



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Mykolo Romerio universiteto
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TEISĖ* (valstybinis kodas – 621M90011)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *LAW* (state code -621M90011)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Mykolas Romeris University**

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Teisė</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621M90011
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Teisė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1,5), Iššęstinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Teisės magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-02-19, Nr. ISAK-225

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Law</i>
State code	621M90011
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Law
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (1,5), Part-time (2)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Law
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-02-19, No. ISAK-225

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Background of the evaluation process	4
1.2. General.....	4
1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information	5
1.4. The Review Team.....	6
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	6
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	6
2.2. Curriculum design	7
2.3. Teaching staff	9
2.4. Facilities and learning resources	10
2.5. Study process and student performance assessment.....	10
2.6. Programme management	11
2.7. Examples of excellence	13
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	14
IV. SUMMARY.....	15
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	17

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.	Annex 5: Study Plans for Full Time and Part Time Students (in English).
2.	List of Names of all participants from the Senior Management team, SER team, Teaching Staff team, Graduates and Social Partners teams.

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 (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).

The six programmes listed above were subject to review in the present procedure and this report reflects the findings of the expert team with regard to the general Master of Law (#5 above) and its four areas of specialization. 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, in particular 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. It is strongly suggested that the next evaluation of the Master programme(s) should include all Master of Law programmes offered at MRU in Vilnius and all courses accessible to students in these programmes.

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 unhelpful from the point of view of 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 by the HEI, which created the impression among the experts that MRU was trying to impress without necessarily 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”. Specifically with regard to “Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes”, the

respective passage in the self-evaluation report for the Master of Law reads as follows: “Taking into account expectations of business and future employees [sic], *it is planned* to strengthen the learning outcomes of International law specialization related to the practical knowledge, interdisciplinary approach as well as development of general abilities to make the programme ‘closer to the ground’ and more practice oriented. Furthermore, practice *might be introduced* in all specializations in the future, as this is the aim included in the 5 years strategic plan of the Faculty of Law” (emphasis added). This language shows an awareness of the problems but does not show a firm commitment to do anything about them, let alone a clear idea what should be done and when and how. 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, LL.M. (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, which has to be effectively communicated to (potential) students. The experts found weaknesses in this regard in the bachelor programmes offered by MRU in Vilnius. Those are elaborated in the corresponding evaluation reports.

At the Master level, the situation is different, however. Applicants to the Master programme are either just finishing their bachelor degree at MRU and want to continue their education to become qualified as attorneys, or they are mid-career professionals seeking to acquire additional knowledge and skills and/or formal qualifications. It is quite safe to assume that both of these groups of potential students are well aware of the programme structure and the available course options, as well as the pro's and con's of the four different specializations for their respective career goals. Nevertheless, MRU should make an effort at improving its website since it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to identify the courses actually offered in a given academic year on the basis of the website and/or various printed materials available from MRU.

With the exception of inconsistencies between the website and printed materials, the experts found the programme aims and learning outcomes reasonably well defined and accessible. However, what is much less clear is whether the programme aims and outcomes are sufficiently in tune with the academic and professional requirements, public needs, and the needs of the labor market. On the one hand, MRU graduates generally find employment that corresponds to their level of education and personal expectations, even if salaries, at least at the entry level, are often low. On the other hand, graduates and social partners identified a number of weaknesses of the average graduate from the MRU Master of Law programme that indicate systemic problems. While the self-evaluation report claims that “[t]he Programme is regularly updated in accordance with [various MRU procedures and the] Programme is annually revised (usually in November) in order to check whether any changes or improvements are required”, the experts got the impression that the programme has not been updated in a while and does not reflect the needs of the labor market very well. It certainly could do better. The evaluation of the Bachelor in Law already commented on the managerial structures at MRU, which are probably too complicated and cumbersome, effectively leading to a lot of talk and very little action when it comes to the continuous improvement of the programmes offered at the HEI. Some of that will be brought up also in this report under section 2.6. but the reader is encouraged to read the Bachelor report for a fuller understanding of the critique.

For the present purposes, it may suffice to say that the experts gained the impression that recent changes in the Master of Law were implemented in response to declining student numbers and not in response to the needs of the profession and the labor market. Unfortunately, to the extent courses were cut, they apparently were cut not because they were less important but because a particular faculty member was let go or left. MRU is strongly encouraged to develop an overall strategic vision for the Master of Law – including the Master Programme in European and International Business Law not subject to the current evaluation – and to identify clearly the strategic priorities and core courses versus a range of optional or elective courses. The former need to be offered by permanent faculty on an annual basis, whereas the latter could be offered by part-time or adjunct faculty on an as needed basis. The current division between compulsory courses and “alternative subjects” is not very well in tune with market needs and best practice standards at other leading law schools in the EU and the rest of the developed world. The experts refer to section 2.2. for more detailed critique and specific suggestions for improvement.

2.2. Curriculum design

The experts had to review, at least in theory, the curriculum design of four separate specializations in the Master of Laws at MRU. As a reminder, these specializations are #1 civil law, #2 civil justice, #3 criminal law and criminology, and #4 international law. From the outset, it was not quite clear why a distinction should be made between civil law and civil justice and whether separate specializations in this regard would be sensible. However, the problem seems to have resolved itself since MRU has not admitted students into the **civil justice** specialization since 2014. Given the overall decline in student numbers, mostly caused by demographics, it would seem unlikely that the specialization in civil justice would be revived any time soon. In

light of the fact that the experts did not receive any detailed study plans or course listings for this specialization either, the evaluation explicitly excludes a review of the specialization civil justice and the recommendation for the accreditation of the Master in Law does not pertain to this specialization.

That being said, it would seem suitable and befitting for MRU to offer the remaining specializations. **Criminal law and criminology** are traditional strengths of MRU and the specialization is suitable for students pursuing employment in the criminal justice sector and/or as defense attorneys. The curriculum in this area seems to cover the subject comprehensively and without being repetitive. The content of the subjects would seem consistent with Master level studies and appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The formula of MRU to offer roughly equal hours of theoretical lectures and more hands-on seminars in tandem seems appropriate and effective for the subjects at hand. One shortcoming is the insufficient emphasis on international and comparative approaches to criminal law. EU law and the law developed by the European Court of Human Rights are essential elements to be taught in the context of criminal law these days!

In the specialization dealing with **civil law**, the experts found a number of weaknesses with regard to the curricular offerings. On the one hand, courses such as “contract law” would seem too basic and belong in the ambit of the bachelor programme. On the other hand, European Union law, which has an ever increasing influence in the area of civil law, does not seem to be on the menu at all since 2013/14. Maybe even more important is the absence of any course offerings in the field of “international business transactions”, as well as courses in “private international law”, “corporate law”, as well as “tax law”. “Enforcement of court judgments” and “international commercial arbitration”, inexplicably, have also not been offered since 2013/14. The lack of business law related courses was also a point brought up by the employers and social partners when asked about weaknesses of MRU graduates. Closely related was the criticism that MRU graduates generally do not have a professional competence in English. The experts believe that the HEI should quickly improve its curricular offerings in this direction, namely by introducing more business law, including EU and international civil and business law. The latter courses should also be offered in English for students wishing to build their professional competence to deal with foreign clients and/or to represent Lithuanian clients in civil and commercial dealings in the EU and beyond.

The specialization **international law** should be renamed “public international law” to better reflect its virtually exclusive focus on matters traditionally understood to fall into this category and to distinguish it more clearly from the other Master offered by MRU in European and international business law. If MRU were to continue the claim that the specialization covers international law in general, which would have to include international business law, private international law, international family and inheritance law, etc., the experts would have to conclude that the label is misleading. By contrast, if understood as a specialization in public international law, the scope and content of the programme are adequate, which is not surprising, given MRU’s traditional strength in public law.

With regard to the question whether the content of the programme in all three remaining specializations reflects the **latest achievements in science, art and technology**, the experts were of the opinion that the preparation of the students for the production of a high quality Master thesis would benefit from improvements. In particular, it seems that legal research and legal writing should be strengthened. At present, legal research is not offered outside of a few hours for preparation of the Master thesis, and legal writing is offered, if at all, only in the context of the Master thesis preparation, i.e. as academic writing. What should be expanded, and this has been confirmed by the employers and social partners, is legal writing *for professionals*, including

such topics as contract drafting and the drafting of various documents for courts and public offices. Furthermore, the curriculum is short on elements that would qualify for experiential learning, such as moot court competitions, clinical legal work, supervised externships, and the like. MRU is encouraged to explore a modernization of its curricular offerings in this regard. Last but not least, the experts would like to return to the issue of language proficiency and recommend that MRU not only introduce several substantive courses taught in English, such as European Union law, but also offer legal English language courses as such, and provide an opportunity that students should be able to write their final thesis in English. In particular in light of the fact that Lithuania is a small country and a member state of the European Union, professional proficiency in English is an absolute must for many legal professionals these days and MRU is so far not addressing this need of the labor market at all. General courses in legal English may need to be offered as additional electives outside of the 90 credit curriculum to avoid competition with other urgently needed additional courses.

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. The point is developed in greater detail in the report on the Bachelor Programme in Law and does not need to be repeated here in full. Readers are referred to the corresponding section in the other evaluation report.

In the meeting with the experts, faculty members expressed their desire to receive more and/or better courses and workshops on academic writing in English for international publication, which clearly shows their willingness to work with the new requirements. This should be a priority for MRU regardless of a modification to these new requirements. Given the fact that the experts detected a high level of uncertainty and increasing demotivation among faculty members, both the modification of the criteria and the improvement of the support system should be top priorities for MRU. Otherwise, the university 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 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 not able to examine in any detail whether the teaching materials assigned for the different courses at the Master level were adequate and sufficiently accessible. The syllabi generally listed a range of works, sometimes including international materials. While the experts had no reason to doubt that those materials would be accessible, we suggest that the professors may want to pick one primary text that every student would have to get, and in addition suggest further reading that would be available in the library and/or online.

2.5. Study process and student performance assessment

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.

With regard to admission requirements, the experts believe that MRU is applying reasonable standards for admission marks. There does not seem to be a correlation between admission standards and drop-out rates. The latter are worrisome in the specialization criminal law and criminology, in particular in the part-time programme (up to 30%). MRU should study why such a large number of students are dropping out in this area and introduce measures to reduce the number of drop-outs. These may include better information to potential students about the work-load and complexity of tasks expected from part-time students, as well as better support structures and tools for admitted at-risk students.

Concerning the question whether students are encouraged to participate in research and applied research activities, reference is made to section 2.3. and specifically the remarks about the new building with the research laboratories. The experts had the impression that Master students, in particular, are encouraged to be involved in research projects under the umbrella of the topical research laboratories, which is a great opportunity for these students.

The fact that students are not specifically encouraged, let alone required, to participate in student mobility programmes at the Master level is of no further concern to the experts, as long as mobility opportunities at the Bachelor level are improved, as suggested by the experts in the evaluation of the Bachelor of Law programme.

Concerns do exist, however, about the assessment of the students at the Master level. From the meetings with students and faculty, the experts gained the impression that final exams typically last for only 60 to 90 minutes and often rely heavily on multiple choice or short answer questions. If this is indeed the case, such a basis for student assessment is not adequate for studies at the Master level. The average final exam for students in the Master programme should be a 4 to 5 hour exam in which the students have to work on life-like cases of some complexity and come up with comprehensive client memos, applications to court, or appellate briefs, and the like, and demonstrate critical thinking and advanced problems solving skills. The experts would strongly encourage future evaluation teams to examine whether this recommendation has been heeded by MRU.

Finally, with regard to professional activities of the graduates, the experts conclude that the opportunities for the graduates meet the expectations of the programme provider and the students and graduates themselves. Employment opportunities are in line with the education provided by MRU and comparable to other Master of Law programmes in the region. They may indeed be better than in some of the more advanced countries in the EU and the rest of the world, which would indicate a sustained need in the Lithuanian market place for highly qualified lawyers.

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 a Study Programme Committee responsible for the quality of the Master programmes in law and their implementation. 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 lack of a clear vision for the curriculum and its constant development to meet the needs of the profession and the labor market. It is not clear to the experts whether MRU has been trying to address the problems it identified in the self-evaluation report, in particular the mismatch between the course offerings and the expectations of employers and the market in general, the lack of practice oriented courses, and the high drop-out rates in the part-time division, or whether MRU at least has some kind of a real and specific plan to address these issues. 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.“ In practice, the experts did not find many or even any manifestations of this 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

The strengths of MRU's Master programme in law are in the area of criminal law and criminology and, to a lesser extent, in public international law. This should be more clearly communicated via the website and other information made available to prospective students.

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. In general, MRU has to become more self-critical and nimble at implementing reforms. A modern research university can only remain competitive in the long term if it develops a culture of constant self-reflection and self-improvement. MRU needs to flatten its hierarchies and accelerate and simplify its decision-making structures to become more responsive to changes in the market, both as far as student numbers are concerned, and the expectations in the labor market. Reform plans have to become more specific, with clear targets, deadlines, financing solutions, and implementation responsibilities.
2. In the Master of Law programme, MRU needs to permanently drop the specialization “civil justice”. There is not objective need for it and the experts were not able to evaluate the study plan in this regard. The experts’ recommendation for accreditation does not pertain to the specialization “civil justice”.
3. The specialization “international law” is mislabeled and needs to be changed to “public international law” since it does not cover other areas of international law.
4. In the specialization “criminal law and criminology” MRU should examine the reasons for high drop-out rates in the part-time programme and offer better information prior to enrolment about expectations and work-load, as well as better support after enrolment for at-risk students.
5. More generally, the experts recommend that MRU should develop all Master programmes in law in tandem, including the Master in European and international business law that was not subject to the present evaluation. One way this might be done could involve the designation of about 45 subject specific credits required for each of the specializations and a pool of common elective courses from which the students would satisfy the other 45 credits for a total of 90. This could enable, for example, students in civil law to take some courses on European Union and international business law as electives.
6. Actual course requirements and course offerings need to be communicated more clearly to (potential) students and the information provided on the website and in printed materials needs to be updated and harmonized.
7. In addition to a general expansion of course offerings in the areas of European and international (business) law, the experts recommend that at least some of these substantive courses should also be offered in an English language version since a majority of actual cases involving these subject matters in the practice of a legal professional in Lithuania these days will have to be dealt with in English language.

8. MRU should also strengthen practice oriented course offerings such as legal research and legal writing for professionals. Academic writing for the thesis could benefit from English language components to enable and encourage students to write their final thesis in English if it focuses on EU and/or international law issues. Along similar lines, MRU should include some experiential learning opportunities at the Master level, such as (international) moot court competitions, clinical legal work, and externships.

9. With regard to its 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.

10. Last but not least, MRU should improve the methods of student assessment in the Master of Law programme and shift more exams to longer and more complex problem solving exams that are suitable to assess critical thinking and professional writing skills.

IV. SUMMARY

MRU has a solid infrastructure and excellent physical facilities for the delivery of its Master of Law programme. 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. In general, MRU has to become more self-critical and nimble at implementing reforms. A modern research university can only remain competitive in the long term if it develops a culture of constant self-reflection and self-improvement. MRU needs to flatten its hierarchies and accelerate and simplify its decision-making structures to become more responsive to changes in the market, both as far as student numbers are concerned, and the expectations in the labor market. Reform plans have to become more specific, with clear targets, deadlines, financing solutions, and implementation responsibilities.

In the Master of Law programme, MRU needs to permanently drop the specialization “civil justice”. There is not objective need for it and the experts were not able to evaluate the study plan in this regard. The experts’ recommendation for accreditation does not pertain to the specialization “civil justice”. The specialization “international law” is mislabeled and should to be changed to “public international law” since it does not cover other areas of international law. In the specialization “criminal law and criminology” MRU should examine the reasons for high drop-out rates in the part-time programme and offer better information prior to enrolment about expectations and work-load, as well as better support after enrolment for at-risk students. More generally, the experts recommend that MRU should develop all Master programmes in law in tandem, including the Master in European and international business law that was not subject to the present evaluation. One way this might be done could involve the designation of about 45 subject specific credits required for each of the specializations and a pool of common elective courses from which the students would satisfy the other 45 credits for a total of 90. This could enable, for example, students in civil law to take some courses on European Union and international business law as electives.

The experts also had the impression that communication by MRU to its various stakeholders is not clear enough. Actual course requirements and course offerings need to be communicated more clearly to (potential) students and the information provided on the website and in printed materials needs to be updated and harmonized.

In addition to a general expansion of course offerings in the areas of European and international (business) law, the experts recommend that at least some of these substantive courses should also be offered in an English language version since a majority of actual cases

involving these subject matters in the practice of a legal professional in Lithuania these days will have to be dealt with in English language. MRU should also strengthen practice oriented course offerings such as legal research and legal writing for professionals. Academic writing for the thesis could benefit from English language components to enable and encourage students to write their final thesis in English if it focuses on EU and/or international law issues. Along similar lines, MRU should include some experiential learning opportunities at the Master level, such as (international) moot court competitions, clinical legal work, and externships.

With regard to its 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.

Last but not least, MRU should improve the methods of student assessment in the Master of Law programme and shift more exams to longer and more complex problem solving exams that are suitable to assess critical thinking and professional writing skills.

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 Master of Law.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme Law (state code – 621M90011) 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	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	18

*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 ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS *TEISĖ* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621M90011) 2016-08-19
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-186 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Mykolo Romerio universiteto studijų programa *Teisė* (valstybinis kodas – 621M90011) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	18

* 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)

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IV. SANTRAUKA

MRU turi solidžią infrastruktūrą ir puikius materialiuosius išteklius magistro laipsnio studijų programai *Teisė* 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. Apskritai MRU turėtų būti labiau savikritiškas ir greičiau įgyvendinti reformas. Modernus mokslo universitetas konkurencingas ilgą laiką gali išlikti tik tuo atveju, jei puoselėja nuolatinės savirefleksijos ir tobulėjimo kultūrą. Norėdamas greičiau reaguoti į rinkos pokyčius tiek studentų skaičiaus, tiek darbo rinkos lūkesčių požiūriu, MRU turi supaprastinti savo hierarchiją, padaryti aiškesnę sprendimų priėmimo struktūrą. Reformų planai turi būti

konkretesni, numatant aiškius tikslus, įgyvendinimo terminus, finansavimo struktūras ir atsakomybę už įgyvendinimą.

Magistro laipsnio programoje Teisė MRU reikia visam laikui atsisakyti Civilinės teisės specializacijos. Jai nėra jokio objektyvaus poreikio, be to, ekspertams nepavyko įvertinti tokios specializacijos studijų plano. Ekspertų rekomendacija dėl akreditacijos nėra taikoma Civilinės teisės specializacijai. Tarptautinės teisės specializacijos pavadinimas yra klaidinantis ir turi būti pakeistas į Viešoji tarptautinė teisė, kadangi specializacija neapima kitų tarptautinės teisės sričių. Specializacijoje Baudžiamoji teisė ir kriminologija MRU turėtų išnagrinėti aukšto studentų „nubyrėjimo“ rodiklio iššęstinėse studijose priežastis ir stojančiuosius iki įstojimo geriau informuoti apie programos lūkesčius ir darbo krūvį, taip pat labiau remti rizikos grupės studentus po priėmimo. Apskritai ekspertai rekomenduoja MRU visas magistro laipsnio studijų programas, įskaitant magistro laipsnio studijų programą Europos ir tarptautinė verslo teisė, kuri per šį vertinimą nebuvo vertinta, rengti vienu metu. Vienas būdas, kaip tai būtų galima padaryti, yra skirti apie 45 kreditus dalykams, kurie reikalingi konkrečiai specializacijai, ir pasiūlyti bendrojo pobūdžio pasirenkamuosius dalykus, iš kurių studentai galėtų susirinkti dar 45 kreditus, kad iš viso gautų 90 kreditų. Tokia praktika leistų, pavyzdžiui, civilinės teisės studentams pasirinkti kai kuriuos dalykus, pavyzdžiui, Europos Sąjungos ar tarptautinę verslo teisę, kaip pasirenkamuosius dalykus.

Ekspertams taip pat susidarė įspūdis, kad MRU komunikacija su įvairiais socialiniais dalininkais yra nepakankamai aiški. Faktiniai dalykų reikalavimai ir dalykų pasiūla turi būti geriau komunikuojami (potencialiems) studentams, be to, svetainėje ir spausdintinėje medžiagoje pateikiama informacija turi būti atnaujinta ir suderinta.

Be poreikio apskritai padidinti dalykų Europos ir tarptautinės (verslo) teisės srityse pasiūlą, ekspertai rekomenduoja bent kai kuriuos iš šių svarbių dalykų dėstyti anglų kalba, kadangi dauguma realių bylų šiomis temomis teisininko praktikoje Lietuvoje šiais laikais turės būti vedamos anglų kalba. MRU taip pat turėtų išplėsti į praktiką orientuotų dalykų pasiūlą, pavyzdžiui, teisinį tyrimą ir teisinę kalbą profesionalams. Akademiniis baigiamojo darbo rašymas palengvėtų, jei kai kurie dalykai būtų dėstomi anglų kalba, taip studentai būtų skatinami baigiamuosius darbus rašyti anglų kalba, jei baigiamojo darbo tema yra susijusi su ES ir (arba) tarptautine teise. Panašiai MRU turėtų sudaryti kažkiek patirtinio mokymosi galimybių magistro laipsnio studentams, pavyzdžiui, dalyvauti teisminės inscenizacijos (tarptautiniuose) konkursuose, klinikiniame teisiniame darbe ir atlikti praktiką.

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.

Galų gale MRU turėtų pagerinti teisės magistro laipsnio studijų programos studentų vertinimo metodus, prailginti daugelio egzaminų trukmę ir juos skirti sudėtingesnėms problemoms spręsti. Tokie egzaminai būtų tinkamesni studentų kritiniam mąstymui ir profesiniams rašymo įgūdžiams įvertinti.

MRU gebės ugdyti teisės magistrus tik tuo atveju, jei rimtai įvertins visas šias rekomendacijas ir ims puoselėti nuolatinio kritinio įsivertinimo ir efektyvaus tobulėjimo kultūrą.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Apskritai MRU turėtų būti labiau savikritiškas ir greičiau įgyvendinti reformas. Modernus mokslo universitetas konkurencingas ilgą laiką gali išlikti tik tuo atveju, jei puoselėja nuolatinės savirefleksijos ir tobulėjimo kultūrą. Norėdamas greičiau reaguoti į rinkos pokyčius tiek studentų skaičiaus, tiek darbo rinkos lūkesčių požiūriu, MRU turi supaprastinti savo hierarchiją, padaryti aiškesnę sprendimų priėmimo struktūrą. Reformų planai turi būti konkretesni, numatant aiškius tikslus, įgyvendinimo terminus, finansavimo struktūras ir atsakomybę už įgyvendinimą.
2. Magistro laipsnio programoje Teisė MRU reikia visam laikui atsisakyti Civilinės teisės specializacijos. Jai nėra jokio objektyvaus poreikio, be to, ekspertams nepavyko įvertinti tokios specializacijos studijų plano. Ekspertų rekomendacija dėl akreditacijos nėra taikoma Civilinės teisės specializacijai.
3. Tarptautinės teisės specializacijos pavadinimas yra klaidinantis ir turėtų būti pakeistas į Viešojo tarptautinė teisė, kadangi specializacija neapima kitų tarptautinės teisės sričių.
4. Specializacijoje Baudžiamoji teisė ir kriminologija MRU turėtų išnagrinėti aukšto studentų „nubyrėjimo“ rodiklio ištęstinėse studijose priežastis ir stojančiuosius iki įstojimo geriau informuoti apie programos lūkesčius ir darbo krūvį, taip pat labiau remti rizikos grupės studentus po priėmimo.
5. Apskritai ekspertai rekomenduoja MRU visas magistro laipsnio studijų programas, įskaitant magistro laipsnio studijų programą Europos ir tarptautinė verslo teisė, kuri per šį vertinimą nebuvo vertinta, rengti vienu metu. Vienas būdas, kaip tai būtų galima padaryti, yra skirti apie 45 kreditus dalykams, kurie reikalingi konkrečiai specializacijai, ir pasiūlyti bendrojo pobūdžio pasirenkamuosius dalykus, iš kurių studentai galėtų susirinkti dar 45 kreditus, kad iš viso gautų 90 kreditų. Tokia praktika leistų, pavyzdžiui,

civilinės teisės studentams pasirinkti kai kuriuos dalykus, pavyzdžiui, Europos Sąjungos ar tarptautinę verslo teisę, kaip pasirenkamuosius dalykus.

6. Faktiniai dalykų reikalavimai ir dalykų pasiūla turi būti geriau komunikuojami (potencialiems) studentams, be to, svetainėje ir spausdintinėje medžiagoje pateikiama informacija turi būti atnaujinta ir suderinta.
7. Be poreikio apskritai padidinti dalykų Europos ir tarptautinės (verslo) teisės srityse pasiūlą, ekspertai rekomenduoja bent kai kuriuos iš šių svarbių dalykų dėstyti anglų kalba, kadangi dauguma realių bylų šiomis temomis teisininko praktikoje Lietuvoje šiais laikais turės būti vedamos anglų kalba.
8. MRU taip pat turėtų išplėsti į praktiką orientuotų dalykų pasiūlą, pavyzdžiui, teisinį tyrimą ir teisinę kalbą profesionalams. Akademiniis baigiamojo darbo rašymas palengvėtų, jei kai kurie dalykai būtų dėstomi anglų kalba, taip studentai būtų skatinami baigiamuosius darbus rašyti anglų kalba, jei baigiamojo darbo tema yra susijusi su ES ir (arba) tarptautine teise. Panašiai MRU turėtų sudaryti kažkiek patirtinio mokymosi galimybių magistro laipsnio studentams, pavyzdžiui, dalyvauti teisminės inscenizacijos (tarptautiniuose) konkursuose, klinikiniame teisiniame darbe ir atlikti praktiką.
9. 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.
10. Galų gale MRU turėtų pagerinti Teisės magistro laipsnio studijų programos studentų vertinimo metodus, prailginti daugelio egzaminų trukmę ir juos skirti sudėtingesnėms problemoms spręsti. Tokie egzaminai būtų tinkamesni studentų kritiniam mąstymui ir profesiniams rašymo įgūdžiams įvertinti.

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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)