCO, ECONLIT ir kt.). Apibendrinant galima teigti, kad savianalizės suvestinėje ir per vizitą surinkta informacija tik patvirtina, kad studijų programai vykdyti patalpos ir metodiniai išteklių tinkami ir prieinami.

### **Studijų eiga ir studentų rezultatų vertinimas**

Priėmimo reikalavimai atitinka visus teisės aktais nustatytus reikalavimus, jie aiškiai suformuluoti ir viešai paskelbti VU interneto svetainėje. Nors vidutinis naujų studentų konkursinis balas padidėjo, šią studijų programą pasirinkusių studentų skaičius smarkiai sumažėjo. Studijų programos komitetui (toliau – SPK) vertėtų formaliai nustatyti, kokie veiksniai lėmė tokią situaciją, juos išanalizuoti bei atlikti išsamesnius mokslinius tyrimus dėl šios magistro studijų programos galimos paklausos.

Susitikimuose surinkta ir dokumentuose pateikta informacija pakankami įrodo, kad naudojami šiuolaikiniai mokymo ir mokymosi metodai. Studentai vertina atvejų tyrimus, nes jie suteikia daugiau praktinės patirties. Tačiau vertinimo priemonių ir metodų spektras prieštarauja dėstymo priemonėms ir atvejo tyrimo metodui, kurį taiko dėstytojai. Daugelyje dalykų egzaminas sudaro 70–80 proc. galutinio vertinimo balo. Būtina geriau integruoti programos studijų rezultatus su dalyko turiniu ir vertinimo metodais. Būtina papildomai išanalizuoti ir tobulinti baigiamojo darbo rengimo priežiūros ir vadovavimo sistemą.

Nelanksti darbo rinka ir studentų prioritetai yra pagrindinės žemo tarptautinio judumo priežastys. Tačiau tokiai studijų programai kaip Europos ekonominės studijos šią problemą spręsti būtina, ir numatyti alternatyvias studentų judumo ir tarptautiškumo galimybes, atsižvelgiant į natūralias kliūtis. Studentai turi galimybę iškelti problemas, susijusias su studijų programos turiniu ir jos vykdymu, nors reikėtų sukurti labiau struktūrizuotą grįžtamojo ryšio ir problemų sprendimo sistemą. Nepaisant sričių, kurias reikia tobulinti, ši studijų programa atitinka fakulteto misiją, visuomenės poreikius ir absolventų lūkesčius.

### **Programos vadyba**

VU yra sukūręs centralizuotą studijų programos vadybos proceso sistemą su aiškiai paskirstyta atsakomybe. Studijų programos Europos ekonominės studijos Studijų programos komitetas atsako už reguliarų šios studijų programos stebėjimą, vertinimą ir tobulinimą. Kokybė užtikrinama atliekant vidinį ir išorinį programos vertinimą. Nepaisant kai kurių pakeitimų ir oficialaus grįžtamojo ryšio rinkimo kiekvieno semestro pabaigoje, ekspertų grupei kelia susirūpinimą sisteminis požiūris ir SPK atliekamo darbo efektyvumas. Procedūros aiškiai išdėstytos savianalizės suvestinėje. Tačiau ekspertų grupė nebuvo informuota, kokie pakeitimai atlikti po grįžtamojo ryšio

analizės. Dalininkai taip pat įtraukti į SPK darbą, tačiau savianalizės suvestinėje jų vaidmuo neapibrėžtas, nematyti, kiek veiksmingai jie prisideda prie šios studijų programos plėtojimo.

Labai sumažėjo į šią studijų programą įstojusiųjų skaičius, todėl kyla klausimas dėl šios studijų programos tvarumo ateityje. Tačiau jokia priežasčių ir pasekmių sisteminė analizė nebuvo atlikta. Galiausiai atrodo, kad programai trūksta unikalumo kalbant jos aprėptas temas ir studijų tikslus, kurie iš tikrųjų sutampa su kitomis studijų programomis, kurias siūlo VU Ekonomikos fakultetas. Netolimoje ateityje SPK turėtų atlikti gilesnį tyrimą dėl šios studijų programos paklausos ateityje, kuri turėtų apimti šios studijų programos pertvarkymą, pavyzdžiui, į magistro specializaciją Ekonomikos politika.

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### **III. REKOMENDACIJOS**

1. Studijų programos komitetas (toliau – SPK) turėtų nuodugniai išnagrinėti, kokios priežastys lėmė studentų skaičiaus mažėjimą šioje studijų programoje, ir priimti reikiamas priemones šios magistro studijų programos tvarumui užtikrinti.
2. Remdamasi pateikta informacija, ekspertų grupė siūlo pertvarkyti šią studijų programą kaip magistro specializaciją Ekonominė politika, kuri taip pat įvertinta toje pačioje vertinimo sesijoje. Gali būti ir kitos alternatyvos, tačiau reikia daugiau informacijos apie būsimą galimą paklausą, taip pat reikia atlikti tyrimą apie panašias studijų programas kitose šalyse.
3. Ypač išplėsti dėstytojų dalyvavimą mokslinių tyrimų ir mokslo veikloje. Be to, dėstytojams siūloma taikyti kritiškesnę požiūrį į studentų darbus, kuriuose trūksta analizės, sintezės ir alternatyvių problemų sprendimų ir sprendimų priėmimo būdų apžvalgos.
4. Jei ši studijų programa liks, ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja keisti programos sandarą. Pirmasis semestras turėtų būti skirtas atnaujinti pagrindines žinias, kurias studentai įgijo per bakalauro studijas. Vidutinio sudėtingumo mikroekonomika, makroekonomika ir ekonometrija galėtų sudaryti pirmojo semestro pagrindą.
5. Toliau susieti programos studijų rezultatus su dalykų turiniu ir vertinimo metodais. Rezultatas – turtingesnė studentų mokymosi patirtis, kurią sąlygotų jų dalyvavimas daugiau orientuotoje studijų programoje.
6. Ekspertų grupė mano, kad reikia gerinti darbų rašymo procesą. Konkretesnis pareigų ir procesų paskirstymas pagerintų baigiamųjų darbų kokybę.
7. Studentai žino bibliotekos ir internetinius akademinių žurnalų išteklius, tačiau iš magistro baigiamųjų darbų akivaizdžiai matyti, kad jų nenaudoja. Dėstytojais galėtų skatinti studentus

efektyviau naudoti šiuos išteklius ir paskatinti už tokias pastangas, skirdami aukštesnius balus per egzaminus ir vertinimo testus.

8. Daugiau formalizuoti SPK veiklą. Turėtų būti galimybė fakultete ir universitete susipažinti su kiekvieno posėdžio protokolu, kuriuose būtų nurodyti dalyviai ir darbotvarkė, taip pat nurodyti veiksmai, dėl kurių susitarta, ir laiko grafikas. Socialinių partnerių dalyvavimas galėtų būti formalesnis.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)