



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Klaipėdos universiteto
PEDAGOGINĖS PSICHOLOGIJOS PROGRAMOS
(valstybinis kodas 621S10004, 62406S102)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY (state code 621S10004,
62406S102)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Klaipėda University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Studijų programos pavadinimas | <i>Pedagoginė psichologija</i> |
| Valstybinis kodas | 621S10004, 62406S102 |
| Studijų sritis | Socialiniai mokslai |
| Studijų kryptis | Psichologija |
| Studijų programos rūšis | universitetinės studijos |
| Studijų pakopa | antroji |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais) | nuolatinė (2), iššęstinė (3) |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais | 120 ECTS |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Psichologijos magistras |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data | 1997-05-19 |

INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Name of the study programme | <i>Educational psychology</i> |
| State code | 621S10004, 62406S102 |
| Study area | Social Sciences |
| Study field | Psychology |
| Kind of the study programme | university studies |
| Level of studies | second |
| Study mode (length in years) | full time (2), part time (3) |
| Scope of the study programme in credits | 120 ECTS |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Master of Psychology |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 19-05-1997 |

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study programme of Educational Psychology second cycle is implemented by the Department of Psychology in the Pedagogy Faculty at Klaipeda University. It was rooted in a programme of Pre-School Education Pedagogy and Psychology at the former Klaipeda Faculty of Siauliai Pedagogical Institute and Klaipeda Faculties of the Lithuanian Conservatoire before the establishment of Klaipeda University. Currently, 8 doctors of Social Sciences (Psychology) are employed in the Department full-time.

The programme was designed for granting bachelor's of psychology degrees and is a practice-oriented graduate programme on master level.

This assessment report has been produced in the following way: the expert group received the self-assessment report in June 2011. All members of the evaluation group individually read the self-assessment reports and prepared draft reports.

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

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme is designed in compliance with Lithuanian Descriptors for Master Studies and seeks to combine the development of professional competencies of psychologists and the development of research competencies, in line also with Bologna recommendations.

Programme aims as described in the self-assessment are well defined, clear, and publicly accessible. However the term *learning outcomes* is not used; instead the terms knowledge and abilities are used, whereby abilities would be the equivalence of the intended learning outcomes for each course. Overall, these abilities are very 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 future 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 developing students' abilities and competencies as well as knowledge acquisition.

When it comes to labour market needs and employability aspects, this programme definitely serves the needs of Lithuania. However, to avoid unnecessary future critique our recommendation is to make very clear to both students and employers what can be expected from an educational psychologist. Our impression during site visits was that the need for psychologists in school and educational settings in the rural areas of the country altogether is so large that in many places, employers will hire any type of psychologist regardless of specialisation. This may result in unrealistic expectations and demands which in the long run lead to inappropriate criticism of the programme.

The level of studies is satisfactory with the level of qualification and consistent with the name of the programme; learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

In sum the programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined, clear and publicly accessible but should be labelled “learning outcomes” instead of “abilities” in the templates in order to be compliant with European terminology. However, this is a minor issue. The main point is that staff members demonstrate clear understanding and motivation to work with developing students’ abilities and competencies instead of just their knowledge. The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and/or professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market and also consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, contents and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

2. Curriculum design

As stated above the current curriculum meets legal requirements, national as well as European. It was recently updated and also renamed from School Psychology to Educational Psychology in order to make it relevant to the total field of education. Study content is renewed every two years.

The programme has a good balance between theoretical subjects, scientific research work and professional practice. Active learning seems prominent, as well as self-reflection, necessary for all practising psychologists. There is a focus on both children and adolescents, and the programme is clearly situated in an educational context emphasising the necessity for the educational psychologist to collaborate with other professionals and with parents. Prevention work is included together with assessment intervention and treatment methods.

The content and methods utilised are consistent with the type and level of studies and also appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes when it comes to working in educational settings for children and adolescents. This is all very well described in the self-evaluation and was also well described at the site visit. The persons responsible have put a lot of thought into these matters. At the site visit the expert group was also informed about a coming introduction of Problem Based Learning (PBL) to the program. This will positively increase the already existing culture of active and student centred learning.

The programme is currently taught in the form of part time education where students have employment in relevant fields for their studies. This looks to be a very good format for studies of this type where integrating knowledge into practice on a continuous basis probably consolidates students’ competencies even better than a “normal” full time study format without such possibilities could.

A wish that was expressed by both graduates and employers was to include more training of diagnostic competencies, especially in regards to Wechsler tests. Another wish from one of the graduates was opportunities for courses on entrepreneurship and starting a business. This would be relevant to include in such a programme and also fully in line with European efforts to integrate entrepreneurship more into all Higher Education programmes (often labelled The Knowledge Triangle).

In sum, the content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies. The content and methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. The introduction of Problem Based Learning (PBL) can positively increase the already existing culture of active and student centred learning. Employers and graduates expressed the need for more diagnostic competencies,

especially Wechsler testing, and wishes for including courses on entrepreneurship and starting a private business. The latter would be relevant to include in such a programme and also fully in line with European efforts to integrate entrepreneurship into all Higher Education programmes (often labelled The Knowledge Triangle).

3. Staff

The programme meets legal requirements in that it is provided by a sufficient number of teachers possessing PhDs in psychology, and that at least 20% of the study field is taught by professors. The department has a very low turnover rate. Teachers are satisfied with the workload and students are happy with the communication and amount of time they have access to their teachers. The institution also creates conditions for their professional development both in terms of research and teaching competencies.

The site visit showed that staff has been working for a long time with developing their programme into becoming more competence based instead of merely knowledge based (via the Tuning project, Dublin descriptors, etc.) and they showed clear evidence of their understanding and motivation with regards to the European changes in Higher Education, moving from teacher driven provision to student centred teaching and learning. Ambitions of starting to use a more systematic approach to student centred teaching methods (Problem Based Learning, PBL) were also expressed at the site visit. All this is commendable and should be continued. The teachers as a team also give the impression of being very well connected to the practice they are preparing their students for.

The research projects that the teachers are involved in are relevant for the programme they are teaching in, however a weakness is that not all teachers participate in research and/or professional development projects.

In sum all legal requirements are fulfilled concerning teaching staff, number of staff and their qualifications are adequate and turnover is low. The conditions for Continuous Professional Development, CPD with respect to both research and teaching competencies are good. Teaching staff showed clear evidence of their understanding and motivation with regards to the European changes in Higher Education moving from teacher driven provision to student centred teaching and learning. The teachers as a team also give the impression of being very well connected to the practice they are preparing their students for. Research that is done is relevant for the programme but not all staff participates in research and/or professional development projects.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The Psychology department is located in an historical building, which is only partly renovated. The Pedagogy Faculty (hosting also the Psychology Department) uses 27 classrooms, having also two specialized labs - Observation and Interview Practicum and Psychological Counseling class. 25 computers of the Faculty have SPSS available.

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's initiative, there are funds available for the next two years to acquire new equipment for the psychology labs and also to renovate classrooms and offices. At the moment, there are two technologically well equipped rooms for psychological consulting and for psychology practicum.

KU library funds consist of approximately 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 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.

In sum, the premises for studies are not yet fully adequate in their size or quality, but there is a clear plan for improvement during the next couple of years. Also, improvement in library resources in the field of psychology will be welcomed.

5. Study process and student assessment

The admission requirements are well founded and all students admitted during the period 2006-2008 were students with good or average grades from their Bachelor studies. Dropout rates have been insignificant since 2004. However, the number of applicants is small and admission to full-time studies has been temporarily suspended since 2009. The programme running now is a part time version. The positive aspects of this have already been mentioned under *Curriculum*.

Students are encouraged to participate in research activities predominantly in choosing the themes for their master theses within the staff's research and project activities. Some students also take part in data collections and in conferences. There are limited teacher/student joint publications from the assessed period and here there is room for improvement.

Student mobility is low, both with regards to outgoing and incoming students. At the site visit, students expressed that financial and language problems were the main obstacles. If there are possibilities for the university to give further financial support (in addition to Erasmus scholarships) this may enhance the number of students taking the opportunity to go abroad. Also, if students can go in pairs or even in a small group, as was recently done, this will probably also increase their motivation to study in another country.

The financial support system is well founded. There is a career-counselling centre but students were generally unaware of this. In addition, the activities of this centre should be examined so as to correspond to students' needs.

The assessment, criterion based and cumulative over the programme with criteria for term papers and master theses, is available to students in advance (cf. requirements in European Standards and Guidelines, ESG, on this subject). This is commendable. However, students' attendance should not be assessed, but rather just noted in regards to completion of obligatory activities. Relevant, fit for purpose assessment methods (i.e., fully aligned with the competencies the intended learning outcomes express) is the guarantee for students' achievements of intended learning outcomes. Our impression was that there might be room for further development here since the majority of assessment tasks still are performed in the written format, not always the right way of assessing "understanding performances" instead of just "knowledge possession".

The assessment of theses work is clearly described and adequate. Average grade was 8,22 (on a scale from 1-10). The sample of theses that the evaluation team looked at showed that titles were relevant for the programme, and that literature as well as methods also in general was relevant for the chosen topics. However, at masters level it would be advisable to demand somewhat more sophisticated research questions and subsequently, also a rise of level of analysis methods used. Given the excellent staff resources with regards to these competencies the department has, this would be easily attainable.

In sum, admission requirements are well founded and the organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.

Students are encouraged to participate in research activities predominantly in choosing the themes for their master theses within the staff's research and project activities and also to take part in data collections and in conferences. However there is limited teacher/student joint publications from the assessed period which should be further encouraged and supported.

The assessment, criterion based and cumulative over the programme with criteria for term papers and master theses available to students in advance (cf. requirements in European Standards and Guidelines, ESG, on this subject) is commendable. However, assessment of students' achievements is primarily done in the written format, not always the guarantee for students' achievements of the intended learning outcomes. This is an area where there is room for further development, as with mobility where figures are quite low. The quality of the theses the evaluation team looked at was good but somewhat more sophisticated research questions and subsequently also a rise of level of methods could be expected at master's level.

6. Programme management

There are three bodies responsible for long-term observations as a basis for quality assurance: the Senate and the Rectors Office, the Council of the Pedagogy Faculty and the Psychology Department. The roles between these three levels are clear. The self-assessment process, according to the self-assessment team, also resulted in the discovery of fields with no responsible person attached. This has now been remedied.

The department implements long-term observation on a number of issues including student and stakeholder involvement and this is very well organised.

Outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the program. Programme development is done on a continuous basis as well as by means of a more formal revision, which takes place every two years. However, the department does not have a study committee for the sole purpose of programme development but instead uses department meeting time also for this. A consequence of this is that no student representation or stakeholder involvement exists in this forum, which is unfortunate. Advice would be to form such a committee and advice would also be to have a joint committee for both bachelor and master programmes.

In sum, responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of programme implementation are clear. This process does involve stakeholders, and the outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. However advice is to form a joint study committee for this programme and the BA psychology programme instead using department meetings for these issues, in order to be able to include student and employer representation. Graduates and stakeholders are in general very satisfied with the programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Find ways of including more training of diagnostic competencies, especially Wechsler testing.

3.2. Work towards students formulating somewhat more sophisticated research questions and subsequently also a rise of level of methods of analysis in MA theses is recommended.

- 3.3. Investigate the possibilities for the university to give further financial support, in addition to Erasmus scholarships, to students in order to further raise mobility levels.
- 3.4. Replace the term “abilities” in course outline templates with “intended learning outcomes”.
- 3.5. 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.
- 3.6. 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.
- 3.7. Continue the good work with developing student centred active teaching and learning and learning outcomes, to also include true alignment of assessment methods with the intended learning outcomes.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Educational psychology* (state code – 621S10004, 62406S102) 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 | 4 |
| 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: | 20 |

*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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