



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Mykolo Romerio universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TEISĖ IR PENITENCINĖ VEIKLA*
(valstybinis kodas – 612M90004)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF LAW AND PENITENTIARY ACTIVITIES *(state code -612M90004)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Mykolas Romeris University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

Vilnius
2016

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Teisė ir penitencinė veikla</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612M90004
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Teisė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3,5), Iššęstinė (5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	210 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Teisės bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19, Nr. 565.

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Law and Penitentiary activities</i>
State code	612M90004
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Law
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3,5), Part-time (5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	210 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Law
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-19, No. 565.

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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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.	List of Names of all participants from the Senior Management team, SER team, Teaching Staff team, Graduates and Social Partners teams.
2.	List of Subjects (year 2015/2016).

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

Mykolas Romeris University (hereinafter MRU) was founded in 2004 as successor to the Law University of Lithuania, itself successor to the former Lithuanian Police Academy. It is a public university offering numerous study programmes in social sciences, physical sciences, and humanities. The overall student population is around 13,000 in 1st cycle (bachelor level), 2nd cycle (master level), and 3rd cycle (doctoral level) combined. However, like many Higher Education Institutions (hereinafter HEIs) in Lithuania, MRU is experiencing a rapid and massive decline of its overall student population, mostly attributable to demographics, which will make it harder to sustain existing structures and programmes in future.

In the study field “Law”, MRU offers Bachelor level programmes in 1) Law, 2) Law and Management, 3) Law and Police Activity (in Kaunas), as well as 4) Law and Penitentiary Activity. At the Master level, MRU offers a programme in 1) Law, with specializations in Civil Law, Civil

Justice, Criminal Law and Criminology, as well as International Law, and 2) Law and Police Activity (in Kaunas).

All six programmes listed above were subject to review by the present team. The present report focuses on (#4 above) the Bachelor Programme in Law and Penitentiary Activities.

The documentation provided to the expert team by MRU and the information available on the website of MRU are not entirely clear, nor consistent, as to which other programmes in law or related to law are (still) being offered by the HEI, for example a bachelor in law and customs activities, or a master in European and/or international business law. Although this is of limited significance since any other programmes are not subject to review by the present team, it made it hard for the experts to understand which courses are available at MRU outside the programmes under review and thus potentially accessible to the students as electives.

The programmes subject to the present procedure were last evaluated in 2011 and found to fulfil all necessary requirements. That evaluation was conducted by Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales AHPGS, a for-profit agency from Germany. The experts had access to the Evaluation Reports produced by AHPGS and found them to be superficial and short on specific recommendations suitable for providing guidance to MRU as it seeks to continuously improve its structures and programmes.

Before going into the details of the present procedure, the experts would also like to note that MRU seemed to struggle with the self-evaluation procedure. Firstly, MRU was considerably late in submitting its self-evaluation reports. Secondly, the reports are in many parts not very clear and occasionally inconsistent. The reports also contradict, at least in part, with information provided on the website of MRU. The annex with the semester-by-semester study plan was submitted only in Lithuanian language. The annex with the course descriptions contained hundreds of pages with courses that are not (currently) offered in the bachelor programme, which created the impression among the experts that MRU was trying to impress without having the substance to back it up.

Thirdly, the reports were short on admission of weaknesses and extremely vague with regard to the way self-identified weaknesses are going to be addressed. In the latter regard, formulations prevailed like “the structure ... might be updated” or “the possibility ... is being considered”. This was particularly disappointing, given the fact that MRU is not a very young institution and has already been through multiple cycles of evaluation over the years. As a result of any future self-evaluation procedures, the experts would like to see a more honest acknowledgment of weaknesses, as well as specific action plans for the way they will be addressed, with clear targets and specifics about how the measures will be implemented, when they will be completed, and how they will be funded.

During the visit to MRU, the experts were able to clarify most issues left unclear in the self-evaluation reports but it remained somewhat unclear whether the problems at MRU should be attributed mainly to ongoing changes to existing structures and programmes or to weaknesses in the leadership structure and/or the lack of an overall strategic plan for the many and diverse study programmes.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of Expert Recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 10-12 May 2016.

- 1. Prof. dr. Frank Emmert (team leader)**, *Professor of International, Comparative and European Union Law, Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, USA;*
- 2. Prof. dr. Ralf Alleweldt**, *Professor of Constitutional Law, EU Law and Human Rights Law, Brandenburg University of Applied Police Sciences, Germany;*
- 3. Prof. dr. Kerstin Nordlöf**, *Professor of Criminal and Procedural Law, School of Law, Psychology and Social Work, Örebro University, Sweden;*
- 4. Mrs. Edita Ivanauskienė**, *Founder of Law firm of Edita Ivanauskienė, Attorney at Law, Patent Attorney, Lithuania*
- 5. Ms. Aušrinė Nenortaitė**, *Bachelor of Economics at Vilnius University, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

By contrast to other universities in Lithuania, where law is offered in an integrated programme of five years, MRU has chosen to offer their programmes in the study field as bachelor programmes of three and a half years and master programmes of one and a half years. As such, both structures are compatible with Lithuanian legislation. However, the choice by MRU creates a more complicated model and requires very effective communication to potential students. This can be illustrated as follows: At other universities, all students take the first three and a half years together, before they are divided up into a number of different specializations. It seems safe to presume that the students, by the time they have to select their specialization(s), are well informed about the different options, corresponding professional opportunities, as well as personal preferences and inclinations. By contrast, at MRU, the choice between a general bachelor in law and one of the more specialized bachelor programmes in law has to be made at the time when the students first apply to enter law school, long before they have had even a single day of studies in the field. On the one hand, one could say that any students who are not sure about their preferences would presumably opt for the general bachelor in law and, anyway, given the many courses required by Lithuanian law for any programmes in law, the differences between the different bachelor programmes in law are quite minor. On the other hand, the experts discovered that students do not always get their first choice and may end up in a bachelor programme in law that was only their second or third choice. Furthermore, the experts were surprised by the drop-out rates at MRU, which seemed generally high, in particular at the end of the first year, and in some years and some of the bachelor programmes in law amounted to over 50% and even as high as 75%. This would seem to be a massive problem of wasting the time and financial resources of the students and should receive adequate attention.

The experts concluded that a number of factors are contributing to the high drop-out rates at MRU. First, it seems questionable whether the programme aims and learning outcomes are sufficiently well defined, clear, and publicly accessible. In particular, the experts question whether the differences between the different bachelor programmes in law at MRU are sufficiently well communicated to potential students. The problem can be illustrated as follows: Since MRU offers specialized bachelor programmes in law and police activity and in law and penitentiary activity, law and management, as well as law and customs activity, one might assume that the general bachelor in law has more of a private and/or commercial law focus. This, however, is not really the case. MRU claimed that this can be explained by the fact that the curriculum of any bachelor programmes in law in Lithuania is quite heavily determined by legislation and, at least until now, has left very few choices to the HEIs. Specifically, the experts were told that under the Order of the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on adoption of law studies description of 19 August 2010, a total of 165 credits were predetermined for specific law courses, another 15 credits were predetermined for specific general university courses (such as philosophy or sociology), and another 15 credits were predetermined for specific practice periods or internships. Given the fact that the bachelor programme in law and penitentiary activities at MRU were set for a total of 210 credits, this system supposedly left the HEI with only 15 credits where courses and specializations could be freely determined. As a consequence, the experts were surprised to find only minor differences in the curricula of the different bachelor programmes in law, even to the extent that the experts thought that the distinction between the different bachelor programmes was a distinction without a difference, possibly more of a marketing tool than a real adjustment of aims and learning outcomes.

After extensive discussion with administrators and faculty during the visit to MRU, the experts were able to better understand the differences between the different bachelor programmes in law. One of the findings included the fact that at least some of the courses are taught differently in the different bachelor programmes in law, for example the course civil law in the programme on law and management would be taught with more of a focus on labor and employment law than in the other bachelor programmes.

Nevertheless, the experts question whether MRU has made the best use of its limited discretion with regard to curriculum structure and design in the past, in order to deliver the programmes that are supposedly being offered under the different labels, and whether the differences have been sufficiently well communicated to potential students. This topic will be further elaborated below under item 2.2. Curriculum Design.

Another problem of the current structure is the fact that the discretion of the HEIs supposedly was largest during the first year of the bachelor programmes in law. At MRU, this led to a situation where the specialized courses in the specialized bachelor programmes were frontloaded. For example, in the bachelor programme in law and penitentiary activities, much of the penitentiary law was taught in the second and third semester while the more general law courses followed in the fourth, fifth and sixth semester. This is not only sub-optimal from a didactic perspective, it also caused significant frustration among the students who were happy to receive the courses that corresponded to their programme choice at first and then disappointed that there were few or none of the programmatic courses after the second and third semester.

As of July 2015, the requirements for the courses to be offered in a bachelor programme in law under Lithuanian legislation have been amended. The strict and credit based framework of the ministerial order of 2010 has been abolished but a list of mandatory courses remains in place on the basis of one or more decisions of the Lithuanian Constitutional Court (this will also be discussed in some more detail below under 2.2. Curriculum Design).

Against this background, the experts believe that MRU should consider the adoption of one or more of the following measures, in order to provide programme aims and learning outcomes that are well defined and clear and correspond to the respective name(s) of the various bachelor programmes in law:

- 1) MRU may want to merge at least some of the more specific bachelor programmes into the general bachelor programme in law, with some choices of specialization during the more advanced years. Such a simplification of the programme structure at MRU would also seem to help with the overall administration of the law programmes and make sense against the background of declining student numbers. At the same time, the experts would not recommend that MRU should move to a fully integrated study programme in law, such as it is offered at other universities, where a bachelor degree is not conferred at all, only a master degree after five years of studies. There are advantages to having different options in Lithuania, a kind of competition of systems. Also, not every person opting for studies in law may want to or need to complete a full master. At least some students may not be pursuing the goal of becoming qualified as an advocate.
- 2) To the extent that specialized bachelor programmes in law are maintained, MRU should exhaust all discretionary options to offer as many credit hours as possible in the area of specialization and at least one specialized course in every semester of the study programme. Even if such an expansion of the curriculum would require prolongation of the programme by one semester and an expansion from 210 ECTS to 240 ECTS credits, with a proportionate tuition increase, this would be acceptable to a majority of those who were interviewed.
- 3) In all programme offerings, MRU should review the curricular structure on an annual basis to ensure that course offerings, to the extent that the HEI has discretion, are optimized to correspond to market needs, including the latest developments at the European and international level.

A second issue contributing to the high drop-out rates has been the admission policy of MRU. The experts were told that as a rule, MRU did not set any minimum standards for admission to its bachelor programmes, while even the colleges were generally applying a threshold of 0.8. Consequently, anybody with a high school graduation certificate was able to apply and enter into one of the bachelor programmes in law. The main limitation, it seemed, was the number of available places per programme, which could result in admission of a student not to his or her first choice but to a second or third choice programme. For example, a student may have put down the general bachelor in Law as her first choice and the bachelor in Law and Penitentiary Activities as her second choice but since there were stronger applicants for the general bachelor, the student was then only admitted to Law and Penitentiary Activities.

The experts believe that first of all, it is highly advisable for MRU to set a threshold for admission to any of its bachelor programmes in law. It seems clear from the high drop-out rates that

at the present time, a significant number of students is being admitted for whom law is either not a good fit or who should not seek university level education at all. The experts were told that by decision of 9 May 2016, as of the fall of 2016, a certain threshold has been set for admission to MRU but it was neither clear whether this threshold was decided by MRU or in general for Lithuanian universities, nor whether it will be strict enough to ensure that fewer students are admitted who turn out to be insufficiently prepared for university studies. Second, the complicated structure of legal education at MRU, with the many different programmes, results in a significant number of students not getting what they really want and then dropping out.

The experts acknowledge that in the most recent years, the drop-out rates have been declining somewhat but they are still a matter of concern and require further attention by MRU. Specifically, the experts believe that the merger of several of the current specializations in the bachelor programmes in law, as proposed above, could reduce the problem of high drop-out numbers because it would reduce the number of students who did not get into their first choice of programme specialization. Furthermore, if MRU continues to apply no admission threshold or a very low admission threshold, the experts recommend that MRU should introduce special remedial classes and other support for students entering with low high school graduation scores.

After careful review of course descriptions, reading assignment, exams, final theses, and feedback from alumni, employers and social partners, the experts otherwise find that the programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and provide a qualification that is appreciated in the labor market and generally adequate for a bachelor programme in law.

2.2. Curriculum design

The study plan for the bachelor in Law and Penitentiary Activities provides for only theoretical courses in the first semester: Introduction to Studies, 6 credits, Theory of Law, 12 credits, History of Law, 6 credits, Philosophy, 3 credits, Foreign Language for Specific Purposes (English/French/German), 6 credits, as well as Lithuanian for Specific Purposes, 3 credits. Even the second semester remains partly theoretical: Theory of Law 12 credits, although courses on Constitutional Law, 6 credits, Administrative Law, 6 credits, Fundamentals of Restorative Justice, 3 credit and Penitentiary law, 12 credits, are introduced. There is also one optional course, to be chosen from a limited list of options: Introduction to Penitentiary Psychology, 3 credits, and The Basic of Alternative Dispute Resolution, 3 credits. Similarly, in subsequent semester there are compulsory courses and optional courses. Semester four, five and six have only mandatory courses, and as mentioned above, no courses related to penitentiary activities.

While the experts do not see a problem with limited choices of courses in the early semesters of a law degree, the highly theoretical start of the programme may contribute to the high drop-out rate. Finally, the limited number of optional courses once again seems to be a reflection of the compartmentalized structure of the different law programmes at MRU. If more bachelor programmes would be merged into fewer but broader bachelor programmes in law, the students might have access to more optional courses, enabling them to design an overall programme that is more in tune with their individual preferences, without compromising the overall quality. This, in turn, might increase overall student satisfaction and lower the drop-out rates. Incidentally, a merger of at least some of the different bachelor programmes into one bachelor programme in law was already recommended in the previous evaluation in 2011 to “simplify organizational structures and

increase transparency” but obviously not implemented. Furthermore, MRU did not provide explanations to the present evaluation team why they did not follow the 2011 recommendation.

More worrisome than the number of optional courses is the absence of important subjects from the list of courses. Overall, the curriculum is heavy on civil law and criminal law and short on courses related to penitentiary activities as for example courses dealing with behavioral programmes and risk assessment. Subjects such as Criminology, Victimology and Human Rights were neither on the list of compulsory nor available as optional courses. This was also the case regarding language course in Russian, which was requested by several of the interviewed. By contrast, MRU offered Finance Law as a compulsory subject, although it would not seem to be in any way connected to penitentiary activities. It is highly doubtful that this heavy focus on civil and criminal law corresponds to the expectations of the students who enter into a bachelor of law and penitentiary activities, nor is it a good reflection of the needs of the labor market, where a good knowledge of penitentiary law and human rights will be needed in a majority of jobs in the public sector.

The explanation provided to the experts for what seems to be a one-sided curriculum was that Lithuanian law does not give much of a choice to the HEIs. Specifically, the experts were told repeatedly that up until now, based on Lithuanian legislation, a total of 165 credits were pre-determined law courses, an additional 15 credits were pre-determined general subjects, and a further 15 credits were required for practices or internships. Given a total of 210 credits in the bachelor programmes in law at MRU, this supposedly left only 15 credits for free determination by MRU.

However, after significant additional research, the experts came to the conclusion that the requirements under Lithuanian law were either not understood correctly by the administration and faculty at MRU or were not communicated honestly to the experts. Specifically, the 2010 Order of the Minister for Education and Science, while stipulating that not less than 165 out of 210 credits have to be from the study field “law”, does not require specific subjects to be taught, which means that it leaves considerable discretion to the HEIs. The list of specific subjects is determined by the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania of 20 February 2008 in Case No. 19/05. However, first of all, this list is quite short and sets requirements only for a total of 56 national credits, equivalent to 84 ECTS credits. Second, the list sets the requirements for judges and advocates, i.e. for graduates of master programmes, and not all of these requirements have to be fulfilled already at the bachelor level. Thus, while MRU suggested to the experts that it could only determine about 7.14% of the credits in a bachelor programme pursuant to its own priorities, the reality is that MRU could determine a much larger part of the entire programme to match with the programme name and aims (see, in particular, the discussion in our evaluation of the bachelor in law and management) and/or to meet the expectations of the students and the labor market.

In sum, MRU actually had very significant discretion to optimize its bachelor programmes and does not have any valid excuses for not doing so.

Against this background, the experts strongly recommend that the administration and faculty at MRU actually start with the optimization of the different bachelor programmes according to the professed specializations and corresponding expectations of the students (see the other evaluation reports for additional details), respectively the ever evolving needs of the labor market and Lithuanian society at large, and stop hiding behind imaginary limitations imposed by law. Besides broader offerings in penitentiary law, human rights, criminology and victimology as outlined above, this would also have to include a stronger emphasis on practical skills via so-called experiential

learning courses and modules (legal writing, legal research, clinical work etc.). In order to regain a leading position in the educational market of Lithuania and the Baltics, MRU would seem to have to introduce a minimum requirement for experiential learning to be satisfied by every single student.

On the basis of feedback from various stakeholders, the experts came to the conclusion that there are at least two additional problems with the current curricular structure in the bachelor programme(s). First, MRU is discouraging student mobility in programmes like Erasmus or Nordplus by requiring that students, upon return, take the exams in the mandatory subjects as if they had spent the semester studying in Vilnius. As a result, upon returning from a semester abroad, students are cramming for a couple of weeks to study the entire past semester material for the required subjects, all the while having to take on new courses and/or practice placements, and without getting much help from the university. While the experts cannot provide an easy answer to the problem, MRU should explore options such as spreading out these exams over several semesters, allowing students to take the exams in a later semester when they have also taken the courses and/or providing short and intensive courses to the students to prepare them for the exams. Otherwise, student mobility is likely to remain low.

Second, MRU is considerably overloading the 7th and final semester. Students are expected to simultaneously write their bachelor thesis, do the internship of some 6 weeks of full time work, attend class, and prepare for the very substantial final exams. Unsurprisingly, this has not worked in recent years. On the one hand, there is a significant drop-out rate of students giving up right before the finish line. On the other hand, many of those that do finish, cannot finish on time and have to extend their studies beyond the formal duration of the programme. Upon relatively superficial analysis, at least two solutions would seem possible. 1) MRU could decongest the last semester by putting the practice or internship requirement in the 6th semester or the summer before the final year of studies. Furthermore, MRU could schedule fewer or no classes during the 7th semester to give students enough time to write the final thesis and prepare for the final exams. 2) MRU has apparently been considering the expansion of the bachelor programme(s) from 210 to 240 credits and from 7 to 8 semesters. Such an expansion would not only allow a decongestion of the currently overloaded 7th semester, it would also allow for MRU to introduce more of the specialized courses currently missing. The experts consulted with different student groups and generally felt that the students would welcome such an expansion of the schedule, provided it would decongest the final term and add interesting and relevant additional subjects, even if the students would then have to spend an additional semester at MRU (which they increasingly can't avoid anyways) and pay for the additional credits. There may be additional and/or alternative solutions to the problem that MRU could explore. The main thing is that MRU acknowledges the problem and starts actively fixing it.

Outside of the issues discussed above, the experts concluded that the content of the courses is consistent with the expectations for a bachelor programme. With the reservation about the shortage of penitentiary law oriented courses, the experts also conclude that the programme can achieve its central aims and learning outcomes and that the overall scope is sufficient. Given the fact that a good number of the teaching staff are also working in public sector, and that many of the faculty members are actively researching and publishing, the experts also have reason to believe that the content of the courses reasonably reflects the state of the art and science.

2.3. Teaching staff

Over the years, MRU has developed an impressive roster of teaching staff. About 1/3 of the faculty members are on permanent and/or full-time contracts, while about 2/3 are on short-term and/or part-time contracts. At first glance the high reliance on faculty with short-term and/or part-time contracts might seem to be a problem but after the visit the experts concluded that short term contracts tend to be renewed on a semester or annual basis and that most faculty prefer to work part-time because it allows them to also hold a job in government or private practice. The latter is to be considered a strength of the programme(s) because it ensures close connection between practice and academia and helps the students in finding internships and even permanent jobs via the contacts of their professors. In the self-evaluation reports, MRU acknowledged that short term contracts might lead to staff turnover which could be a problem with continuity of thesis supervision, i.e. that a student might experience two or even three different supervisors over the time frame of her thesis research. In practice, it was the impression of the experts that this is not a common occurrence.

The experts were satisfied with the qualifications of the teaching staff and found general compliance with the legal requirements. The experts also believe that the HEI is providing adequate and even good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff. Three factors should be complemented, in particular, in this respect. First, MRU has a good library and very good access to electronic resources, including many and expensive international databases and resources. Faculty members can work in a special room in the library and can also access the electronic resources from home. Second, MRU has recently developed a new building with a total of 19 research laboratories. In these labs, faculty members can benefit from subject-focused research networks and state of the art technology. It was the impression of the experts that quite many faculty members felt that these resources were accessible to them and/or had already participated in networks and attended conferences in the labs and even abroad. Third, MRU also offers workshops and presentations for the continuing professional development of its faculty and these were generally viewed as topical, accessible, and useful.

The main concern of the experts with regard to the faculty at MRU has to do with a new university regulation stipulating expectations for research and publication output of the teaching staff. Apparently, this new internal regulation mandates that all teaching staff has to re-apply for their own jobs on a regular basis and will only be re-appointed if they publish a minimum number of articles and books in a given time frame. While this idea is not new to academic environments and as such does not have to be bad, the way the requirements are formulated at MRU indicates either ignorance or indifference on behalf of the administrative leadership regarding the specifics of legal research. According to the regulation, only articles published in peer reviewed journals listed or indexed by Thomson Reuters and/or Scopus count towards the research requirement and, indeed, each member of the teaching staff is expected to place a certain number of articles in every three or five year period in such journals. The experts consider such a requirement to be unsuitable for law teachers in countries like Lithuania, in particular because there seems to be no way for the faculty at MRU to compensate a lack of success with publishing in these listed journals with other valuable research and publications.

To give a practical example, a faculty member at MRU would get recognition for a publication in a peer reviewed journal of international or comparative law from Ukraine, while she would get no recognition whatsoever for a publication in the Harvard Law Review, which is not formally peer

reviewed. Given the fact that it is certainly much more difficult to place an article in the Harvard Law Review and given the fact that the article in the Harvard Law Review would probably be accessible to and read by several hundred times the number of researchers compared to the article in the Ukrainian journal, this simply makes no sense. Moreover, most of the faculty members at MRU have so far focused their research activity on the development of Lithuanian law, for which there is limited appetite in the international market place of ideas. If they should have to publish in the international journals at all cost, they necessarily will neglect important research at the national level. The long-term harm to Lithuanian law and society should be obvious. Furthermore, the faculty at MRU are not native speakers of English and have little chance to get a piece accepted in an international journal unless they hire a native speaker to edit it for language content. Such editorial services are notoriously expensive and should not be imposed on local faculty with very modest salaries. Last but not least, the primary interlocutors of the Lithuanian professors are the students and legal professionals in Lithuania. This constituency needs qualified textbooks, casebooks, monographs, and articles about topics of national and regional importance, of which there is certainly no oversupply so far. By contrast, the primary consumers of the peer reviewed international journals are academics at wealthy foreign universities who can afford the enormous cost of access to databases and subscriptions including these journals. This constituency is well supplied as it is and of limited interest to the Lithuanian scientific community and society. At the end of the day, MRU has to ask itself whether it wants to serve its own vanity by focusing its efforts and resources into trying to get noticed by international rankings such as the ARWU or Shanghai ranking, or the QS University Rankings, or whether it wants to serve the constituents that need and pay for its services, namely the students, legal professionals, government agencies, NGOs, and academic colleagues in Lithuania and the Baltic region.

To prevent any misunderstanding, the experts are not suggesting that MRU should not encourage its faculty to publish in peer reviewed international journals or that it should not strive to climb up in international rankings. However, there are many colors between black and white and there are many valuable research and publication projects that are not listed by Thomson Reuters and/or Scopus. While MRU may be commended for setting targets and maybe even obligations for the research and publication activity of its faculty members, the basket of valuable and accepted publications has to be expanded far beyond these international databases, not least because they are generally poorly suited for legal research which by definition has a stronger national basis than, for example, research in the natural or economic sciences, of which there are no national branches. Instead of setting unrealistic targets for the teaching faculty and threatening them with loss of employment, MRU should think how it could support its faculty members if they wish to prepare a publication for submission to one of the international peer reviewed journals and reward them generously if indeed they succeed, as it is done in Sweden, for example, where rewards include funding for future travel to conferences and the like.

Given the fact that the experts detected a high level of uncertainty and increasing demotivation among faculty members, it should be a priority for MRU to clarify and modify these criteria. Otherwise, MRU stands to lose many good teachers and gain little or nothing in return.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The experts spent two days on the MRU campus in Vilnius and visited various classrooms, computer labs, library and other facilities, as well as the new building, September 2015, with the research laboratories. The facilities at MRU, both for the students and for the faculty, are exemplary

in every way. The experts understand that there were some shortages of space before, when the student population was still about 30% higher, but at the present time and for the foreseeable future, there are no space constraints and MRU should actually be proud of its physical facilities, which must be among the best one may find anywhere in Central and Eastern Europe.

The same goes for the teaching materials and other learning equipment. It is clear that MRU has heavily invested into its library, both as far as the space for the collection and work spaces for the users is concerned, as well as the collection itself. The number and range of books and journals in hardcover is at least adequate and probably good, in particular for a university in Lithuania. What makes the library outstanding, however, is the access to electronic resources. The experts were able to log into the MRU system and gain immediate access to a large number of important and expensive databases and collections that allow both students and staff to conduct research on par with their colleagues at many of the finest universities around the world. The experts were also pleased to see that the library is open 24/7 and that the electronic collections can be accessed from other parts of the campus and even from home by both students and staff. With wireless access to the internet throughout the buildings, there is really nothing that one could wish for beyond what MRU is currently offering with regard to premises, teaching and learning equipment, as well as teaching materials for the students in the law programmes.

The experts were also satisfied with the opportunities for students to do practice work. MRU makes active use of a large number of social partners and other connections and seems generally able to offer suitable practice places to all of its students in the law programmes, usually even in the area of specialization desired by the students. The only reservation the experts have in this regard was mentioned above under curriculum design, namely the problem that a major practice session is required in the final semester, alongside course work, thesis research, and exam preparation, which leads to an overload on the side of the students. This, in turn, has caused many drop outs, delays with the thesis preparation, and probably sub-optimal performance on exams. The experts have said this before and repeat it here, MRU should seek to re-structure the curriculum to de-congest the final semester and provide more time for the practice of the students.

2.5. Study process and student performance assessment

As outlined above, MRU so far did not have specific admission requirements beyond a general high school graduation diploma. The experts believe that this contributed to high drop-out rates, in particular during the first year, because a significant number of students are admitted that are simply not ready for university studies. MRU should either introduce stricter admission criteria or special remedial courses for students with low high school graduation marks. After the visit, the experts were informed that by decision of the MRU Senate of 9 May 2016, i.e. during the expert visit, a threshold for admission has been introduced. The experts welcome this development and hope that the threshold is high enough to provide the signaling intended with admission thresholds.

With regard to the organization of the study programme, we refer first to the remarks about problems with the curricular structure. Furthermore, the experts detected inconsistencies in the communications made available by MRU. The study programme was presented differently in the initial self-evaluation report, the study plan submitted during the site visit, and the information available on the website of MRU. The experts are concerned about sufficiently clear communication of programme structure and learning outcomes to the students.

However, when it came to the specific courses, the experts were provided with well-developed syllabi. These would suggest that students can obtain all required information, including course specific learning outcomes, assessment techniques, etc. from their professors even if the university administration seems to struggle with clear and consistent information dissemination.

For a programme at the bachelor level, the experts found that the students were sufficiently encouraged and able to participate in research and applied research activities. However, much of the required research is concentrated at the end of the bachelor programme, in particular in the form of the final thesis. As a consequence, many students were struggling with the production of high quality theses, causing some to run late by up to a full semester and others to drop out completely. MRU has been offering some preparatory workshops and each student is matched with an academic advisor for their thesis. The usefulness of the current writing course was questioned by some and in any case, these measures do not seem to be enough. The experts consider it desirable for the students to be introduced earlier and repeatedly into the art of legal research and writing. MRU should consider a writing requirement in each year of the bachelor programme, beginning maybe with a 15-20 page seminar paper in the first year and then increasing annually in length, and finally culminating with the 40-50 page final thesis requirement. Alternatively, students could be required to produce a shorter paper in every semester, with increasing expectations as to complexity and background research, to lead them gradually toward the goal of writing a publishable final thesis. Obviously, each student should be matched each time with an academic advisor and should receive feedback about the evolving research project and how to do even better next time.

The experts also found that student attendance is often low in the lectures, where attendance is not required, while students do come to the seminars, where attendance is required. The experts believe that MRU needs to find better ways to motivate students to attend the lectures as well. Assuming that the lectures provide the theoretical foundation for the seminars and practical work, it would seem not only a waste of resources but quite foolish for students not to attend and MRU not to care about the lectures. The combination of lectures with large groups and small group seminars, a bit like the system in the United Kingdom, should be a strength of MRU but currently does not seem to work that way. To the extent students complained about the lectures being frontal assaults and boring, MRU needs to train its faculty in delivering more engaging and worthwhile lectures.

The experts have already commented on practical access to mobility programmes in the section on curricular structure. As a reminder, MRU requires students to take the exams of all required courses after they go abroad for a semester. At the present time, students can neither defer some of these exams, nor obtain support from MRU in their preparation. This is a strong disincentive against participation in mobility programmes, although it seemed that plenty of places would be available. The experts recommend that MRU decongests the calendar, allows for some exams to be taken later, and provides support to the students in the preparation of the exams to enable more students to make actual use of available mobility opportunities.

Another concern with regard to the study process and student performance assessment is the relatively widespread reliance on multiple choice exams and an apparent disinterest on behalf of some faculty members and at least some of the administrative leaders at MRU to actively combat cheating in the exams. The experts heard from various constituents a high level of frustration with widespread cheating in exams and a basic lack of sanctions for such violations of academic honesty. This problem is apparently at a level that is by now damaging the reputation of MRU on a national level. The experts would like to strongly encourage MRU to take this problem more seriously and to

introduce additional and effective measures to reduce and ultimately eliminate the problem. If it is not already done, MRU should systematically require students to sign a pledge of academic honesty at the beginning of each and every exam. Students should be informed of the consequences of academic dishonesty, in particular the expulsion from the University for repeat and/or serious violations. In particular in larger classes, additional proctors may have to be made available during exams to monitor students and make successful cheating hard or impossible. As a corollary, the experts would like to encourage the faculty to avoid simple multiple choice exams wherever possible and instead require more complex problem solving exams where a quick glance to the neighbor or even an exchange of notes will provide far less advantages to dishonest students. The experts understand, however, that faculty often have only something like five working days to grade an entire set of exams, possibly even all their exams of an entire semester. This of course, given that some classes in the bachelor programme can number up to 200 students, is a powerful incentive for faculty to stick to multiple choice exams that can be graded swiftly. Logically, if indeed there is such a high time pressure for grading, this is another item that MRU should reform.

Finally, the experts also found some issues in the way grades are communicated to the students. On the one hand, MRU introduced a system of course evaluations that have to be completed or waived in order for grades to be accessed. This system is well intended to get a higher rate of return on the course evaluations. However, in practice, students seem too eager to get their grades quickly and usually just waive their right to evaluate a given course. On the other hand, it seems that review sessions after exams and explanations of grades are not always and certainly not readily available. In this regard, the experts would like to encourage MRU to re-think the timing and format of the course evaluations and to see whether it is possible to require a review session for each exam at the time when the grades are available. At the present time, it seems that MRU is not getting the full benefit of student course evaluations and the students are not getting the full benefit of exam assessments.

Certain weaknesses in the delivery of the courses and assessments have had little impact on the professional opportunities of the students, however. From meetings with students, graduates, and social partners, the experts conclude that in general the graduates have good opportunities in the job market. This is due, at least in part, to the excellent connections of MRU with its social partners and other employers.

2.6. Programme management

Pursuant to the self-evaluation report, responsibilities for programme management are distributed primarily by the Senate of MRU via the Quality Policy Provisions for the Studies and Research at MRU, and the Regulations of the System of Internal Study Quality Assurance at MRU. According to these documents, the Senate, the Committee for Assurance of MRU Studies Quality, the Vice-rector for Education, and the Academic Affairs Centre, as well as the Study Programmes Committee, the Faculties, and certain sub-units share different responsibilities in the implementation of the programmes.

Following the provisions of the Regulations of the System of Internal Study Quality *the Senate of the MRU, the Rectorate and the Committee for Assurance of MRU Studies Quality* are responsible for the formation and implementation of the study quality policy. *Faculties, Institutes and Study Programme Committees* are responsible for the quality of the study programmes and their practical implementation (correspondence of the study programme to the needs of students and the labor market, the provisions of University study policy and education achievements, supervision of

contents of study subjects, constant renewal and correspondence of the programmes to their study programme aims, for selecting the staff and initiation of their development of qualifications, supervision of the needs for material and informational sources, attraction of students and listeners). *The Academic Affairs Center* is responsible for initiating and preparing the policies ensuring the study quality, the quality of the study process, as well as coordination and support for the creation and renewal of study programmes. Finally, *university lecturers* are responsible for the quality of the lectures that they are giving (accomplishment of the study results, creative and innovative lecturing, quality of teaching material and correspondence for newest scientific achievements; quality of contact hours; correspondence to the needs of concrete students/listeners) and *students and listeners* are responsible for the personal study results and quality of their own studies. They are obliged to follow academic discipline, academic ethics, other university community requirements for the quality of the study process, and to provide feedback on the quality of studies.

The quality policy provisions for studies are focused on the following areas: strengthening the relationship between teaching and research, development of student-centered studies, fitness of studies for students, stakeholders and public purposes, interdisciplinarity of studies, innovations and entrepreneurship education, internationalization of studies and research (Quality Policy Provisions, para. 4).

As per the Regulations of the System of Internal Study Quality internal monitoring of study quality is carried out continuously and at all levels.

As indicated in the self-evaluation report, the structural unit responsible for the quality implementation of the Programme is the Faculty of Law, which offers bachelor degree, master degree and doctoral degree study Programmes.

As from 1 September 2015, there is one Study Programme Committee responsible for the quality of all bachelor degree programmes in law and their implementation. It consists of the heads of the bachelor degree programmes (Law, Law and Management; Law and Customs; Law and Penitentiary Activities), 2 teachers, one student from every bachelor degree programme, 1 graduate, 2 social partners (prof. dr. Egidija Tamošiūnienė, judge of Lithuanian Court of Appeal; Arūnas Kazlauskas, Chancellor of the Ministry of Justice).

Further, as explained in the self-evaluation report, the Committee considers the programme development plan, and possible improvements to the curriculum and the quality of the implementation process. It is also responsible for the staff selection and the supervision of the need of material and information resources. The Study Programme Committee adjusts study programme plans to incorporate improvements. The Faculty Council approves the adjustments. The approved adjustments are submitted to the Centre of Academic Affairs. The Centre of Academic Affairs, after assessing the matching of adjustments to the regulations, submits the adjustments for the approval of the Rectorate. Upon approval of the Rectorate, study programme renewals (improvements) are submitted to the Senate's Study Commission and, if approved by the Senate, the Academic Affairs Centre, which includes the Study Programmes and Quality Assurance Group, performs the coordination of the study programme implementation at the institutional level. This Group gives consultations and provides methodical assistance for such issues as preparation, evaluation and accreditation of study programmes, and the assurance of the quality of the studies.

Having reviewed this extremely complicated structure, the experts cannot avoid the impression that the structure may be responsible for at least some of the problems outlined above, in particular the unclear goals of different bachelor programmes, less-than ideal sequencing of courses within the bachelor programmes, and more broadly the curricular priorities in the general bachelor in Law and the bachelor in Law and Management. It is not clear to the experts whether MRU has been trying to address the problem of the high drop-out rates, whether and how MRU responds to critical feedback from students, for example about the problem of cheating in exams, or whether MRU has even considered the suggestion in the 2011 evaluation report that it should simplify the structure of the bachelor programmes and consider merging several of them into one. The experts suspect that the problems may have been discussed in various committees but in the end nobody took any decisions, either because they could not act on their own or because the discussions fizzled out before everybody was able to contribute their required input.

With regard to its management structures, MRU should examine itself carefully whether there might be a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth or an excessive fragmentation of the responsibilities with the effect that everybody should be but nobody does feel responsible for the development of the programmes and their constant adjustment to market needs and evolving standards of art and science.

The experts certainly believe that the programme structure and the management structure at MRU are much more complicated than at many other universities of similar size and that this complexity may be an obstacle rather than a benefit. We would strongly encourage MRU to rethink its structures and decision-making procedures to become more nimble and better able to achieve the constant self-improvement expected nowadays from any top quality higher education institution.

What MRU seems to be lacking, and this has become evident time and again as the experts reviewed the programmes and interviewed the different stakeholder, is a culture of constant critical self-evaluation and continuous and effective self-improvement. On paper, „internal monitoring of study quality is carried out continuously and at all levels.“ MRU even has a lively interaction with employers and social partners and receives many recommendations from them. However, in practice, the experts did not find many manifestations of reforms actually happening. MRU will not become a first rate university, unless such a culture can be implemented in practice and not just in theory.

Otherwise, the experts found that the procedures of opening, redesigning and closing of programmes are clearly disclosed in the documents provided by MRU and conform to legal requirements.

2.7. Examples of excellence

MRU's bachelor programme in Law and Penitentiary Activities has some courses taught by practitioners from the prison service and other penitentiary activities and these faculty members not only relate the current state of the art in the classroom but also provide opportunities for the students to do internships in prisons and with the public authorities dealing with penitentiary activities.

Other examples of excellence at MRU include the general qualification of the faculty, which is composed of many practitioners with in-depth experience in their respective fields, as well as many dedicated academics with a genuine desire to excel in the classroom and in their research work. A

related strength is the close cooperation of MRU with its social partners, many of whom are well-known and highly respected professionals in Vilnius and across the country. They provide advice to MRU – although it does not always get heard. More importantly, they provide practice placements to MRU students and job opportunities to its graduates.

Finally, MRU has excellent facilities for the students and the faculty and staff. Classrooms are functional and physically appealing, well equipped and sufficient in size and number. Workspaces in the library and computer labs are equally well equipped and sufficient. The library collection, in particular with its online access to important national and international databases, provides excellent opportunities for research. The faculty and some of the more advanced students can also make use of new research labs in a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to highly topical and often interdisciplinary research with a focus on inter-institutional and even international cooperation. MRU can only be congratulated on these facilities, they must be the gold-standard in the region to be emulated by other HEIs.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. MRU should communicate to potential students more clearly the requirements for admission, and the goals and learning outcomes of its various programmes in law and how they are reflected in different study plans and foci. Right now, it seems that too many students do not know what to apply for or do not get into their preferred programme. In this context, MRU also needs to ensure consistency between its written and online marketing and information sources.
2. MRU should also re-think its current admission policies to ensure that first of all, some students who are apparently not mature enough or not sufficiently prepared for university studies receive stronger signals that law studies may not be right for them. Second, MRU should seek to offer support structures for students who struggle during their first year in the bachelor. Other measures to address the unacceptably high drop-out rates may also need to be taken.
3. In the bachelor programme in Law and Penitentiary Activities, MRU should reduce the current focus on civil and criminal law and broaden the course offerings related to penitentiary activities.
4. In general, MRU should make more and better use of the discretion available to it under Lithuanian legislation and the mandates provided by the Constitutional Court to offer to its law students more interesting and better structured programmes. This includes not only more courses related to penitentiary activities as is required in the labor market, but a better balance between theoretical courses and practical courses. Specifically, the highly theoretical start of the programme should be mixed up with more practical and more exciting courses, which may incidentally contribute to a reduction of the drop-out rate in the first year.
5. MRU should also introduce a series of experiential learning opportunities into the bachelor programme, respectively expand significantly the current offerings in this regard. The experts consider it desirable that every student should have to participate in a certain number of credit hours of such experiential learning before graduation. A focus should be on legal writing. Along similar lines, the experts also recommend that all students should be introduced earlier and more systematically to academic research and writing in order to be better prepared for the final thesis.

6. Another modification MRU should make to the current study programme is the decongestion of the final semester where students currently may have to simultaneously take exams of required courses they missed during study abroad periods, take new courses, do a practice period, write the final thesis, and prepare for the final exams. This is also important with regard to improving the actual opportunities for students to participate in mobility schemes.

7. MRU should urgently figure out additional solutions to address the problem of cheating in exams.

8. With regard to the faculty, MRU should urgently re-think the current research and publication requirements since the insistency on numeric goals in Thomson Reuters and/or Scopus indexed journals is poorly suited for law professors in Lithuania and undervalues other important research achievements.

9. Finally, with regard to its administrative structures and its ability to respond to internal problems and external changes in the professional environment, MRU needs to become more nimble, better at recognizing internal weaknesses and external challenges, identifying possible solutions, taking decisions how to respond, and putting them into practice.

IV. SUMMARY

MRU has a solid infrastructure and excellent physical facilities for the delivery of its bachelor programme in law and penitentiary activities. The human resources, in particular the faculty, are very good. However, the experts have detected a number of weaknesses in the administration of MRU, where there seem to be too many layers of decision-making and a general unwillingness or inability to recognize weaknesses and implement reform.

From the beginning, MRU should communicate to potential students more clearly the requirements for admission, and the goals and learning outcomes of its various programmes in law and how they are reflected in different study plans and foci. Right now, it seems that too many students do not know what to apply for or do not get into their preferred programme. In this context, MRU also needs to ensure consistency between its written and online marketing and information sources.

Furthermore, MRU should re-think its current admission policies to ensure that first of all, some students who are apparently not mature enough or not sufficiently prepared for university studies receive stronger signals that law studies may not be right for them. Second, MRU should seek to offer support structures for students who struggle during their first year in the bachelor. Other measures to address the unacceptably high drop-out rates may also need to be taken.

In the bachelor programme in Law and Penitentiary Activities, MRU should reduce the current focus on civil and criminal law and broaden the course offerings related to penitentiary activities and a language course in Russian.

In general, MRU should make more and better use of the discretion available to it under Lithuanian legislation and the mandates provided by the Constitutional Court to offer to its law students more interesting and better structured programmes. This includes not only more courses related to penitentiary activities as is required in the labor market, but also a better balance between theoretical courses and practical courses. Specifically, the highly theoretical start of the programme should be mixed up with more practical and more exciting courses, which may incidentally contribute to a reduction of the drop-out rate in the first year.

MRU should also introduce a series of experiential learning opportunities into the bachelor programme, respectively expand significantly the current offerings in this regard. The experts

consider it desirable that every student should have to participate in a certain number of credit hours of such experiential learning before graduation. A focus should be on legal writing. Along similar lines, the experts also recommend that all students should be introduced earlier and more systematically to academic research and writing in order to be better prepared for the final thesis.

Another modification MRU should make to the current study programme is the decongestion of the final semester where students currently may have to simultaneously take exams of required courses they missed during study abroad periods, take new courses, do a practice period, write the final thesis, and prepare for the final exams. This is also important with regard to improving the actual opportunities for students to participate in mobility schemes.

To improve student assessment and ultimately its reputation as a serious provider of quality education, MRU should urgently figure out solutions to address the problem of cheating in exams.

With regard to the faculty, MRU should re-think the current research and publication requirements since the insistency on numeric goals in Thomson Reuters and/or Scopus indexed journals is poorly suited for law professors in Lithuania and undervalues other important research achievements.

In sum, only if MRU takes these recommendations seriously and develops a culture of constant critical self-evaluation and continuous and effective self-improvement, will it be able to develop its Bachelor of Law and Penitentiary Activities.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme Law and Penitentiary Activity (state code – 612M90004) at Mykolas Romeris 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	2
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	16

*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:	Prof. dr. Frank Emmert
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. dr. Ralf Alleweldt
	Prof. dr. Kerstin Nordlöf
	Mrs. Edita Ivanauskienė
	Ms. Aušrinė Nenortaitė

**MYKOLO ROMERIO UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
TEISĖ IR PENITENCINĖ VEIKLA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 612M90004) 2016-08-19
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-188 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Mykolo Romerio universiteto studijų programa *Teisė ir penitencinė veikla* (valstybinis kodas – 612M90004) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
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	2
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	17

* 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)

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

MRU turi solidžią infrastruktūrą ir puikius materialiuosius išteklius studijų programai *Teisė ir penitencinė* vykdyti. Žmogiškieji ištekliai, ypač fakultetas, yra labai geri. Vis dėlto ekspertai nustatė MRU administravimo silpnųjų pusių: atrodo, kad sprendimų priėmimo procese yra per daug sluoksnių, pastebimas bendras nenoras ar negebėjimas atpažinti silpnąsias puses ir įgyvendinti reformas.

Nuo pat pradžių MRU turėtų potencialiems studentams aiškiau komunikuoti priėmimo reikalavimus, įvairių siūlomų teisės programų tikslus ir studijų rezultatus bei kaip jie atsispindi

skirtinguose studijų planuose ir panašaus pobūdžio akcentus. Šiuo metu susidaro įspūdis, kad pernelyg daug studentų nežino, kur stoti, arba nepatenka į pageidaujamą programą. Esant tokiai situacijai, MRU turi užtikrinti rašytinės ir internetinės reklamos ir informacijos šaltinių nuoseklumą.

MRU taip pat reikėtų iš naujo apsvarstyti dabartinę priėmimo politiką ir, pirma, užtikrinti, kad akivaizdžiai nepakankamai subrendusiems ar nepakankamai pasirengusiems universitetinėms studijoms studentams būtų siunčiami stipresni signalai, jog teisės studijos galbūt nėra jiems tinkamas pasirinkimas. Antra, MRU turėtų pasiūlyti paramos mechanizmus studentams, kuriems sunkiai sekasi studijuoti pirmaisiais bakalauro studijų metais. Be to, gali reikėti imtis ir kitų priemonių siekiant sumažinti nepriimtinais aukštą „nubyrėjimo“ rodiklį.

Bakalauro laipsnio programoje *Teisė ir penitencinė veikla* MRU turėtų sumažinti dabartinį dėmesį civilinei ir baudžiamajai teisei ir išplėsti su penitencine veikla susijusių dalykų pasiūlą ir pasiūlyti rusų kalbos dalyką.

Apskritai MRU turėtų daugiau ir geriau išnaudoti Lietuvos įstatymuose ir Konstitucinio Teismo suteiktuose įgaliojimuose aukštajai mokyklai paliktą veiksmų laisvę siūlyti savo teisės programų studentams įdomesnes ir geriau sudarytas programas. Tai reiškia ne tik didesnę su penitencine veikla, kurios poreikį sąlygoja darbo rinka, susijusių dalykų pasiūlą, bet ir geresnę pusiausvyrą tarp teorinių ir praktinių dalykų. Konkrečiau kalbant, itin teorinius dalykus programos pradžioje reikėtų derinti su praktiškesniais ir patrauklesniais dalykais, kas galbūt leistų sumažinti „nubyrėjimo“ rodiklį pirmaisiais metais.

MRU taip pat turėtų bakalauro laipsnio programoje pasiūlyti patirtinio mokymosi galimybių ir atitinkamai gerokai išplėsti dabartinę tokio mokymosi pasiūlą. Ekspertų nuomone, pageidautina, kad prieš baigdamas studijas kiekvienas studentas sukauptų tam tikrą patirtinio mokymosi kreditų valandų skaičių. Akcentas turėtų būti teisinių tekstų rengimas. Ekspertai taip pat rekomenduoja anksčiau ir sistemingiau visus studentus supažindinti su akademinė tiriamąja veikla ir akademinio rašymu, kad studentai būtų geriau pasirengę rašyti baigiamąjį darbą.

Kitas pakeitimas, kurį dabartinėje studijų programoje turėtų įgyvendinti MRU, yra sumažinti krūvį paskutiniame semestre, per kurį studentai šiuo metu turi ir laikyti privalomų dalykų, kuriuos praleido studijuodami užsienyje, egzaminus, išklaudyti naujus dalykus, atlikti praktika, parašyti baigiamąjį darbą, ir rengtis baigiamiesiems egzaminams. Tai taip pat svarbu norint pagerinti realias galimybes studentams dalyvauti judumo programose.

Norėdamas pagerinti studentų vertinimą ir galiausiai savo, kaip rimto kokybiško švietimo teikėjo, reputaciją, MRU turėtų skubiai rasti sprendimų, kaip spręsti sukčiavimo per baigiamuosius egzaminus problemą.

Kalbant apie fakultetą, MRU turėtų skubiai persvarstyti dabartinius mokslinių tyrimų ir publikavimo reikalavimus, kadangi atkaklus reikalavimas pasiekti kiekybinių publikavimo „Thomson Reuters“ ir / arba „Scopus“ indeksuojamuose žurnaluose tikslų netinka teisės profesoriams Lietuvoje ir sumenkina kitų svarbių mokslinių pasiekimų vertę.

Apibendrinant, jeigu MRU rimtai įvertins visas šias rekomendacijas ir imsis puoselėti nuolatinio kritinio įsivertinimo ir efektyvaus tobulėjimo kultūrą, jis gebės ugdyti programos *Teisė ir penitencinė veikla* bakalaurus.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. MRU turėtų potencialiems studentams aiškiau komunikuoti priėmimo reikalavimus, įvairių siūlomų teisės programų tikslus ir studijų rezultatus bei kaip jie atsispindi skirtinguose studijų planuose ir panašaus pobūdžio akcentus. Šiuo metu susidaro įspūdis, kad pernelyg daug studentų nežino, kur stoti, arba nepatenka į pageidaujamą programą. Esant tokiai situacijai, MRU turi užtikrinti raštu bei internete vykdomos viešinimo veiklos ir informacijos šaltinių nuoseklumą.
2. MRU taip pat reikėtų iš naujo apsvarstyti dabartinę priėmimo politiką ir, pirma, užtikrinti, kad akivaizdžiai nepakankamai subrendusiems ar nepakankamai pasirengusiems universitetinėms studijoms studentams būtų siunčiami stipresni signalai, jog teisės studijos galbūt nėra jiems tinkamas pasirinkimas. Antra, MRU turėtų pasiūlyti paramos mechanizmus studentams, kuriems sunkiai sekasi studijuoti pirmaisiais bakalauro studijų metais. Be to, gali reikėti imtis ir kitų priemonių siekiant sumažinti nepriimtinais aukštą „nubyrėjimo“ rodiklį.
3. Bakalauro laipsnio programoje *Teisė ir penitencinė veikla* MRU turėtų sumažinti dėmesį civilinei ir baudžiamajai teisei ir išplėsti su penitencine veikla susijusių dalykų pasiūlą.
4. Apskritai MRU turėtų daugiau ir geriau išnaudoti Lietuvos įstatymuose ir Konstitucinio Teismo suteiktuose įgaliojimuose aukštajai mokyklai paliktą veiksmų laisvę siūlyti savo teisės programų studentams įdomesnes ir geriau sudarytas programas. Tai reiškia ne tik

didesnę su penitencine veikla, kurios poreikį sąlygoja darbo rinka, susijusių dalykų pasiūlą, bet ir geresnę pusiausvyrą tarp teorinių ir praktinių dalykų. Konkrečiau kalbant, itin teorinius dalykus programos pradžioje reikėtų derinti su praktiškesniais ir patrauklesniais dalykais, kas galbūt leistų sumažinti „nubyrėjimo“ rodiklį pirmaisiais metais.

5. MRU taip pat turėtų bakalauro laipsnio programoje pasiūlyti patirtinio mokymosi galimybių ir atitinkamai gerokai išplėsti dabartinę tokio mokymosi pasiūlą. Ekspertų nuomone, pageidautina, kad prieš baigdamas studijas kiekvienas studentas sukauptų tam tikrą patirtinio mokymosi kreditų valandų skaičių. Akcentas turėtų būti teisinių tekstų rengimas. Ekspertai taip pat rekomenduoja anksčiau ir sistemingiau visus studentus supažindinti su akademinė tiriamąja veikla ir akademinio rašymu, kad studentai būtų geriau pasirengę rašyti baigiamąjį darbą.
6. Kitas pakeitimas, kurį dabartinėje studijų programoje turėtų įgyvendinti MRU, yra sumažinti krūvį paskutiniame semestre, per kurį studentai šiuo metu turi ir laikyti privalomų dalykų, kuriuos praleido studijuodami užsienyje, egzaminus, išklaudyti naujus dalykus, atlikti praktiką, parašyti baigiamąjį darbą, ir rengtis baigiamiesiems egzaminams. Tai taip pat svarbu norint pagerinti realias galimybes studentams dalyvauti judumo programose.
7. MRU turėtų skubiai apmąstyti papildomas priemones, kurios leistų išspręsti sukčiavimo per egzaminus problemą.
8. Kalbant apie fakultetą, MRU turėtų skubiai persvarstyti dabartinius mokslinių tyrimų ir publikavimo reikalavimus, kadangi atkaklus reikalavimas pasiekti kiekybinių publikavimo „Thomson Reuters“ ir / arba „Scopus“ indeksuojamuose žurnaluose tikslų netinka teisės profesoriams Lietuvoje ir sumenkina kitų svarbių mokslinių pasiekimų vertę.
9. Galiausiai, kalbant apie administracines struktūras ir gebėjimą reaguoti į vidines problemas ir išorinius profesinės aplinkos pokyčius, MRU turi būti greitesnis ir geriau atpažinti vidines silpnąsias puses ir išorinius iššūkius, identifikuoti galimas išeitis, priimti sprendimus, kaip reaguoti, bei įgyvendinti sprendimus praktiškai.

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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)