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STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Klaipėdos universiteto

PSICHOLOGIJOS **PROGRAMOS (valstybinis kodas 612S10003, 61206S101)**

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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EVALUATION REPORT

OF *PSYCHOLOGY* (state code 612S10003, 61206S101)

STUDY PROGRAMME

at Klaipėda University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	*Psichologija*
Valstybinis kodas	612S10003, 61206S101
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Psichologija
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (4), ištęstinė (5,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Psichologijos bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2001-05-24

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INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	*Psychology*
State code	612S10003, 61206S101
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Psychology
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Level of studies	first
Study mode (length in years)	full time (4), part time (5,5)
Scope of the study programme in credits	240 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Psychology
Date of registration of the study programme	24-05-2001

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Klaipeda University was established in 1991, and the BA study programme in Psychology was registered in 2001, and passed the first accreditation in 2003. The expert group proposed the full accreditation for the program, approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (ISAK-413, 23-03-2004).

The present review has been carried out under the guidelines and procedures of SKVC. This assessment report is based on the self-evaluation report, received in June 2011, and on a site visit in October 2011. All members of the assessment group individually prepared draft reports. During the site visit, the team had the opportunity to discuss the programmes with faculty administrators, teaching staff, students, graduates and employers. We also visited the library, offices, teaching space and laboratories associated with the programme.

After the visit, the expert group held a meeting in which the contents of the evaluation was discussed and adjusted to represent the opinions of the whole group.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The BA programme in psychology is designed to provide basic knowledge in psychology which allows graduates to enter the labour market as well as continue their studies at the MA level. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualification offered, the aims of the programme are well defined, clear, and publicly accessible on the University's website (www.ku.lt), being also consistent with the professional requirements (EuroPsy) as well as in line with the Lithuanian legislation. The name of the programme (Psychology), its learning outcomes, content and the qualification offered are generally compatible with each other, still some overlapping of the content of the taught subjects was mentioned by the students as a problem to be solved.

However, in the documents and in self-evaluation report the term *learning outcomes* is not used as the expression; instead the terms *knowledge and abilities* where the abilities would be the equivalence of the intended learning outcomes of each course is used. Overall these abilities are well written, expressing what "students are expected to know, understand and be able to do after completion of the course". It would be advisable to use the term learning outcome instead in the documents since this is the common "European language" with regards to Higher Education now. However, this is a minor issue. The main point is that staff shows clear understanding and motivation to work with abilities and competencies instead of just knowledge possession.

The programme is clearly based on labour market needs in Western Lithuania. Many employers expressed this need and indicated a shortage of specialists with competencies in psychology. As

they indicated, not only Masters but also Bachelors in psychology find it rather easy to obtain a job, especially in a fields of education, social care, media, marketing and management.

In sum, the programme has appropriate aims and outcomes, but the terminology used to describe them is not always fully corresponding the Bologna process discourse. Programme is based on clear labour market needs and is welcomed by the employers.

2. Curriculum design

The programme is well designed and courses are balanced and evenly spread. Content appears to be current, thorough and relevant. Although the accepted terminology to express outcomes may need some attention, an understanding of the learning process is apparent and matches of activities, materials and coursework is good. The faculty has clearly capable teachers, able to support and develop student skills and motivation. Students indicated in their comments that they respect faculty knowledge and appreciate the attention and support they receive.

Students' theses projects are good, demonstrating that appropriate teaching and learning is in place within this programme. Range of topics represented is appropriate, and there is a clear understanding of statistics and methodology. Literature cited is relevant, current and from reliable sources. This is a definite strength of the program, especially considering the range of student abilities when they begin. It is clear the staff can develop research-practitioner skills in the students they teach.

As the self-study states, there are 31 compulsory Psychology subjects, and 9 electives listed in the curriculum. The structure of the study programme assures a possibility to select several academic subjects. 22 credits are allotted to electives. Choosing electives, students can also start or continue studies of foreign languages (English, German, French, Spanish) or can take subjects from adjacent study fields. Indeed, based on our observation, student language skills were particularly good, so they do seem to take advantage of language courses, although they still seem insecure with their level of skill and hesitant to participate in mobility programs. They also expressed a desire to replace some mandatory courses, in particular Physical Education, with other optional courses such as perhaps "Sports Psychology". Optional courses in business management were also requested by students who might wish to start their own practices or consulting firms in the future. Listening to student wishes to prepare additional optional courses in place of mandatory courses less related to psychology is encouraged.

During the site visit students indicated, that there are some overlapping topics and issues discussed during different classes. Our recommendation is that teaching staff should analyze the course contents in this respect to reduce the overlapping themes.

Two kinds of practices (*Introductory Practice,* aimed "to acquaint students with main activities of psychologist in different settings" and *Training Practice,* which will be started from the year 2012/2013) are included in curriculum. This is in line with student wishes for more practice opportunities. Role plays, structured observations and reflection papers should also increasingly

be intertwined with more traditional lecture on a gradual basis, as appears to be happening, to meet student needs and encourage more application of theoretical knowledge.

A curriculum has been updated since the previous accreditation in 2003 to follow recommendations. *(2003 recommendation: The biological bases of psyche and behaviour were presented rather weakly in the study program. There are too many different subjects with a focus on the historical aspect - History of Pedagogy, History of Psychology, History of Philosophy, History of Civilization).* The current curriculum, as noted earlier, is comprehensive, current and well-aligned to programme level and to desired programme outcomes. The curriculum meets legal requirements, national as well as European. It also has a good balance between theoretical subjects, research work and practice. Again, we note a particular strength in thesis methodology and analysis in this program.

In sum, the curriculum design meets legal requirements. The study subjects and/or modules are spread evenly. The content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies and especially well balanced. The content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, and the articulation of learning outcomes. Sources and texts in both courses and theses are current and students' outcomes in terms of thesis quality are strong. Curriculum overall is excellent.

3. Staff

KU staff teaching at the psychology BA programme consists of 21 teachers, including 8 PhDs in Social Sciences (Psychology). 11 regular teachers are coming from the Psychology Department, 4 regular teachers from other departments of KU and 2 visiting teachers from other universities. There was 1 professor during the preparation of the self-assessment report, but from September 2011 another professor joined the teaching staff. The number and qualifications of the staff comply with the requirements of the Lithuanian legislation. The staff-student ratio is 1:12 which is appropriate.

The age composition of teaching staff indicates sustainability and ensures adequate provision of the programme (age group of 25-34 – 5; age group of 35-44 – 4; age group of 45-54 – 4; age group of 55-60 – 7; age group over 60 – 1 visiting professor). At the same time the department has a quite low turnover rate, during last 5 years only one young teacher have joined the teaching staff.

Still, the qualifications and age composition of teachers are adequate to ensure learning outcomes of the program. During the meeting with the evaluation team, staff members were open and active, being at the same time self-critical. The openness and constructive-critical attitude of the staff members was impressive.

Staff members expressed satisfaction with how the university is supporting their professional development. They have the possibility to have a "free semester" for research and their participation in conferences and international meetings is supported, as well. Still the amount of

international exchange remains low - during last 5 years 3 teachers of the programme participated in an internationals exchange programme and 4 representatives from a foreign university visited KU. The KU staff members' participation in international scholarly exchange should be strengthened.

Majority of the staff members are participating in research projects, related to the study programme and funded by the KU Psychology Department, Faculty of Pedagogy and also by the Lithuanian Science and Studies Foundation, as well as by an international projects. At the same time there are problems in publishing the results of the KU teachers' research. The majority of publications listed in the CV-s are in Lithuanian journals and in Lithuanian language. Increasing publications in international journals is recommended for the future.

In sum: The number and qualification of the staff complies with the requirements of the Lithuanian legislation; KU employs a sufficient number of qualified teachers. The university supports teacher's professional development. The staff members' participation in international scholarly exchange should be strengthened.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The Psychology department is located in an historical building which is only partly renovated. The Pedagogy Faculty, including the Psychology Department, uses 27 classrooms, and has two specialized labs used for - Observation and *Interview Practicum* and *Psychological Counseling* class. 25 computers of the Faculty have *SPSS installed.*

In spite of some progress during the last few years, the premises for studies are not yet fully adequate in size or quality. However, due to the faculty initiative, there are funds available to acquire new equipment for the psychology labs and also to renovate classrooms and offices over the next two years. At the moment, there are two technologically well equipped rooms for psychological consulting and for psychology practicum.

The KU library consists of 450, 000 publications (155, 000 titles). At the same time, because of insufficient financing, the funds allotted to the library and the number of acquired books has been decreasing during the last few years. KU subscribes to 47 databases, including Academic Search Complete; Education Research Complete; ERIC; Humanities International Complete etc. During the meeting, some students expressed concern about the small number of psychology textbooks in the library.

To sum: The premises for studies are not yet fully adequate in size or quality, but there is a clear plan for improvement during next couple of years. Improvement in library resources specific to the field of psychology will be welcomed.

5. *Study process and student assessment*

In 2002 – 2006, 141 students started their studies in the Psychology BA program, and 124 graduated during 2006 – 2010. The number of applicants in the period of 2006 – 2010 fluctuated from 745 to 1041 per year. The majority of applicants marked the programme as their first priority. This means, that the programme in Psychology is among the most popular programs at KU. The admission requirements are well founded, and dropout rates have been insignificant. Recently, to have better entrants, the number of admitted students was reduced from 50 to 30.

The assessment procedures are clearly described and publicly available at the university's website. The topics of theses were relevant for the programme. Still, during the meeting several students indicated that they would prefer more oral exams. Currently, the majority of exams are written. Generally, the organization of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Student support system means mainly informing students by the Department bureau as well as regular e-mail based communication with the staff members. Students considered such an informal support system adequate and were satisfied with it. As a good practice, the university provides financial support to students by reducing the tuition fee for students from socially supported families or individuals who live alone and for students whose average grade of exams is 9 to 10, in addition also to students who are active in the social activities of the university.

Only 2-3 students per year use the opportunity to go abroad. Also, during the last 5 years, 12 students from 5 foreign universities participated in the KU study programme of Psychology. As a reason for low mobility, KU students indicated lack of confidence in their skills in foreign language or not knowing the language of the country at all, as well as financial considerations. Also, greater variety of possible destination countries was requested by the students. Student international mobility should be more encouraged and supported, including financially. Schemes should also be established allowing students to take courses in other Lithuanian universities. Currently, this seems to be restricted by financial, distance and political considerations.

Students are encouraged to participate in research activities predominantly in choosing the themes for their theses within the staff's research and project activities. About 60% of graduates continue to Master level, the majority of them (2/3) at the same university, which indicates that students are satisfied with their education at the university.

To sum: The admission requirements are well-founded and the student support system is adequate. The assessment system is clear and understandable for students, organization of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Student mobility should be encouraged and supported, along with mobility between Lithuanian universities for necessary courses.

6. Programme management

The programme is administered by the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy. Responsibilities for decision making and monitoring the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. However there is no programme committee established for the single study programs. Programme development issues instead are discussed in the department meetings. This means that students and employers are not regularly participating in the programme analysis and change decisions. Our recommendation is to establish one programme committee covering both programs in psychology (BA and MA program), which includes students and stakeholders.

The feedback on students' satisfaction with studies and their problems is regularly collected. Each year a survey is conducted using a standard University questionnaire and the *Sentence Completion Test* worked out by the department. Also, the KU student union carries out a feedback survey, which is a very welcomed initiative. The department is taking students' opinions into account while changing the programme and renewing the study organisation. KU students are active in presenting their considerations. During the site visit, students presented a number of recommendations about how to improve the studies – for instance to reduce the overlapping topics in the courses (sometimes the same themes/topics are presented in different courses). More knowledge in a field of entrepreneurship would also be welcomed, as would the reduction of some mandatory non-psychological subjects (physical education was named).

There are a number of organizations at KU cooperating when developing the psychology programme - Klaipeda Pedagogical Psychological Service, Kretinga Pedagogical Psychological Service, Klaipeda Hospital, Klaipeda Mental Health Centre, Klaipeda Centre Social and Psychological Help Centre and others. The cooperation with stakeholders mainly concerns the organization and assessment of student practice. Later, every practice is discussed in the meetings with tutors and mentors. During the meeting, stakeholders expressed satisfaction with the cooperation with KU.

KU established a system of internal quality assurance measures, including collaboration with stakeholders. The system is efficient and adequate. In spite of the fact that there is a career centre for students, the majority of students have not used it or even heard about its existence.

To sum: Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring the programme are clearly allocated. KU has established a system of internal quality assurance measures, including intense collaboration with stakeholders. The system is efficient and adequate. One drawback noted is that there is no programme committee established for programme development issues; instead these are discussed at the department meetings. Our recommendation is to establish a programme committee covering both programs in psychology (BA and MA program) which then can include both students and stakeholders.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1.   Replace the term "abilities" in course outline templates with "intended learning outcomes"
3.2.   More publishing in international peer reviewed journals is an important future challenge for the KU academic staff
3.3.   Student and staff international mobility should be more encouraged and also financially supported. Schemes should be established allowing students to take courses in other Lithuanian universities, which are currently restricted by financial and political considerations.
3.4.   As the premises for studies are not yet fully adequate in size or quality, realization of the renovation programme is urgently needed. Also, some improvement in library resources in the field of psychology is recommended.
3.5.   It is suggested to establish a programme committee covering both programs in psychology (BA and MA program), which would make it possible to include students and stakeholders.
3.6.   Teaching staff should analyze the course contents to avoid overlapping topics and issues discussed during classes.
3.7.   Efficiency of the career centre should be increased, both in informing students about their services as well as improving quality of consultations and counselling.

Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Psychology* (state code – 612S10003, 61206S101) 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	4
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
	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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