



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETAS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *Religinis švietimas*
(*valstybinis kodas – 621V80004*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *Religious Education (state code - 621V80004)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VYTAUTUS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

Experts' team:

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Religinis švietimas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621V80004
Studijų sritis	Humanitariniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Religijos mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės (1,5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Religijos mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2002-06-14, Nr. 1093

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Religious Education</i>
State code	621V80004
Study area	Humanities
Study field	Religious Studies
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (1,5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Religious Studies
Date of registration of the study programme	14-06-2002, No. 1093

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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 Structure of the Self-Evaluation Report corresponds to the Methodological Guidelines.

This evaluation report is based on the self-evaluation report of Vytautas Magnus University, in Kaunas (SER) prepared by Prof dr Artūras Lukaševičius together with his team. The on-site evaluation was performed by the entire evaluation team on October 27-28, 2015 according to the following schedule.

27 October

9.00 – 9.45 Meeting with faculty administration staff

9.45 – 11.00 Meeting with staff responsible for preparation of Self-Evaluation Reports

11.15 – 12.30 Meeting with Teachers

14.15 – 15.00 Meeting with Religious Education (MA) students

15.45 – 16.15 Meeting with graduates of Religious Education (MA)

16.20 – 16.40 Meeting with social partners

28 October

9.00 – 10.00 Visiting auditoriums, libraries, other facilities

10.00 – 11.00 Familiarizing with students' final projects

11.00 – 12.00 Experts private discussion and finalisation of the visit

12.10 – 12.30 Introduction of general remarks of the visit to the university

The following evaluation report represents the unanimous opinion of the entire team.

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
	Not applicable

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

The second level Religious Education study programme is implemented by the Department of Religious Studies (hereinafter DRS) of the Faculty of Catholic Theology (hereinafter FCT) at Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University (hereafter – VMU). The Dean of the faculty is assoc. prof. dr B. Ulevičius (since spring of 2007); the Head of Religious Studies Department is prof. dr. E. Danilevičius (since 1 September 2006).

The programme is realised in close cooperation with other units of the FCT and VMU: Department of Theology, Centre of Lithuanian Catholic Church, Centre of Christian Education, Centre of Matrimony and Family Studies, with the Faculties of Social Sciences, Humanities, Quality and Strategy Office, Office of International Relations. The second level of Religious Education study programme has been offered since 2002.

The Structure of the presented Self-Evaluation Report fully corresponds to the Methodological Guidelines.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' 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 27-28/10/2015.

- 1. Prof. Peter Jonkers (team leader)** *Tilburg University, Professor of Department of Systematic Theology and Philosophy, the Netherlands.*
- 2. Assoc. Prof. Olga Schihalejev**, *Tartu University, Associated Professor of the Faculty of Theology, Estonia.*
- 3. Prof. Rev. Stanislaw Rabiej**, *University of Opole, Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Poland.*
- 4. Prof. Rev. Vidas Balčius**, *Pontifical Urbaniana University, Associated Professor, Vatican City.*
- 5. Ms Daina Habdankaitė**, *student of Vilnius University of Philosophy master degree study programme, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

2.1.1 Clarity and accessibility of the programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme scope and aims are well-defined and logical. The aims and learning outcomes of the Programme are expressed in competences directed to achievement of the Programme tasks. After accomplishing the studies graduates are expected to: 1) Accomplish valid small-scale research in the area of religious education; 2) Develop research-based projects in the area of religious education; 3) Evaluate the processes of religious education; 4) Initiate informal religious education; 5) Apply theological knowledge in personal life and educational activities; 6) Promote the idea of lifelong learning in relation to the Christian vocation among the youth and adults; 7) Transfer the knowledge of religion to the youth and adults effectively; 8) Respond to different ethical and moral problems and manage them by promotion of various research methodologies and disciplines of religious education.

When it comes to the clarity of the programme aims and learning outcomes the following changes are recommended by the review team.

First, it should be made more explicit how the program meets the requirements of VMU Strategy to foster openness, diversity and tolerance. Although the review team experienced that graduates, students and staff were open and tolerant in informal talks and teachers claimed to have this dimension in different courses present, this aim should be made more explicit also on the level of programme aims. The aims of the programme do not reflect the competencies needed for working in the context of diversity and multicultural relations, in which the work and teaching must meet the standards of openness and tolerance. Also the graduates of the programme said that more attention should be paid to interreligious competencies and ecumenical dimension. Second, in view of the need of labour market the fourth outcome should include both formal and informal education. Third, the seventh learning outcome (“knowledge transfer”) belongs to teacher centered learning paradigm and should be modified in a way which regards students to be active, reflexive, responsible and critical thinkers.

The purpose and learning outcomes of the Programme are publicly accessible on the Internet sites (www.vdu.lt, www.studijos.lt, www.balsas.lt, www.aikos.smm.lt, www.bernardinai.lt), in journals and newspapers. (See § 38 of SER) The tasks of the Programme are in compliance with the requirements set for the second cycle and university study programmes.

Additionally, two issues that have to be addressed by the faculty management in the process of the regular improvement of this programme are: 1) the difference and complementarity between

this Programme and BA programme “Religion pedagogy”(during the site visit, some graduates complained about a certain overlap between these two programmes); 2) the specific features of the Programme in relation to the Christian Anthropological Pedagogy at Lithuanian University of Education. This kind of clarification would help to found the argument that “Religious education Programme is the only programme of this kind in Lithuania” (SER, § 43).

2.1.2 Basement of programme aims with academic standards and public needs

The Programme responds to the needs of specialists in religious education, both in schools as teachers of Religious Education, as well as in parishes as catechists. The National Education Strategy for 2013-2022 notes that teachers who work in gymnasiums and upper vocational schools are required to have at least a Master’s degree. The need for catechists was confirmed both by SER as well as by stakeholders. Many graduates work in schools as teachers of RE, kindergartens, catechetical centres, Christian media, hospitals. The tasks of the Programme are in compliance with the requirements set for the second cycle (Master, EQF level 7) and university study programmes. The graduates are equipped with tools what help them to plan and improve their professional activities by critically assessing them.

2.1.3 Consistency of programme aims with qualifications offered

The Programme purpose, tasks and learning outcomes are in general consistent with the type and level of studies. The Programme equips students with theological knowledge and general analytical skills.

Although the SER stresses the great need for RE teachers in school, the Programme does not prepare graduates to become RE teachers in schools unless they qualified as RE-teachers during their previous study. As underlined by the dean of the faculty, BA programme aims at preparation of catholic teachers while the MA programme prepares catholic educators who are given the tools to work with the knowledge they have in a more complex context than school environment. Although students with no or insufficient background in theology have to complete a preparatory programme before entering this MA-programme, this preparatory programme does not include any pedagogical and didactic qualifications. However, the aims and outcomes of the MA-programme are hardly achievable without prior pedagogical training. This aspect should be clarified in respective documents and the admission requirements to the Programme have to be adapted accordingly.

2.1.4 Internal consistency of name, outcomes, content and qualification

The intended learning outcomes at the Programme level are reflected in the learning outcomes on the level of the individual courses. But from the Table 4 in SER we can see that the third outcome is less represented in courses compared to other outcomes in the Programme. Each course unit is directed to achieve several Programme learning outcomes.

The evaluation of the learning outcomes is performed at the end of each semester using the appropriate questionnaires. Based on the responses and other input received, if necessary, the contents of the study subjects and/or learning outcomes are updated under the supervision of the Study Programme Committee.

2.2. Curriculum design

2.2.1 Compliance of the Programme curriculum with legal acts

This Master studies programme is defined in published documents as a second cycle course designed to develop professional and research qualification. Master studies are oriented towards an analytic and applied activity and developing professional qualification. The programme content is based on the concept of Religious Studies maintained by the Holy See and its corresponding guidelines as well as on the requirements for Religious Studies in Lithuania. The programme curriculum complies with the dispositions of the Order issued by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science.

The volume of studies in the Master in Religious Education is 90 ECTS; the duration, 1.5 years; the study form, full-time studies. This is in compliance with the requirements of legal acts. A total of 60 ECTS is allocated for Study field courses, 30 ECTS is allocated to the final thesis and its preparation, as it is required in the legal acts. Also the volume of courses unit is between 4-6 ECTS, as required; and no more than 5 courses is required in a semester.

2.2.2 Spread of subjects

The Table 6 in SER indicates slightly uneven workload, in total 34 ECTS-s for the last semester. The workload of contact work for students of the Programme during the entire period of studies is 600 teaching hours (25% of study time), 120 for the first two semesters and 75 hours for the last one when more individual work is planned.

2.2.3 Consistency of the contents of the subjects with the level of the studies

The contents of the subjects are diverse and cover a broad range of issues, including for example visual communication, contemporary media. The range and complexity of themes are in compliance with the learning outcomes (Annex1). The logic of the structure of the Religious Education programme courses and modules is based on the relation between and sequence of the study subjects. The programme Curriculum is divided into three units. The first unit is composed of courses focused on training in researcher competence; the second unit includes courses focused on the development of educational competence; the third unit includes courses focused on the development of competence in Religious Studies, the subjects are not repetitive. However, some of the students and graduates, who have a BA in religious studies or religious education, said that they have the impression that some of the subjects taught on MA level repeat the material they have received on the BA level.

2.2.4 Appropriateness of content and methods for the achievements of intended learning outcomes

The learning outcomes are set out in a logical and coherent manner in the study plan by delivering theory-method subjects and case studies in a balanced way. The Programme fosters students' civic participation in the social environment by encouraging participation in voluntary work during their studies. Attention in the Programme studies is paid both to individual and cooperative work. In order to ensure an opportunity for students to consult teachers in performance of individual tasks, on-line and e-learning methods are actively applied.

The Programme encourages students to think analytically and also creatively. Diverse teaching methods are used to achieve Programme learning outcomes: contact work (lectures, seminars), self-study, practice, individual and group consultations and supervisions. As described in SER, during contact hours, teachers use various active study methods: brainstorming, focus group, project method, cooperative learning, interpersonal exchange, visualizing of situations, learning-by-doing, experiential learning, debate, etc. (SER, § 70)

2.2.5 The scope of the programme

The Programme has a broad and interdisciplinary approach. It equips students with theological knowledge and general analytical skills, but to a lesser extent with pedagogical repertoires and research skills, as became clear by reading the MA-theses (see below). Even though there are some subjects that help to acquire pedagogical competencies, the programme would gain from a greater emphasis on pedagogical theories, so that students can develop their professional

analytical skills, especially given the fact that many students come from different fields. Although the law does not require pedagogical practice from a non-teacher qualification programme, the programme aims and outcomes suggest a greater amount of practical courses, which are hardly to be met without prior pedagogical training. The Programme consists only two courses categorised as practical (Annex 1). In addition, even if students are encouraged to take part in different catechetical activities, there is no formal requirement for the pedagogical practice. Even in case students practice teaching in formal or informal educational settings they lack professional feedback and are weakly equipped with pedagogical theories what could help them to analyse professionally, as students and graduates pointed out.

The programme is well-focused on combining research with practice. This can be indicated by the topics of MA final theses which usually combine theoretical and practical research aspects. As confirmed by the students themselves, the MA thesis writing process is well-organized: the topic and the supervisor is chosen by the student in the first semester and all his/her academic work and writings during the following two semesters is directed towards the final thesis. Analytic research skills, indispensable for scientific research work, are developed during essay writing, preparation of seminar presentations, writing research papers and performing thematic homework. The Review team found that many MA thesis had methodological flaws and presented results in a non-dialogical way. For example, not all empirical research papers have a section on research ethics, and also the descriptions of data collecting and especially data analysing methods are often too brief. They tend to be just descriptive, and not argumentative. The Programme would benefit from a reinforced research competencies and strengthening the skills of constructive dialogue with contemporary society.

2.2.6 Latest achievements

It is difficult to decide how well the Programme reflects the latest achievements in science, very little theories or researches are named in the documents provided. Two indicators were used by the reviewers to assess this component, namely interviews with teachers and the list of required textbooks and articles for the students. Most of the courses fulfill the requirement, but some should update the textbooks used – both to cover more up-to date research and approaches as well as to add a diversity of approaches. For example, in the case of *Biblical catechesis* the list of required textbooks is slightly outdated (the most recently published dates from 2000), and the newest textbook for the courses *Preparation of Adults for the Sacramental Life* and *Catechetical Methods* date from 2001.

2.3. Teaching staff

2.3.1. Compliance of staff composition with legal requirements

Qualification of the academic staff corresponds to the General Requirements for Study Programmes, all 7 of them have doctoral degrees, two have professor's and the rest have associate professor's academic title. The teachers are employed according the descriptions of qualification requirements approved by the VMU Senate as well as teacher and academic personnel's attestation order.

2.3.2 Compliance of staff experience with the Programme

Staff qualification levels are sufficient for meeting the programme's aims and outcomes. The requirements listed in the description of the study field are met. The teachers' pedagogical activity experience is sufficient as the majority of teachers have worked in the universities for 15 years on average. All the members of teaching staff have practical work experience in the area of religious education and pastoral activity.

Most Programme teachers prepare and constantly update the didactical material related to the subject they teach. During the analyzed period, programme teachers published 3 textbooks, in addition monographs, textbooks, educational publications or scientific articles within the area of their taught subject have been published.

The bibliography presented in the Self-Evaluation Report by some lecturers should be renewed, namely with literature related specifically to their particular subject and ongoing scientific work. All teachers expand their academic experience in various formal and non-formal ways (e.g. giving presentations in scientific events, conducting and participating in radio and TV programs, writing articles and giving interviews to scientific and popular media channels, working with the youth and adult groups, particularly in areas of Catechesis and Religious education. Teaching staff qualification is sufficient to achieve Programme learning outcomes, as all teachers have special education in the areas they teach, are active in scientific research and expert activities in the same area.

2.3.3 Number of teaching staff and workload

The Programme enjoys a low student-teacher ratio, which facilitates keeping the track of student's progress and has good impact on their motivation. In total, 7 teachers are teaching at the Programme. The teacher-student ratio at lectures and seminars is 7-11 students per one teacher.

Normal workload of a full-time teacher is 36 hours per week. It consists of 12-18 hours per week teacher contact hours, research and didactical work. This teaching load lets hardly any time for research, as teachers need time for preparation of the teaching and they give feedback to students, as indicated in the interviews. The remaining time is planned individually by the teacher, covering the preparation of publications, research planning, preparation of lecture material, etc. Teachers are assisted in carrying out their pedagogical work, programme teachers are assisted by 2 administrative office workers.

2.3.4 Turnover of teaching staff

During the evaluation period there were few changes in the academic staff composition with positive results to run the Programme. The full time-staff is stable; there were few changes in staff composition of the Programme in last 5 years and only two teachers left the program. The average age of the academic staff is 49, majority are 41-55. The composition of teaching staff of the Programme maintains a balance of majority of scholars working in the Programme on regular basis. There are very limited possibilities to train new researchers with doctoral degree in area of Religious studies, which limits the aftergrowth of academic staff.

2.3.5 Professional development

Almost all teachers of the Programme upgrade their qualification by participating in seminars, courses, internships and mobility programmes. Each year 10 or more teachers of the Programmes of FCT leave for foreign universities according to Erasmus exchange programme or other academic mobility programmes to teach, present a paper at international scientific conferences, or to get acquainted with achievements of partners in scientific research area. Visits to universities and faculties abroad form an important part of qualification upgrading in VMU. The qualification upgrading measures provide new knowledge and equip teaching staff with the latest teaching methods. For example, the teachers have been trained in wording of learning outcomes and planning the teaching in accordance to it, either on university or on department level. There is also a time for consultation on an individual level for new teachers. There is ample communication among the teachers about possible overlap of the courses and aims.

In addition, the Programme teachers contribute to the local community, in addition to work in university they work in areas of training of catechists, preparation of children and adults for sacraments, family counselling, conducting various practical workshops, actively participating in various educational seminars and recollections. Each teacher indicates the development of their qualification in presenting an annual report of his/her individual activity. The administration of

the Faculty motivates teachers to gain higher academic scientific degrees. These various factors have had an impact on the continuous improvement of the study programme's quality.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

2.4.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies

The Faculty is located in 7, 7b, 7c Gimnazijos street; the premises were transferred to the university by the Archdiocese for 99 years under a utilization agreement. In the premises of 7b and 7c Gimnazijos str. there are 10 auditoriums; almost all of which have multimedia projector equipment installed.

The premises for studies are in compliance with labour security and hygiene norm requirements. The occupation of workspaces is rational. Designing the timetable for lectures, the number of students in the course and the number of working places in the premise are taken into account. The majority of auditoriums are occupied from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Vacant auditoriums are used to organize student self-study activities, individual and group consultations, additional seminars and other events. The level of study process computerization is sufficient. The existing agreement with Microsoft allows the updating all university computers with the latest programme versions.

The Faculty owns Stasys Šalkauskis Theology Reading Room where specialised literature sources are collected. Students and teachers can use publications of two libraries: VMU library with 3 Lending Departments, 8 Reading Rooms (with 436 working places, 74 of them computerised and equipped with the latest technologies and Internet connections) and Kaunas Priest Seminary library where specialised literature sources are collected. Conditions are created for students to perform independent work assignments in all university reading rooms. The main reading room is equipped with e-workplace for visitors with disabilities. However, the reading rooms are not open after 7 pm.

The conditions are created for students to perform independent work projects; libraries and reading rooms by and large comply with the requirements.

2.4.2. Sufficiency and suitability of equipment for studies

In the Deanery of FCT there are 12 computerised working places installed, equipped with 6 printers, 3 copying machines, 4 laptops and 3 multimedia projectors. There is one computerised classroom and 1 student's room for students.

Students and teachers have access to databases from VMU Library webpage via VMU computers. A student using public access (OPAC) can perform a search for a broad range of publications in electronic catalogues and can make orders for publications.

Reference lists of main sources necessary for the Programme are presented in each study subject description. Collections of the main books, textbooks and other publications in Lithuanian and foreign languages, necessary for the Programme, are in general sufficient in VMU Library and its Reading Rooms. The teachers affiliated with the Religious Education Programme have prepared educational books, textbooks and other publications necessary for the programme. The didactical and scientific literature written and collected by the Programme teachers is open and accessible to colleagues and students via intranet using FirstClass and Moodle platforms. Students of the Religious Education Programme can also access didactical publications and other material in electronic form on the intranet in study subject conference folders, where teachers of the programme post their course materials. Programme first year students get information about study organization, infrastructure, study programme, coordinating people, etc.

2.4.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training

The premises and equipment is better adjusted for practicing traditional teacher centred methods than contemporary and learner centred methods. Only one auditorium has movable chairs and fully meets requirements for seminars or group works setting in FCT. The Programme would benefit from opportunity to practice more varied contemporary teaching-learning equipment, including iPads, videotaping facilities etc.).

2.4.4. Suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications

Students and teachers have access to databases from VMU Library webpage via VMU computers. The total number of publications at University Library exceeds 296,000, half of which are on open stocks. The Library recommends and provides access to FCT students to 17 databases. A student using public access can perform a search for a broad range of publications in electronic catalogues and can make orders for publications. The VMU Library has 33017 social sciences titles. The repository of the specialized library consists of 10181 publications. The repository of Stasys Šalkauskis Theological Reading Room contained 12461 physical items. The book collection for theology and religious education are largely outdated. But it is compensated by the fact that students can use both e-databases and also library equipped with good books on general pedagogy.

Reference lists of main sources necessary for the Programme are presented in each study subject description. Collections of the main books, textbooks and other publications in Lithuanian and foreign languages, necessary for the Programme, are in general sufficient in VMU Library and its Reading Rooms.

The total number of periodicals received in 2014 was 293 titles. In reading rooms students have access to rare academic and research publications, reference books (encyclopaedias, dictionaries, and manuals) and periodicals.

The teachers affiliated with the Religious Education Programme have prepared educational books, textbooks and other publications necessary for the programme. The didactical and scientific literature written and collected by the Programme teachers is open and accessible to colleagues and students via intranet using FirstClass and Moodle platforms. Programme first year students receive welcome packs which present useful information about study organization, infrastructure, study programme, coordinating people, etc.

Some of the required books are not available or there is only 1-2 copies: (e.g. Kelly, G.A. *Pastor's Challenge: Parish Leadership in an Age of Division, Doubt, and Spiritual Hunger*; Gumuliauskienė A. *Švietimas ir ugdymas: metodologinių kontekstų kaita ir prakseologija.*; Leicester M., Modgil C. and Modgil S. *Spiritual and religious education* etc.)

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

2.5.1 Rationality of requirement for admission to the studies

The admission process is organized according to the *Law on Science and Studies* (Ministry of Education and Science, No XI-242 of 30 April 2009), the requirements of *Sapientia Christiana*, and the admission rules approved by VMU Rector. Admission rules are published on VMU and FCT websites.

Applicants to Religious Education Programme are accepted on the basis of the public admission procedure. The minimal admission requirement is to hold a Bachelor's degree or a recognized equivalent from an accredited institution.

Since 2010, the entrants to the state budget financed places of the Programme have to take a motivation test, organized by Ministry of Education and Sciences. In addition, a written recommendation by a priest is requested. The latter prerequisite refers to the requirements of Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties *Sapientia Christiana* (art. 31) as the attestation of the suitability and motivation of the candidate (art. 24.1). However, given the fact that the Programme is implemented by public State University that declares being directed

by *Artes liberales* idea, the mentioned requirement is problematic and even contradictory. This fact becomes relevant especially since Lithuania is an independent democratic Republic (Constitution, art. 1), declares the freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art. 26), states the accessibility of higher education to everyone according to his abilities (art. 41) and asserts that culture, science, research and teaching are free (art.42).

2.5.2. Organisation of the study process

The study process is regulated by semester study schedule which indicates classroom work forms, their time, duration and location, the language the course is taught in, the teacher's name and surname. In exceptional cases students can study according to an individual study timetable. Studies according to the individual study timetable are regulated by the order "On individual study timetable procedures" approved by the Vice-Rector for Studies.

The students are acquainted with the aim and learning outcomes of the course unit and the accumulative system of assessment. Final examinations are taken at the end of each semester. The schedule of the final examinations is set a month prior to the start of the examination session.

Some students and graduates felt the programme to be too intensive, especially in the beginning if they had to do supplementary studies and during the last semester when writing a final paper.

It seems from the meeting with the students that both practice orientated (current or future teachers) and research orientated (those who plan to continue their studies on PhD level) are content with the structure and the content of the programme. What should be noted, though, is the length of the programme: most of the students confirmed The Panel's doubt whether three semesters are enough to complete the whole programme. The suggestion of expanding the programme into four semesters has been expressed by the students and the graduates with the argument that more time is needed to write a MA thesis. If expanded, the programme would also benefit in achieving both practical and theoretical research outcomes. As noted by the graduates, more guidance and feedback on practices would be welcome as well as more subjects in ecumenical dimension and comparative analysis would strengthen the programme, as mentioned above. In conclusion, expanding programme into 4 semesters would definitely strengthen it in terms of both scientific research and practical application.

2.5.3. Student academic performance

The Programme students are encouraged to participate in Faculty scientific events, conferences; attend lectures delivered by visiting scholars from foreign countries. Analytical skills and

personal reflection are formed while preparing for seminar presentations, writing research papers and performing homework assignments.

At FCT scientific research is most actively performed by research centres as well as VMU inter-faculty research clusters. Students are invited to publish their scientific articles in the scientific Religious science journal “Soter”, published by FCT.

2.5.4. Mobility of teachers and students

Polish universities play an important role as FCT foreign partners in scientific research area. The faculty cooperates with Pontifical universities and faculties in Europe and United States. There are also occasional visits to universities in Asia and Ukraine.

At least three times a year students are invited to listen to an incoming lecturer, giving lectures related to their studies. FCT students are introduced to opportunities of Erasmus exchange programme since the first year of studies; they are also reminded of the importance to acquire foreign language competence. Since 2010, only one student of Religious Education Programme has gone to study abroad through the Erasmus programme. Small number of Programme students participating in the mobility programme was caused not only by a lack of financial resources for Erasmus programme but also by the fact that Programme students are usually people who have families and are employed and are not fluent enough in English.

2.5.5. Student support

Both academic and social support is provided for students by formal and informal feedback. Consulting is performed face-to-face during officially announced hours, as well as using different on-line forms, such as Skype, e-mail, discussion forums, communication environments that are convenient for students.

Students are provided with comprehensive consultation on career opportunities. A number of successful full-time study students receive a grant from the state. Graduates have found employment in two major areas: as teachers of Catholic religion at schools and as catechists or administrative workers in parishes (Annex 5).

VMU Office of Student Affairs takes care of students' social affairs in all VMU: manages the system of accommodation of student at VMU dormitories, administrates social and enhancement scholarships, exemptions for tuition fees and accommodation fees, etc. The Student Representative Council represents students' interests, develops cultural and social activities.

A number of successful full-time study students receive a grant from the state.

2.5.6. Student achievement assessment

In the Religious Education Programme, most subjects are assessed according to the following accumulating mark system: mid-semester examination – 15-35%; intermediate appraisal(s) – 15-35%; final examination – 50%. Faculty members apply different assessment methods, depending on the learning outcomes to be assessed. In general, the assessment criteria correspond to the intended outcomes of the course. In the majority of Programme courses, students make oral presentations of their individual assignment (essays, reviews, projects, etc.), and these are discussed in class with feedback given orally by the teacher and other participants. In case of disagreement, the student has a right to appeal to the Faculty Dean in 3 days after the evaluation was posted, requesting to review the mark.

The themes of the Master Theses include a wide variety of topics and in accordance with the Programme's aims the research is practice orientated. Every thesis is comprised of theoretical and empirical part. The Review team found some methodological flaws in theses, methodology of empirical study was vaguely described and very few papers discussed how the ethical requirements of an empirical research were dealt. Despite this fact remarkably high grades are given for the final papers.

2.5.7. Graduates placement

Graduates have found employment in two major areas. Some Programme graduates have acquired pedagogical qualification and work in upper secondary schools as teachers of Catholic Religious education at Kaunas archdiocese schools and other regions of Lithuania. Another major field of working is catechists or administrative workers in parishes. The social partners appreciated enthusiasm and good social skills of the graduates. The professional activities of most graduates correspond to the study programme's aims, and their professional success shows they have been properly prepared.

2.6. Programme management

2.6.1. Efficiency of the programme management activities

VMU administrating units, participating in the implementation of the Programme is: Study Programme Committee Department of Religious Studies, FCT, and Faculty Council. Programme administration and programme quality assurance are regulated by corresponding documents. The main unit for the management of the Programme is the Study Programme Committee, composed of qualified and experienced teachers, doctorate student, alumni representatives, and social

partners and coordinated by a chairman (actually prof. dr. E. Danilevičius). The Committee takes decisions by common agreement in Department meetings, in cooperation with the Faculty Council, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Study Quality Centre, the Vice-Rector for Studies, etc.

Like all the other Programmes provided by FCT, the Programme, is approved by the Congregation for Catholic Education and must meet also the requirements specified in the corresponding documents of appointed Congregation. The Grand Chancellor represents the Faculty in the Congregation and the Congregation in the Faculty. Each five years the Dean prepares a report about the faculty and the major changes in the Programme and submits it to the Grand Chancellor, who then presents the report to the Congregation for approval of changes.

2.6.2. Suitability of the Programme quality assessment

The Programme is subjected to constant internal quality evaluation. The measures used are coordinated and meet the aims of the evaluation process. The internal study quality assurance at VMU is on-going process which covers: a) the evaluation and development of the study programme, b) programme course units, c) teaching quality assessment and improvement.

Every year, on the basis of the information provided by the internal study quality assurance system, final thesis assessment, teacher research activity and production indicators, University study programme committees take measures to eliminate programme shortcomings that have emerged during the academic year.

2.6.3. Using evaluations for the improvement

The Programme is subjected to constant internal quality evaluation – teachers get feedback from students and programme management. At the end of every semester, students are encouraged to assess via e-questionnaire every course quality and method of teaching. There is the constant fine-tuning of the programme and the subjects according to the feedback received from students, staff and stakeholders. The internal quality assurance of VMU requires courses to be accredited every three years.

2.6.7. Involvement of the stakeholders

All Programme teachers, students and social partners can propose Programme updating measures for SPC. At the end of each semester students are asked to express their opinion by filling the questionnaires about the teaching quality of every course unit they took that semester. Employers participate in the activities of SPC, assess students' knowledge and ability compliance with the

demands of the labour market, and express their opinions about the relevance of the Programme. The stakeholders are content with graduates and value their social skills which enable to relate to diverse target group. The feedback from alumni is collected mostly via face-to-face meetings and on-line discussions. Feedback is constantly received from the social partners of the Programme. Feedback received from the school principals, teachers, and Church organizations is of utmost importance in renewal of Programme learning outcomes, improving study conditions, reviewing curriculum design. There is a need to organize feedback from potential employers and graduates not only in non-formal but also in more formalized way. The process and outcomes of Programme evaluation and improvement are accessible to the stakeholders.

2.7. Examples of excellence

The Theological Faculty at VMU is well run and the staff works clearly as a team. The effective and dialogical program management at FCT supports and motivates staff to improve and students to achieve their learning outcomes as well as to grow personally. The communication works two ways in all the levels. The feedback is collected both in formal and informal ways. In a formal level, the data on students' satisfaction with the Programme and courses is collected, also graduates' further career is regularly collected and analysed. The information it is used effectively to fine-tune the Programme tasks and learning outcomes and to improve teaching. Students get relevant constructive feedback to their work both formally and informally. Teachers are supported by courses both in university level as well by individual mentoring in faculty level and by an effective motivation system.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Seeking to be better adjusted for working in open and pluralistic society the skills of ecumenical and intra-religious dialogue should be fostered in the program.
2. The differences between the BA Religion Pedagogy Programme and the MA Religious Education Programme should be better clarified.
3. Dialogical approach regarding religious diversity, which is present in informal level, should be brought to the formal level of the programme as well as to academic writing.
4. In the list of reference material for some study units (see observations on the *Curriculum design*), a clear distinction between different categories of the proposed texts would be requested. The primary textbooks should be annually updated.
5. According to the possibilities of the FCT and in collaboration with the university administration, seek to create more reasonable conditions on teaching staff workload issue to allow a greater commitment to scientific research, publishing activity and professional development.
6. The aims of the program are too ambitious for a 1,5 year's study program. The review team supports the idea to prolong studies to 4 semesters (120 ESCT) in order to achieve better the pedagogical and methodological aims and learning outcomes of the programme. Another option is to modify the learning outcomes in expense of meeting the needs of labour market.
7. Since the Programme is implemented by public State University that declares being directed by *Artes liberales* idea, the written recommendation of the priest as a formal requirement for admission to the Programme should be reconsidered because is ambiguous and contradictory, furthermore, comes into tension with the statement of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania. The issue evoked asks definitely find the new way to be in compliance with the demands of the Holy See.

IV. SUMMARY

1. The program corresponds with a clear need of the labour market. The learning outcomes reflect the needs of church, but not so much of a school. The aims of fostering openness and tolerance are weakly expressed.
2. The curriculum design meets legal requirements. The content of the subjects and/or modules is consistent with the type and level of the studies. The scope of the programme needs to have more practical subjects and practice, also greater emphasis on research methods to ensure learning outcomes.
3. The study programme is provided by the staff not only meeting legal requirements but also contributes both to the international academic community as well as to serving local community in Kaunas and in society. It is made up of highly qualified and motivated people. The teaching workload is very high, what gives too little space for doing research.
4. The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality. The students can use VMU libraries as well as Reading rooms. The premises and equipment is better adjusted for practicing traditional teacher centred methods than contemporary and learner centred methods.
5. The organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme, they get constructive feedback and support from their teachers. The research papers are clearly related to the field of study but they have some methodological flaws. Graduates work mostly as catechists in churches, but in case they have teacher qualification also as teachers in upper secondary level.
6. There is an effective programme management which supports both academic as well as personal growth of students and the staff. The faculty enjoys support of stakeholders and social partners.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme Religious Education (state code – 621V80004) at Vytautas Magnus 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	3
3.	Teaching staff	4
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	4
	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.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. Peter Jonkers
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. Stanislaw Rabiej
	Assoc. Prof. Olga Schihalejev
	Prof. Rev. Vidas Balčius
	Ms Daina Habdankaitė

**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS *RELIGINIS ŠVIETIMAS* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621V80004) 2015-12-
01 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-315 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

VI. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Religinis švietimas* (valstybinis kodas – 621V80004) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	4
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	4
	Iš viso:	20

* 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)

<...>

2.7. Išskirtinės kokybės pavyzdžiai

VDU Teologijos fakultetas yra gerai valdomas, o personalas aktyviai dirba kaip viena komanda. Efektyvus ir dialoginis KTF programos valdymas padeda ir motyvuoja personalą tobulėti, o studentus – siekti savo studijų rezultatų ir asmeniškai tobulėti. Visais lygmenimis

vykdoma abipusė komunikacija. Grįžtamasis ryšys gaunamas tiek oficialiai, tiek neformaliai. Oficialiuoju būdu reguliariai renkama ir analizuojama informacija apie studentų pasitenkinimą programa ir studijų dalykais, taip pat informacija apie absolventų tolesnę karjerą. Informacija naudojama programos tikslams ir studijų rezultatams efektyviai reglamentuoti ir tobulinti dėstytojų kokybę. Studentams teikiami atitinkami konstruktyvūs atsiliepimai apie jų darbą tiek oficialiai, tiek neformaliai. Dėstytojams teikiama parama pagal dalykus universitete ir asmeniškai fakultete, taip pat jiems siūloma veiksminga motyvacinė sistema.

IV. SANTRAUKA

1. Programa tenkina aiškius darbo rinkos poreikius. Studijų rezultatai atspindi bažnyčios poreikius, bet nepakankamai atspindi universiteto poreikius. Tikslai – puoselėti atvirumą ir toleranciją išreikšti silpnai.

2. Programos sandara atitinka teisinius reikalavimus. Dalykų ir (ar) modulių turinys atitinka studijų tipą ir lygį. Programos apimčiai reikėtų daugiau praktinių dalykų ir praktikos, taip pat daugiau dėmesio reikėtų skirti mokslinių tyrimų metodams, skirtiems studijų rezultatams užtikrinti.

3. Studijų programą dėsto personalas, ne tik tenkinantis teisinius reikalavimus, bet taip pat prisidedantis prie tarptautinės akademinės bendruomenės ir tarnaujantis vietos bendruomenei Kaune ir visuomenei. Personalą sudaro itin kvalifikuoti ir motyvuoti žmonės. Dėstytojų krūvis labai aukštas, tai teikia mažai erdvės moksliniams tyrimams vykdyti.

4. Studijų patalpos yra tinkamos tiek dydžio, tiek kokybės atžvilgiu. Studentai gali naudotis VDU bibliotekomis ir skaityklomis. Patalpos ir įranga geriau pritaikyta tradiciniam į dėstytoją sukoncentruotam dėstytojų nei šiuolaikiškiems į besimokantįjį sukoncentruotiems dėstytojų metodams.

5. Studijų proceso organizavimas užtikrina atitinkamą programos teikimą, studentai gauna konstruktyvų grįžtamąjį ryšį ir savo dėstytojų pagalbą. Tiriamieji darbai aiškiai susieti su studijų sritimi, tačiau jie pasižymi keliais metodiniais trūkumais. Absolventai daugiausia dirba bažnyčiose katechetais, taip pat jei turi mokytojo kvalifikaciją, dirba mokytojais vidurinėse mokyklose.

6. Programos vadyba yra efektyvi, remiamas akademinis ir asmeninis studentų bei personalo tobulėjimas. Socialiniai dalininkai ir socialiniai partneriai teikia paramą fakultetui.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Siekiant geriau prisitaikyti prie darbo atviroje ir pliuralistinėje visuomenėje, programos vykdytojai turėtų puoselėti ekumeninio ir intrareliginio dialogo įgūdžius.

2. Reikėtų aiškiau išdėstyti skirtumus tarp Religijos pedagogikos bakalauro programos ir Religinio švietimo magistro programos.

3. Dialoginis požiūris į religinę įvairovę, kuris egzistuoja neformaliai, turėtų būti formalizuotas tiek programoje, tiek akademiniam rašyme.

4. Kai kurių studijų dalykų literatūros sąrašuose reikėtų aiškiai atskirti skirtingas siūlomų tekstų kategorijas (žr. pastebėjimus apie *Programos sandarą*). Pagrindinius vadovėlius reikėtų atnaujinti kasmet.

5. Bendradarbiaudamas su universiteto administracija KTF, pagal savo galimybes, turėtų ieškoti, kaip geriau spręsti dėstytojų darbo krūvio problemą, kad jie galėtų daugiau laiko skirti moksliniams tyrimams, leidybinei veiklai ir profesiniam tobulėjimui.

6. Programos tikslai yra per daug ambicingi kaip studijų programai, kuri trunka 1,5 metų. Vertinimo grupė remia idėją studijas pailginti iki 4 semestrų (120 ESCT), tam, kad būtų geriau pasiekiami pedagoginiai ir metodiniai tikslai bei programos studijų rezultatai. Kita išeitis – keisti studijų rezultatus darbo rinkos poreikių tenkinimo sąskaita.

7. Kadangi programą įgyvendina valstybinis universitetas, kuris deklaruoja besivadovaujantis *artes liberales* idėja, rašytinė kunigo rekomendacija kaip oficialus reikalavimas įstoti į šią programą turėtų būti persvarstyta, nes ji dviprasmiška ir prieštaringa, be to, nėra suderinama su Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija. Iškeltas klausimas reikalauja rasti naujų būdų, kaip veikti pagal Šventojo Sosto reikalavimus.

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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)