STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus universiteto
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS**
*RYŠIAI SU VISUOMENE (valstybinis kodas - 621P20001)*
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**
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**EVALUATION REPORT**
**OF** *PUBLIC RELATIONS (state code - 621P20001)*
**STUDY PROGRAMME**
at Vilnius University

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5. **Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis,** *representative of social partners,*

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**Evaluation coordinator – Ms. Dovilė Stonkutė.**

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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Vilnius
2015

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**INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME**

| | |
|---|---|
| Title of the study programme | *Public Relations* |
| State code | 621P20001 |
| Study area | Social Sciences |
| Study field | Public Relations |
| 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 Public Relations |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 25 June, 1998 |

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes,** approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team at the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as "very good" (4 points) or "good" (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as "satisfactory" (2 points).

The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

## 1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

| No. | Name of the document |
|-----|----------------------|
| 1. | Current number of students per year (2014/2015) |
| 2. | Guide How to Write a Master's Thesis (17 pages in English) |

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

The Master of Public Relations was established at the Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University in 1998. The Master degree study programme of Public Relations emphasises, more than the other communication programme within the Faculty of Communication, its practical orientation: theoretical knowledge is combined with analyses of the field and the development of practical skills. The programme responds to the need from both the professional field (more in-depth knowledge of communication is needed for the success of organisations), the labour market (alumni find jobs in the PR field) and from students as between 35 and 48 students were admitted to the programme (highest student intake of all programmes in the Faculty of Communication). The Public Relations Master programme was designed according to national guidelines and legal requirements.

*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 *28 April, 2015*.

1. **Prof. dr. Steven Knowlton (team leader)**, *Professor of Journalism, chair, M.A. International Journalism Studies, 2008-2011, Chair, B.A. Journalism, 2012-13, Dublin City University, Ireland.*
2. **Assoc. Prof. dr. Martine van Selm,** *Director of College of Communication, Department of Communication Science, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.*
3. **Assoc. Prof. dr. Baiba Holma,** *Department of Information and Library Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Latvia, Latvia.*
4. **Assoc. Prof. dr. Dorte Madsen,** *Dept. of Intercultural Communication and Management, Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Denmark.*
5. **Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis,** *Head of Public Relations and marketing department at VšĮ „Lietuvos radijas ir televizija" (National radio and television), Lithuania.*
6. **Ms. Gabrielė Gendvilaitė,** *student of Šiauliai University study programme Lithuanian philology and communication.*

**Evaluation coordinator – Ms. Dovilė Stonkutė.**

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims and learning outcomes are defined in the following way: The Public Relation Master programme aims for knowledge and skills at a strategic and operational level. The learning outcomes are detailed in 5 objectives that have to do with gaining knowledge and skills regarding:

      - PR Theory (knowing theories and being able to apply them)
      - Stakeholder relationships
      - (Mass) media relations, analysis media messages, monitoring and acting upon media environment
      - Analysis, planning and management of communication processes
      - Corporate communication programs (including research of organisational identity, image, reputation).

The learning outcomes are publicly available in the official faculty website (www.kf.vu.lt).

In the Self-evaluation report (SER) the aims are formulated in with respect to the programme's orientation which is the field of Public Relations. With regard to the field of study, the evaluation panel sees that Public Relations on a strategic level is elaborated in a range of relevant topics, including: Organisational Communication, Organisational Image, Identity and Reputation, CSR activities, Marketing Communication, Crisis Communication, IT and social media for PR activities. The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are comparable with each other.

From the SER, less clear is the Master-level that is aimed for. It is not clear how the Master level programme aims and learning outcomes are different from Bachelor level aims and outcomes. The review team learned during the visit that on the Bachelor level no PR programmes are present. Also, during the visit, the self-assessment team members explained that on the level of

individual courses (such as Communication Theory) there are differences between Bachelor (basic knowledge) and Master level (more advanced).

The review team recommends the programme management to work out in more detail how the programme aims result in academic Master level outcomes. Especially, given the two-fold emphasis in the programme: both on theoretical and analytical knowledge and practical skills. As it is now, the aims concentrate on applying existing knowledge to the professional field of PR (which is Bachelor level) and less to developing new knowledge (which is Master level). Only in the fifth programme aim 'know and are able to analyse, plan, develop and evaluate corporate communication programs, to prepare and implement organisational identity, image, and reputation researches' the development of programmes and preparation of (empirical) research is formulated, which refers to the academic Master level.

Another point is that some general academic learning outcomes of Master degree programmes seem to be missing:
- development academic attitude and mindset
- research methodological skills
- problem solving abilities; being able to deal with insecure situations and vaguely defined problems.

However, Master level learning outcomes are applied in the programme as is shown in the course description.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are based on the academic and professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market as the programme committee signals an improved understanding of the influence of communication in the success of organisations in both the private and public sectors, and an increase in the need for specialists in this area.

However, and this was recommended by the external review team in 2012, the analysis of labour market needs is not based on grounded market research. Instead, it is based on consultation with members of professional associations of Public Relations specialists in the country, other PR professionals working in the field and alumni from the programme. Also, it reflects the Faculty's vision that not only the current state of the labour market is relevant, but also what is expected as future developments in the labour market, as was explained by the vice-dean for strategic development during the meeting with the Faculty's administration.

At the same time, during the visit, the review team learned that alumni find their way to PR jobs, such as PR manager in a theatre, project assistant in a strategic communication company, owning a business in innovative publishing, or marketing manager.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. However, in order to make this point stronger, a more explicit (inter)national benchmark is recommended. In the meeting with the self-assessment group members the review team learned that the PR programme offered by the University of Leeds has been a good example while developing the current Master programme. International collaboration appeared rather selective and seems to rely mostly on personal contacts of individual staff members. At the level of the Faculty, international activities are encouraged and financially supported.

In terms of learning outcomes, a general observation of the review team is that major part of the objectives and outcomes focus on 'understanding' and 'knowledge' but that it is not clear what

students should be able to *do* with that knowledge and understanding. How does knowledge and/or understanding translate into student activities and job tasks? (see for instance Corporate Communication in which the description does not specify outcomes of 'knowing, or 'understanding' and assessment criteria do not specify how assignments are evaluated).

In the course descriptions there is a lack of distinction between learning objectives and learning outcomes. In the understanding of the review panel, objectives are *intended* results or consequences of instruction, curricula, programmes, or activities. Outcomes are *achieved* results or consequences of what was learned; i.e. evidence that learning took place.

### 2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets legal requirements. The programme contains 90 ECTS and takes one and a half year. The Master thesis takes 30 ECTS (6 ECTS in the second semester for preparatory work and research question formulation) and 24 in the third semester (actual thesis writing).

The rationale behind the programme is described by means of three competencies: PR Theoretical competencies, Practical Competencies and Competencies of Public Relations Research. On the page 8 of SER it is shown that the same courses serve two or sometimes three objectives at the same time. The course Corporate Communication, for instance, serves both to gain Competencies of Public Relations Research, but also to gain Theoretical Competencies and Practical Competencies. From a positive point of view, this is a welcome characteristic of the programme, as in this way the study materials are offered in an integrated way. From a more cautious point of view it could be argued that the training of separate competencies and goals can get mixed up and probably lost in this way. The review team recommends to work out in more detail how the three competencies are addressed in each course, especially given the fact of a mixed team of teaching staff members (both academic and practitioners are from the professional field, see also 2.3 below on teaching staff).

The structure of the programme vertically seems to be taken care of as in the SER it is described that at the start of the programme (first semester) the courses are theoretical with practical applications, whereas in the second and third semesters also applied courses and independent research projects are scheduled. However, from the titles of the courses it is not clear that those in semester one (for instance Corporate Communication) are more basic compared to the more advanced courses in the subsequent semesters (for instance Media Relations). Also, the names of the courses reveal little about the sometime applied/practical character of the course (no additions such as 'strategies', 'advice', or 'skills'). The themes of subjects are not repetitive.

The review team recommends that the programme management team work out in more detail the differentiation between courses from basic to advanced.

The methods of the subjects/modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and the scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. Some courses, however, such as Communication Theories and Communication Research Methodologies, are rather basic, based upon an examination of the topics, literature and assignments. During the visit the self-assessment team members explained that on the level of individual courses (such as Communication Theories and Communication Research Methodologies) there are differences between Bachelor (basic knowledge) and Master level (more advanced).

There is only one Communication Research Method Course in which the assignments focus on texts and not on 'hands-on' exercises in applying statistics, including SPSS, or other procedures for analysis, including using software such as Atlas Ti. In the meeting with lecturers, one of them explained that as of this year SPSS training is part of the Communication Research Course. So far, students worked in Excel. The students explained that in the Bachelor SPSS is not part of their study programmes. The review team learned from the SER that the computer labs are equipped with the packages SPSS and Atlas Ti. Students are introduced to the software and are encouraged to use it during their course of study. The review team recommends that hands-on training in using these packages be included in the curriculum.

The programme is characterized by core courses and optional courses, such as Intellectual Law or Political Communication. This leaves some freedom for a student to compose a programme that fits their wishes and needs. The range of core courses is relevant to the study of PR.

However, IT and social media are described as important topics to the programme (see chapter 2.1). Therefore, the review team recommends the optional course PR on Internet (which was highly valued by the students) to be a required course.

The self-evaluation report describes 18 contact hours per week (see page 9). However, students explained that in average they have 8 contact hours per week (both lectures and seminars, given that 1 teaching hour is 90 minutes).

The review team is worried about the discrepancy described above. The review team is well aware of the special context: full time working students, teaching is the (late) afternoon and on Saturdays, which place restraints on the number of teaching hours.

However, in order to offer a 90 ECTS Master degree study programme in 18 months, the number of contact hours should be kept to a sensible level.

The literature in most courses consist of textbooks and the titles are relevant and on topic. During the meeting with students the review team learned that students also consult the latest achievements in science (as published in journal articles) trough the databases offered in the new library.

Given the fact that most students have jobs, relatively few students participate in the contest of best PR projects that is organised by the colleagues from Minsk state university, go abroad or take an internship. Students also explain that they already participated in an Erasmus exchange program during their Bachelor studies, which makes it less attractive or relevant while they are doing their Master programme.


### 2.3. Teaching staff

The self-evaluation report described 4 categories of teaching staff: full professors, associate professors, lecturers with a PhD and lecturers/assistants without a PhD. Since the last external evaluation, the Management managed to hire/enrol 3 new staff members holding a PhD in the Master programme PR. However, two other staff members holding a PhD resigned and are no longer teaching in the programme. Therefore, having enough staff members holding a PhD remains a problem. During the visit, the Management was aware of the need to continue their active search for qualified staff with a PhD in order to meet the legal requirements for teaching staff in Master programmes in the period to come. The percentage of teachers holding the Ph.D. has improved since the earlier evaluation, and the programme leaders said they have several

graduate students near the end of their studies whom they hope to hire, which would further increase the percentage.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. The full professors are teaching in the theoretical courses and are responsible for the coordination of the research methodology courses mostly. The self-evaluation report describes that the associate professors and other staff with a PhD degree teach a considerable part of the course programme.

The teaching staff annex 2 shows that Associate Professor Dr. Renata Matkevičienė, perhaps for good reason, given her academic expertise in corporate communication and related modules, is a coordinator of 5 courses in the programme (Corporate Communication, Political Communication, PR Project, International Communication Campaigns) and works together with junior staff in these courses. This seems to be rather ambitious, given that she also does the main share of the management work in the Study Programme Committee (see also chapter on Management).

The review team recommends spreading the coordination task amongst more members of the teaching staff in order to create a more broadly based responsibility for these courses.

A relatively large share of the teaching staff is also appointed elsewhere (outside university or in other faculties). During the meeting with lecturers, all but one were 'external' based lecturers.

On the positive side, this brings in expertise and contacts from the practice field into the programme, and from other disciplines. On the other side, the review team encountered that the external staff members involved in the study programme feel mostly responsible for their own course, and teach in an independent manner according to what they consider important. They are less involved in (decisions about) the aims of the entire programme.

The review team recommends the Management to arrange 'quality loops' in the due course of the academic year in order to keep all staff members up to date about issues and changes in the programme, to secure their commitment to their teaching tasks as part of the entire Master programme, and to compare, monitor and train their skills in grading/evaluating students. In these loops the two meetings with the teaching staff at the start and the end of each academic year, can be placed.

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. The staff student ratio of 1:10 is rather good.

With respect to teaching staff turnover the panel have already stated above that the Management needs to continue their active search for qualified staff with a PhD in order to meet the legal requirements for teaching staff in Master programmes in the period to come. Since the last external evaluation, the Management managed to hire/enrol 3 new staff members holding a PhD in the Master programme PR. However, as stated, two other staff members holding a PhD resigned and are not teaching in the programme any longer.

The higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. Teaching staff is encouraged to participate in professional and scientific activities, for instance by the Erasmus mobility program and financial support to attend scientific conferences. However, the incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff is rather low (2 lecturers in the PR programme have participated or will do so, in a mobility program). During the year 2014 the administration of the Faculty has set priority for internationalisation of studies by inviting scientists from leading European

institutions. During the meeting with teaching staff, the lecturers explained that given their work outside the university in for instance PR agencies, international exchanges do not fit in very well in their lives.

Only to some extent the teaching staff of the programme is involved in research directly related to the study programme. When asked about scientific interest and how to incorporate own academic research in their teaching, the lecturers explained that this question less applied to the external teachers, as their focus is on incorporating professional activities in the courses they teach.

## 2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality. The lack of auditoriums, mentioned in the 2012 evaluation has clearly been remedied. The number in auditoriums has increased. Also, the new auditoriums are state of the art in terms of design and technical facilities. Some measures were taken to coordinate the availability of rooms for students.

There are enough classrooms, areas for individual and group work. The students also have access to wi-fi and the beautiful new multi-story library, which is open 24/7, except for public holidays. Here, students can use 432 workplaces, 11 group work and seminar class rooms with 185 working places, and workstations to be able to work with note books. Furthermore, the library provides access to all library subscription databases via VPN so that students can also have access from home. In the library, students also have access to scanning (free of charge) and copying of required study materials. In the Scholarly Communication and Information Centre (SCIC) there are 34 rooms for individual work. Rooms can also be booked for individual work in the IT laboratory where there are 8 study spaces equipped with computers with special software; furthermore, the library offers rooms for group work and the library's seminar rooms are available to lecturers/professors for lectures and seminars subject to a charge. In other words: Facilities seem to offer anything a student (or member of staff) in 2015 could possibly wish for.

The higher education institution has adequate arrangements for students' practice. During their studies, students have a possibility to do an internship in a Lithuanian PR agency or department upon agreed conditions, and an average 5 out of 40 students make use of this option. The students are highly satisfied with the databases, journals and literature available to them. Teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible. The students explained that they make use of the electronic learning environment Moodle and appreciate it. This is especially the case, as students combine their studies with working full time in jobs.

However, not all lecturers use Moodle in their courses. The review team recommends the Management to develop a policy regarding the use of Moodle in every course.

## 2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

According to the self-evaluation report the admission system is clear. The admission procedures rules are set by VU. The Faculty is responsible for setting the rules of selection of applicants and in set of entrance grade. Students can find out information about the entering this study programme in the webpage of the Faculty, reading via posters, information messages in the newspaper of Vilnius University, also during exhibitions, open door events.

Students with a Bachelor degree outside Communication have to enrol in an entrance examination. Other students' admission is based on entrance grades. However, the programme management seems hesitant about the entrance examination (it was suspended in 2015). In 2012 the review team recommended the development of a formal bridging programme for students with other than communication backgrounds. After 3 years this has not been done. During the meeting with the self-assessment panel, it was explained that such a program has been prepared and that the formal decision on the program was received recently, on April, 17 2015. As it is now, the entrance-test checks the fundamentals of Communication Theory and Public Relations of each student who wants to enrol, in a tailor-made manner.

The organisation of the study process ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. According to the SER, the main forms for academic consultations for students are consultations provided by administration staff members, lecturers during office hours, via e-mails. Every full-time teacher has to have 2 weekly contact hours appointed for students' consultations. Every semester these contact hours are reviewed and presented to students via internet page of the faculty and in information desks. Students indicate to prefer e-mail consultations especially during preparation of research papers or Master thesis.

Students who entered programme into a state non-funded place could pay the tuition fee per three times upon written plea. There are created conditions, that the tuition fee could be reduced in some cases (disabilities, work in University, etc.). The number of student incentive grants awarded in Master study programmes is rather small.

The Master thesis phase deserves additional attention. Combining Figure 1 and Figure 5 from the SER shows that not all students that started the Master programme finish their studies in time (for instance, in 2012 35 students started the Master programme and in the year after (2013) only 17 graduated). The self-assessment group members explained that students need to finish the program within 5 years and that all students manage to do so. The lecturers explained that the Master thesis is the programme's main hurdle. This is despite the lectures' efforts who do their best to encourage the students to keep up with working on the thesis. The academic and social support for students lies with the lecturers and programme management. The students appreciate the open and helpful attitude of the staff members.

The review team recommends considering the development of a new approach to (group wise?) supervision of Master thesis, in order to stimulate and motivate students to finalize the thesis in time.

Students are invited to participate in research, artistic and applied research activities and have opportunities to participate in student mobility programmes. However, the international mobility among students is rather low (typically 1 out of 40) and in the SER programme management describes a number of barriers to participation, such as having a job or a family. The students themselves mentioned mainly they already participated in an Erasmus exchange programme during their Bachelor studies, which makes it less attractive or relevant while they are doing their Master programme.

The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. Students' knowledge is assessed in accordance with the Regulation of Study Results Assessment approved by Vilnius University. The final assessment of the course takes the form of a cumulative grade, in some cases – a combined grade. Students are informed with the principles of the formation of this grade which are presented to students at the beginning of the semester (during the first meeting). It is praiseworthy that most of students evaluate study results assessment procedures and grades as objective, impartial and students' opinion show that

teachers of the study programme clearly present the assessment criteria and apply them, evaluate assignments.

As it is now, the responsibility for the actual assessment of students' papers lies with the teaching staff. Both students and staff were aware of the criteria for their papers and thesis. The Master theses were graded (by one staff member only) according to a standard grading scheme, in which the evaluator writes down his or her points of feedback. This grading scheme is enclosed in every Master Thesis that is graded. In addition, Master Theses are defended in public defence meetings, for which social partners are invited. One of the social partners indicated that based on a Master thesis of one of the students, a glossary of PR terms is to be published in the near future.

In the meeting with the social partners, the participants indicated that the professional activities of the majority of graduates meet the programme providers' expectations. Students themselves indicate to miss some training in writing skills in their native language.

The SER shows that student opinion is important in the study process. Students told the evaluation team they participate in course evaluation by means of survey questionnaires and in focus group meetings. When asked, the students were not always aware of what actions are undertaken normally based on the general course-evaluations organised by the Faculty. This is not particularly alarming, given the turnover of students from one year to the next.

### 2.6. Programme management

The management is in the hands of a Study Programme Committee, with members from inside and outside the university. All members are experts in the field of Public Relations. Management, lecturers, social partners and students were proud of their study programme and enjoyed being a part of it.

However, the review team sees a number of shortcomings regarding the Management of the PR programme. The level of leadership is rather weak as the responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are allocated to and in the hands of too few persons from within the Faculty of Communication.

As a result, a number of the outcomes of the external evaluation of 2012 are not taken up yet, or have not yet resulted in satisfactory outcomes. Examples are the recommendations of hiring more staff with a PhD degree, developing a bridging programme, conducting grounded marketing research, better articulation of the study aims and learning outcomes. Although the management emphasizes in the SER that information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed, the management could not explain a clear systematic and timeframe that aligns with the academic calendar. Also, the Programme management does not convince in explaining how the coordination among teaching staff is realized in a sustainable way (apart from arranging discussions). In addition, the previous evaluators criticized the limited involvement of the members of the Study Programme Committee. The management has yet not developed a policy regarding this issue, for instance by means of new policies with clear timeframes and loops, types of meeting, additional activities.

The review team recommends an improvement of the management team by a more broadly based Study Programme Committee that is better organized by clearly defined quality cycles. As it is now, the internal quality assurance measures are not effective and efficient. Too many tasks and decisions are postponed by the Study Programme Committee.

## III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The review team recommends the programme management to work out in more detail how the programme aims result in academic Master level outcomes. Especially, given the two-fold emphasis in the programme: both on theoretical and analytical knowledge and practical skills.
2. In order for the programme aims and learning outcomes to be consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered, a more explicit (inter)national benchmark is recommended.
3. The review team recommends working out how knowledge and/or understanding translate into students' activities and job tasks.
4. The review team recommends working out in more detail how the three competencies which is aimed for in the programme are addressed in each course.
5. The review team recommends working out in more detail the differentiation between courses (from basic to advanced) throughout the curriculum.
6. The review team recommends including more 'hands on' training in using software packages for data analysis (SPSS, Atlas-Ti).
7. The review team recommends the course PR on the Internet to be a required course.
8. The review team recommends spreading the coordination task amongst more members of the teaching staff in order to create a more broadly based responsibility for the courses.
9. The review team recommends the Management to arrange 'quality loops' in the due course of the academic year in order to keep all staff members up to date about issues and changes in the programme, to secure their commitment to their teaching tasks as part of the entire Master programme, and to compare, monitor and train their skills in grading/evaluating students.
10. The review team recommends the Management to develop a policy regarding the use of Moodle in every course by the staff.
11. The review team recommends considering new ways of supervising Master thesis, in order to stimulate and motivate students to finalize the thesis in time.
12. The review team recommends an improvement of the management team by a more broadly based Study Programme Committee that is organized by clearly defined quality cycles.


## IV. SUMMARY

The programme aims are well formulated with respect to the field of Public Relations. Public Relations on a strategic level are elaborated in a range of relevant topics. Former students of the programme find their way to jobs in the field of Public relations, such as PR manager, project assistant in a strategic communication company, or marketing manager. Less clear is the articulation of the academic Master level in the aims and learning outcomes, as different from Bachelor level aims and outcomes. Furthermore, the analysis of labour market needs is still not based on solid market research.

The structure of the programme is clear as at the start of the programme (first semester) the courses are theoretical with practical applications, whereas in the second and third semesters also applied courses and independent research projects are scheduled. Moreover, the programme is characterized by core courses and optional courses. This leaves some freedom for students to compose a programme that fits their wishes and needs. The literature in most courses consists of textbooks and the titles are relevant and on topic. In addition, students and staff have good access to relevant literature. IT and social media are described as important topics to the programme but

the course on this topic is not a required one. Furthermore, the review team has doubts about the limited number of contact hours in order to warrant a full time Master programme.

The lack of a sufficient number of staff members holding a PhD remains a problem. In addition, a relatively large share of the teaching staff is not involved in academic research activities. A relatively large share of the teaching staff is also appointed elsewhere (outside university or in other faculties), which brings in expertise and contacts from the practice field into the programme, and from other disciplines. The staff student ratio of 1:10 is rather good.

The lack of auditoriums mentioned in the 2012 evaluation has clearly been remedied. The number in auditoriums has increased. Also, the new auditoriums are state of the art in terms of design and technical facilities. The students are highly satisfied with the databases, journals and literature available to them. It is regrettable that not all lecturers use Moodle in their courses.

The students appreciate the open and helpful attitude of the staff members. In addition, Master Theses are defended in public defence meetings, for which social partners are invited. In 2012 the review team recommended the development of a formal bridging programme for students with other than communication backgrounds. After 3 years this has not been done.

There are shortcomings regarding the management of the PR programme as the responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are in the hands of too few persons from within the Faculty of Communication. A number of the outcomes of the external evaluation of 2012 are not taken up yet, or have not yet resulted in satisfactory outcomes. Despite of this, lecturers, social partners and students were proud of their study programme and enjoyed being part of it.

# V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Public Relations* (state code – 621P20001) at Vilnius 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 | 2 |
| 2. | Curriculum design | 3 |
| 3. | Teaching staff | 2 |
| 4. | Facilities and learning resources | 4 |
| 5. | Study process and students' performance assessment | 3 |
| 6. | Programme management | 2 |
| | **Total:** | **16** |

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;
2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;
3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;
4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

| Grupės vadovas:<br>Team leader: | Prof. Dr. Steven Knowlton |
|---|---|
| Grupės nariai:<br>Team members: | Assoc. Prof. Dr. Martine van Selm |
| | Assoc. Prof. Dr. Baiba Holma |
| | Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dorte Madsen |
| | Mr. Žilvinas Kulvinskis |
| | Mrs. Gabrielė Gendvilaitė |

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *RYŠIAI SU VISUOMENE* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621P20001) 2015-06-10 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-128 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

## V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus universiteto studijų programa *Ryšiai su visuomene* (valstybinis kodas – 621P20001) vertinama **teigiamai**.

| Eil. Nr. | Vertinimo sritis | Srities įvertinimas, balais* |
|:---:|---|:---:|
| 1. | Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai | 2 |
| 2. | Programos sandara | 3 |
| 3. | Personalas | 2 |
| 4. | Materialieji ištekliai | 4 |
| 5. | Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas | 3 |
| 6. | Programos vadyba | 2 |
| | **Iš viso:** | **16** |

\* 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

Programos tikslai suformuluoti tinkamai, atsižvelgiant į ryšių su visuomene kryptį. Ryšiai su visuomene strateginiu lygmeniu kuriami atsižvelgiant į aktualias temas. Buvę programos studentai randa darbą ryšių su visuomene srityje, pavyzdžiui, dirba ryšių su visuomene vadybininkais, įmonių strateginės komunikacijos projektų asistentais ar rinkodaros vadybininkais. Akademinio magistro lygio tikslai ir studijų rezultatai, palyginti su bakalauro programos tikslais ir rezultatais, suformuluoti nelabai aiškiai. Be to, darbo rinkos poreikių analizė vis dar nėra grindžiama patikimais rinkos tyrimais.

Programos struktūra aiški, jau programos pradžioje (pirmąjį semestrą) dėstomi teoriniai kursai kartu su praktinio taikymo aspektais, o antrame ir trečiame semestruose numatyti taikomieji dalykai ir savarankiški mokslinių tyrimų projektai. Be to, į programą įtraukti pagrindiniai dalykai ir laisvai pasirenkami dalykai. Taip studentams paliekama tam tikra laisvė susidaryti jų norus ir poreikius atitinkančią programą. Daugelio dalykų literatūrą sudaro vadovėliai, kurių pavadinimai yra aktualūs ir atitinka temą. Be to, studentams ir dėstytojams užtikrinama gera prieiga prie atitinkamos literatūros. Kaip svarbios programos temos apibūdinamos IT ir socialinė žiniasklaida, nors šios temos dalykas nėra privalomas. Be to, ekspertams kelia abejonių nuolatinių magistrantūros studijų programai užtikrinti nepakankamas kontaktinių valandų skaičius.

Problema tebėra nepakankamas dėstytojų, turinčių daktaro laipsnį, skaičius. Be to, gana daug dėstytojų nedalyvauja akademinių tyrimų veikloje. Santykinai daug dėstytojų taip pat dirba kitur (ne universitete ar kituose fakultetuose) ir taip praturtina programą profesine ir kitų dalykų dėstymo patirtimi, praktiniais kontaktais. Dėstytojų ir studentų santykis (1:10) yra gana geras.

Per 2012 m. atliktą vertinimą buvo nurodytas auditorijų trūkumas, tačiau akivaizdu, kad šio trūkumo dabar nėra. Auditorijų skaičius išaugo. Be to, naujos auditorijos labai modernios dizaino ir techninio aprūpinimo prasme. Studentai labai patenkinti duomenų bazėmis, žurnalais ir literatūra, kuriais gali naudotis. Tenka apgailestauti, kad ne visi dėstytojai naudoja Moodle aplinką savo dalykams dėstyti.

Studentai vertina dėstytojų atvirumą ir siekį padėti. Be to, magistro baigiamieji darbai ginami viešuose gynimo posėdžiuose, į kuriuos kviečiami socialiniai partneriai. 2012 m. ekspertų grupė rekomendavo parengti formalią išlyginamųjų kursų programą studentams, kurie yra įgiję išsilavinimą ne komunikacijos srityje. Praėjo treji metai, bet nieko nepadaryta.

Yra Ryšių su visuomene studijų programos vadybos trūkumų, nes už sprendimus, programos įgyvendinimo stebėseną atsako tik keletas Komunikacijos fakulteto atstovų. Kai kurios 2012 m. atlikto išorinio vertinimo rekomendacijos vis dar neįgyvendintos arba tinkamai nepasiekti jose nurodyti rezultatai. Nepaisant to, dėstytojai, socialiniai partneriai ir studentai didžiuojasi studijų programa ir džiaugiasi būdami jos dalimi.

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## III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja programos vadovybei išsamiau išnagrinėti, kaip programos tikslai užtikrina magistro laipsnio akademinių rezultatų pasiekimą, ypač atsižvelgiant į dvejopą programos siekį: siekti teorinių bei analitinių žinių ir įgyti praktinių įgūdžių.
2. Siekiant, kad programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai atitiktų studijų rūšį ir pakopą ir siūlomų kvalifikacijų lygį, rekomenduojama atlikti aiškesnę tarptautinę ir nacionalinę palyginamąją analizę.
3. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja išanalizuoti, kaip įgytos žinios ir (arba) supratimas taikomi studentų veikloje ir atliekant darbo užduotis.
4. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja išsamiau suplanuoti, kaip kiekviename kurse bus lavinamos trys kompetencijos, kurių siekiama programa.
5. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja išsamiau išnagrinėti kursų skirtumus (nuo pagrindinio iki pažengusiųjų lygio) visoje studijų programoje.
6. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja įtraukti daugiau praktinio mokymo naudojant duomenų analizės programinės įrangos paketus (SPSS, Atlas-Ti).
7. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja ryšių su visuomene internetu dalyką padaryti privalomą.
8. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja padidinti dėstytojų, kuriems pavesta koordinavimo užduotis, skaičių, siekiant išplėsti atsakomybę už dalykus.
9. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja vadovybei organizuoti „kokybės ciklus" atitinkamu mokslo metų laikotarpiu, kad visi dėstytojai būtų supažindinami su aktualiais klausimais ir programos pakeitimais, būtų užtikrinamas jų įsipareigojimas dėstyti, siekiant garantuoti visos magistrantūros programos vykdymą, ir palyginti, stebėti ir ugdyti dėstytojų gebėjimus vertinti studentus.
10. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja vadovybei sukurti politiką, apimančią reikalavimą, kad visų dalykų dėstytojai naudotų Moodle aplinką.

11. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja apsvarstyti naujus magistro baigiamojo darbo priežiūros būdus, siekiant skatinti ir motyvuoti studentus laiku užbaigti darbą.
12. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja pagerinti vadovybės kokybę išplečiant Studijų programos komitetą, kuris sudaromas pagal aiškiai apibrėžtus kokybės ciklus.

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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)