



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

**VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETO
INFORMACIJOS VADYBOS PROGRAMOS
(62609S103/621P10002)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (62609S103/621P10002)
STUDY PROGRAMME
AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Informacijos vadyba</i>
Valstybinis kodas	62609S103 (naujas kodas - 621P10002)
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Informacijos paslaugos
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais ¹	80
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Informacijos paslaugų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19

¹ – vienas kreditas laikomas lygiu 40 studento darbo valandų

INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<i>Information Management</i>
State code	61209S103 (new code - 621P10002)
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Information Services
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Level of studies	Master
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2 years)
Scope of the study programme in national credits	80
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Information Services
Date of registration of the study programme	19-05-1997

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I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Lithuanian law on Higher Education and Research, dated 30 April 2009 (No XI-242), and in compliance with Order No. 1-94 of 30 October 2009, an Experts Team (here after: ET) appointed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education has conducted an Evaluation of the study programme Information Management (Code 62609S103), Study Field of Communication and Information, Vilnius University.

In conducting their evaluation of the Study programme, the ET has applied the methodological guidelines developed by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education to implement provisions of the Order No. ISAK-1652 of 24 July 2009 of the Minister of Education and Science “On the approval of the description of the procedure for the external assessment and accreditation of study programmes” (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 96-4083), following the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 2009, No. 54-2140).

The ET would like to pay tribute to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education in Lithuania and, most especially to the Deputy Director of the Centre and to the Head of the Division for Studies Assessment, for the support given to the ET before and throughout the visit to Lithuania.

The External Assessment was conducted in the period November 2010 with in-country evaluation taking place during the period November 14 to November 20, 2010. The assessment included a one-day site visit to Klaipeda University on November 16, and a 3-day visit to Vilnius University on November 17-19, 2010.

This report does not necessarily paraphrase or re-present the range of information presented in the Report of the Self Assessment Group (here after: SAG). Instead, it focuses on issues raised in the Self Assessment Report (here after: SAR) as well as raising some issues not addressed in the SAR, but which came to the attention of the ET during the course of the Team’s time in Lithuania, and specifically, during the course of the site visit.

We would like to express our appreciation to the authorities of the Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University for the manner in which we were made welcome and for the manner in which our queries and our exploration of various key issues were addressed in a professional and positive way by those with whom we came into contact with at the University.

The SAG has put an informative SAR together. It presents, in considerable detail, the nature, structure, aims and content of the programme being evaluated, the methods of study, delivery and assessment, issues with regard to quality, resourcing, student support and participation.

In addition to its examination of the SAR, the ET collected information, data and evidence on which to base its conclusions in the course of the site visit through meetings and other means:

- Meeting with administrative staff
- Meeting with the staff responsible for the preparation of the SAR
- Meeting with teaching staff
- Meeting with students
- Meeting with graduates
- Meeting with employers of those who have graduated from the programme
- Visiting and observing various support services (classrooms, library, computer services, laboratories, etc.)
- Examination and familiarization with students’ final works, examination material, etc.

At the end of the site visit, the initial impressions of the team were conveyed to the administrative and teaching staff of the programme.

The SAR, as presented to the ET consists of a collective volume and 9 Volumes, 6 of which have been studied by this ET. The self-assessment report for the study programme

Information Management (Code 62609S103), is found in volume 5, together with the Information Systems Management programme (Code 62609S102).

This evaluation report only relates to the study programme Information Management (Code 62609S103).

We have assessed the study programme Information Management. The programme is a master's degree programme.

According to the SAR (p. 8) „Renewal of Information Management Master study programme is followed the description of general requirements for Master Study programmes (Order No ISAK-1551 of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 22 July 2005), and rulings presented in The Statute of Vilnius University, Vilnius University Regulations, and Vilnius University Strategic Action Plan which indicate the aim of the university to ensure fundamental university education, satisfying national needs and meeting global requirements. “

According to the collective volume of the Self-assessment report p. 15, in recent years, the study programmes of the Faculty of Communication have been revised and corrected on the Recommendations of the Internal Total Study Programme Assessment carried out in 2005 and in 2008.

In 2005 self-assessment of a part of the study programmes was carried out, including the Information Management programme. The report was discussed and assessed by the Study Commission of the Faculty of Communication and by the division of the Faculty administering a study programme. On the basis of the Self-assessment 2005 the study programmes are being revised and updated. In 2008 a self-assessment of all study programmes was carried out at the Faculty of Communication, Vilnius University. On the basis of the self-assessment of study programmes, decisions on the curriculum review and renewal were adopted.

The self-assessment of the study programme Information Management was conducted in 2008 for external evaluation, self-assessment data was specified (cf. p. 16 in Self-Assessment, Collective Volume, Study Field of Communication and Information, Vilnius University, 2010).

During a meeting with administrative staff during an on site visit on 17th November 2010, it was confirmed that two years ago, a new development plan was made, together with an internal analysis of all curricula and discussion of what changes should be made; furthermore, ET was informed that a new reform is on its way towards a modular system.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims

1.1.1. Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme

The SAR report refers in general terms (p. 6) to the creation of the knowledge society, to the rapid development of the Internet, and to EU strategic documents as well as to *the National Long-Term Development Strategy* and *the Lithuanian Information Society Development Strategy* and to *the Study on Adequacy of Postgraduate Studies for Lithuanian economic needs* (2006) (p. 7) as well as to surveys of master degree studies and demand of Lithuanian economy (2006) that show “numbers of the demand for new employees with master degree education has to rise up to 900 every year because of the development of Lithuanian economy”.

In the SAR (p. 7) it is stated that the competencies provided by the Information Management study programme are relevant to various economic sectors of Lithuania and it is stressed (p. 8) that

“Among the competencies acquired within the Information Management Study Programme the most valuable ones are decision making, analysis of situation in any sector and organizational competencies of internal and external communication within organization have been distinguished in the employers’ surveys as indicated in *The Study on Adequacy of Postgraduate Studies for Lithuanian economic needs*.“

However, we have no specific market data on how the yearly need for 900 employees with a master degree education, might relate to exactly this Information Management programme.

But it is argued in the SAR (p. 7) that “These strategic Lithuanian and EU aims raise the need in information specialists able to ensure information and knowledge about the aspects of improvement modern economic activity (activity environment activity models information systems application, innovations, protection of intellectual property and etc.). Information specialist – information manager – competencies are related to awareness of information users needs, organization of information resources and security, information flows managements and planning and organization of internal and external communication”.

A pilot survey is mentioned in the SAR (p. 8), by T. Dirvonskis, G. Svetlavičius, 2008, carried out by the Communication Faculty at Vilnius University. Their study show both present and future Lithuanian labor market demand for information specialists. 85% of the surveyed employers indicate that such specialists are in demand or very much in demand and the greatest demand is seen in companies with over a hundred of employees (T. Dirvonskis, 2008). In small businesses the demand for information management specialists is not indicated directly (main reason – workload is not ensured), however demand for knowledge and skills of employees working in them is emphasized as 70% of employees working in small and medium-size businesses possess partly satisfactory information management knowledge and skills (G. Svetlavičius, 2008).

However, the number of employers who have contributed does not appear from the SAR. Are we dealing with 85% of 500 employers or 85% of 17? Nor is there any indication of job types or tasks.

During our meetings with the graduates and employers we could observe that there is a need for these master students and their competences. But we did not get a clear picture of the scale of this demand.

According to the tables in the SAR (p. 15), 18 students were admitted to the programme in 2008. Apparently there has been a one-year break in 2007. The SAR also indicates (p. 15) that “The analysis of the change in the number of students is unavailable.”

During the admission process students need to pass an entrance exam, cf. SAR (p. 14).

As for the position of the programme among other study programmes, the SAR refers to foreign Higher Education Institutions (p. 8) and their focus on technological competencies or social competencies. Apparently the Information Management programme is the only one in Lithuania. All in all, the study programme presented appears a good fit with perceived need, and certainly the market as represented by the employers to whom we spoke and the content is deemed to be comparable to similar programmes overseas.

1.1.2. Conformity of the programme purpose with institutional, state and international directives

According to the SAR (p. 6) “Renewing of master degree study programs could be related with the demand for students with master education in communication and information sphere in Lithuania. The creation of knowledge society, oriented to the enhancement of intellectual capital of the country, promotion of lifelong learning, and integration of information and communication technologies in different areas of activity, is a strategic priority stipulated in the national strategies on information policy: *the National Long-Term Development Strategy and the Lithuanian Information Society Development Strategy*. Survey of correspondence of master degree studies and demand of Lithuanian economy (2006) has showed that numbers of the demand for new employees with master degree education has to rise up to 900 every year because of the development of

Lithuanian economy. Development of the sector has supported importance of employees with specific knowledge and skills in business activities. For business sector the most important competencies related with services and consultant activities in information, organization and communication management. The ET uncovered no evidence to suggest that this well-established programme does not conform to Lithuanian requirements. We do however believe that it would be helpful if in future the team follows the Dublin Descriptors.

1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims

According to SAR (p. 9), the purpose of Information Management master study programme is to prepare the most highly qualified specialists and researchers who are able to critically evaluate the trends of present information and knowledge management, generate ideas, forecast and meet the needs of information users, organize and manage information flows, develop and provide information services.

The aim and learning outcomes of Information management master study programme is to equip Bachelor degree holders with general Master level knowledge and special competencies in the communication and information area, needed for their future professional activities to solve information and knowledge management tasks.

These aims are very wide and general, which seem to fit well in the context of a broadening master's programme. cf. SAR (p. 8) "Having regard to the market needs, the study programme was revised and updated in 2008. The Information Management Masters degree study programme is expansive, meant for different courses graduates of basic study, their development of their competence in the area of communication and information. Expansive type of the programme was determined by the context of broad range of information phenomena, trends of their increase in various spheres of societal, economic life and forecasted growth of parallel demand for information, communication competencies, caused by information society peculiarities."

However, it is also indicated in the SAR (p. 15) that "A tendency has been observed that the majority of students admitted to this programme of the second cycle studies have acquired a bachelor's degree in the communication and information study field. A conclusion could therefore be drawn that deepening course units should be leveled in the study programme, since due to inadequate preparation for the entrance examination the number of students from other study fields is very small".

It is therefore suggested that the above wide and general aims should be somehow narrowed and sharpened at the same time as creating a clear differentiation, in the formulation of purpose and aims, between the bachelor's and the Master's level.

1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme

1.2.1. Comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes

The following learning outcomes are included in the SAR (p. 9-10):

"In order to achieve the aim of the Information Management Master programme the following learning outcomes have been formulated:

- *To provide deeper and broader theoretical and applied knowledge* in the field of strategic information and knowledge management, communication and information science research, universal quality management, information systems design, business communication, information systems analyses and design, business research, intercultural communication, intellectual property law;
- *To develop special skills* of organizing and analyzing internal and external information environment within organizations, information needs, communication research, information systems,

information technologies, resources and empirical data on business research, apply them in practice creatively and flexibly, formulate and accomplish scientific research tasks independently;

- *Develop generic skills* – to deliver ideas to professional and non-professional audience, define individual aims of professional development and independent learning.

Graduates of the Information management study programme acquire the following competences (cognitive and practical skills):

- Ability to evaluate the influence of environment on operations of the organization, identify information management problems and resolve them, identify the strategic activity priorities, and develop information and knowledge management strategies;

- Knowledge of the key laws and theories of information; ability to critically assess and apply them in professional information activities;

- Ability to organize information activities;

- Competence to conduct surveys of information users, analyze the information market, evaluate its processes and develop efficient strategies on the provision of consumers with information products;

- Knowledge and understanding of the principles of information search, organization/handling, storage, dissemination and distribution, and ability to apply them in practice;

- Knowledge and understanding of information protection in the organization, and ability to ensure it;

- Knowledge of the methods of designing information systems; ability to analyse and model information processes, formulate and describe the aims, functions and requirements of an information system;

- Competence to use information systems and apply information and communication technologies for data collection, processing and storage, provision of information to consumers and other information activities of the organization.

The ET has some concerns that the documentation does not really explain the programme in terms of learning outcomes. It would be more accurate to refer to the material in the SAR as programme aims and even here it could be argued that some aims are largely a list of subjects/fields to be covered. Nonetheless the ET understands the intent of the programme but hopes that in future documentation the Programme Team will use the language of learning outcomes.

1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes

Disregarding the comment in the previous section concerning our view concerning the so-called learning objectives, the ET has had some difficulty in relating what we take to be programme learning outcomes with the courses which constitute the programme. In order to demonstrate the concerns, we have produced these lengthy tables to attempt to relate the two and we hope to offer some constructive comment to the programme team.

The fields listed above seem to correspond to courses in annex 1 to some extent. That is, the fields can be traced to the course descriptions, except for “business communication” and “intercultural communication”.

The 8 bullet points above with „competences“ can be seen as the learning objectives at programme level. If we compare these with courses: some learning objectives cannot be directly related to course descriptions, and vice versa: some of the compulsory courses have learning objectives that are not reflected at programme level.

For instance, there are no courses in which we can trace „Ability to organize information activities;“ in learning objectives; and the learning objectives for courses „Total Quality Management“ and „Business Research“ do not seem to be reflected at programme level.

Learning objectives in list (8 bullets above) Ability to evaluate the influence of environment on operations of the organization, identify information management problems and resolve them, identify the strategic activity priorities, and develop information and knowledge management strategies	Courses – compulsory Strategical Information and Knowledge Management Strategical Information and Knowledge Project
Ability to organize information activities Competence to conduct surveys of information users, analyze the information market, evaluate its processes and develop efficient strategies on the provision of consumers with information products Knowledge of the key laws and theories of information; ability to critically assess and apply them in professional information activities Knowledge and understanding of the principles of information search, organization/handling, storage, dissemination and distribution, and ability to apply them in practice <i>L-O for this course not reflected at programme level</i> Knowledge of the methods of designing information systems; ability to analyze and model information processes, formulate and describe the aims, functions and requirements of an information system;	Is not to be found directly in any of the course descriptions ? Communication and Information Research Methodology? Cannot be found in annex 1 Total Quality Management Probably course Information Systems Design but no correlation of learning objectives programme level – course level
Competence to use information systems and apply information and communication technologies for data collection, processing and storage, provision of information to consumers and other information activities of the organization	Not reflected in course descriptions
<i>L-O for this course not reflected at programme level</i> Knowledge and understanding of information protection in the organization, and ability to ensure it	Business Research Intellectual property law

Thus, there is confusion and discrepancies between the courses mentioned in the SAR and the learning objectives at programme level, and the course descriptions in annex 1. There was a further complication for the ET in that there seems to be some discrepancy between the programme structure as presented in the documentation given to us in advance of the trip and the course diagram presented to us during the site visit. We have explored that issue in the table below.

Course structure diagram (handed out during site visit)		Course descriptions (in annex 1)
Semester 1	20	
block: Compulsory Courses	16	
Information Systems Modelling	4	?corresponds to Information systems design?
Communication and Information Research Methodology	4	Ok
Research Work I/III	4	Ok
Strategical Information and Knowledge Management	4	Ok
block: Optional Courses	4	
Prognostication Methods in Management	4	?corresponds to Forecasting methods for management?
Theories of Propaganda	4	?
Semester 2	20	
block: Compulsory Courses	16	?
Information and Modelling Promotion of Solutions	4	Ok
Research Work II/III	4	Ok
Strategical Information and Knowledge Project	4	Ok
Total Quality Management	4	
block: Optional Courses	4	
Information Communities	4	Ok
Information Wars	4	Ok
Semester 3 (current)	20	
block: Compulsory Courses	16	
Integrated Marketing Communication	4	?
Intellectual Property Law	4	Ok
Research Work III/III	4	Ok
Business Research	4	?corresponds to Business Investigation?
block: Optional Courses	4	
Organizational Behaviour	4	Ok
Managing Projects and Programmes	4	?corresponds to Project Management?
Semester 4	20	
block: Compulsory Courses	20	?
Final Thesis	20	Ok

This leaves us with the following courses in annex 1, which are **not** included in the Study Programme overview:

- Business communication (has the course disappeared?)
- Decision support by information and models
- Intercultural communication

The following courses *may* be included but due to lack of precision in language maybe with a different title:

- Information systems design
- Forecasting Methods for Management
- Project management
- Business investigation

Thus, the ET has not seen any course descriptions for:

- Information Systems Modelling
- Theories of Propaganda
- Prognostication Methods in Management (corresponds to Forecasting methods for management?)
- Information and Modelling Promotion of Solutions
- Integrated Marketing Communication
- Business Research (corresponds to Business Investigation?)
- Managing Projects and Programmes (corresponds to Project Management?)
- Research Work III/III

There is no indication in the SAR which courses have been replaced with which courses, neither can we see any description of changes in course titles.

Therefore it is recommended that

- learning outcomes at subject level / in course descriptions are formulated in terms of how they contribute to overall learning objectives and
- that learning objectives at programme level are aligned with learning objectives at subject level,
- and furthermore that a clear correlation is established between courses and course titles with learning outcomes at programme level

Furthermore it is recommended that the approach for aligning learning objectives at different levels, demonstrated in the self-assessment report of *MANAGEMENT OF LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES* (Code – 62409S101) is used for inspiration and guidance.

1.2.3. Transformation of the learning outcomes

The self-assessment of the study programme Information Management was conducted in 2008 for external evaluation, self-assessment data was specified (cf. p. 16 in Self-Assessment, Collective Volume, Study Field of Communication and Information, Vilnius University, 2010).

Whilst the SAR shows neither clear procedure nor any actions towards the renewal of the learning outcomes, it could be argued that the differences between the programme recorded in the SAR and the Course Diagram given to us at the site visit demonstrates efforts to renew the programme content in an acceptable manner.

2. Curriculum design

2.1. Programme structure

2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume

The SAR states compliance with VU and State regulations and this information is accurate and the programme is in compliance.

The Course Structure Diagram, which the ET received when it arrived at the University, gives an overview of Compulsory and Optional Courses. In addition the ET refers to the comments above concerning its reservations that some of the learning outcomes at programme level are not reflected on course level, and that some courses' learning outcomes are not reflected at programme level.

In semester 1, 2 and 3 there are five study subjects, four obligatory and one optional. In Semester 4 students work on their Master's thesis.

2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects

In semester 1, 2 and 3 there are 5 study subjects, four compulsory and one optional. In semester 2 students work on A Strategical Information and Knowledge Project. In semester 4 students work on their Master's Thesis.

When we met the students, they expressed the view that there was too little choice, and that the choices were "strange". In the students' opinion, some electives ought to be compulsory some compulsory courses would be better offered as electives. In addition they commented on subject overlap between courses; this should be investigated further and the reduction of overlap may create more space for offering more optional choice to the students.

As previously mentioned, the SAR regrettably does not mention any rationale behind the combination of fields included in the study programme or how the different fields contribute to solving information and knowledge management tasks. We also have no information as to the Master's Thesis in relation to all these fields. How many fields should it draw on? Should its focus be Information Management?

2.2. Programme content

2.2.1. Compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts

As noted previously, the SAR states compliance with VU and State regulations, and as best as could be established this information is accurate and the programme is in compliance.

According to the SAR (p. 13) "During the first three semesters, full-time study students' self-study comprises, on average, 501 hours per semester, extramural - 635 hours per semester. During the fourth semester, full-time students' self-study work comprises 748 hours, extramural - 772 hours. According to VU Study Programme rules and regulations (*June 22, 2006, (Report No. SK-2006-11)*), 1 credit is equal to 40 conventional hours of a student's work (class or individual, etc.) hours, therefore, full-time study mode student's self-study comprises 60% of every subject's scope, extramural study mode - 76% of each study subject's scope."

2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content

The topics of study subjects are to some degree harmonized with the study outcomes. As stated under 1.2.2, there is not a clear correlation between learning objectives at programme level and learning objectives of courses.

According to the SAR (p. 13) "The basic form of the programme's classroom work are - lectures, seminars, practical classes, consultations. The usual scope of study subject's classroom work during one semester: full-time study mode - 52 or 64 hours, extramural study mode - 36 or 38 hours. The scope of classroom scientific research work is 8-53 hours (full-time study mode), 8-28 hours (extramural study mode). The study methods are related to the content and aims of the subject ..."

The SAR and teaching practice shows a good variety of methods used in the programme. Current students as well as alumni of the programme stated that the variety is good and that the programme is very flexible.

The ET observed that the programme is very flexible and therefore was able to cater for the needs of the students most of whom are in employment.

3. Staff

3.1. Staff composition and turnover

3.1.1. Rationality of the staff composition

According to the SAR (p. 16) “64% of the Information Management Master study programme teaching staff are from the Communication Faculty, 33% - from the Faculty of Economics, Vilnius University. According to the scientific degree the distribution of the teaching staff for Information Management study programme is following: 27% are professors, 53% associate professors and 20% PhD holders. In 2009, Chairwoman of the Study Programme Committee Assoc. Prof. Z. Atkočiūnienė accomplished habilitation procedure. Therefore number of lectures, therefore the share of the courses delivered by professors has grown to 33%.”

The research field of all teachers of the programme conforms to the subjects they teach. The profiles of research and academic activities of programme teachers are presented in the curriculum vitae and annexes.

The ratio of staff as presented in the SAR seems generous and should enable good quality teaching.

3.1.2. Turnover of teachers

There is no written information on turnover. From the meeting with teachers we learned that turnover is not considered to be a problem. Some turnover happens with external teachers from business. But this offers a good opportunity to replace teachers with poor teaching qualities.

3.2. Staff competence

3.2.1. Compliance of staff experience with the study programme

As above, the SAR and CVs (as well as the face-to-face discussions) indicate that most staff has good teaching experience and skills appropriate to deliver the programme. Any new teachers are given initial teaching training and there seems to be a supportive environment for new teachers whether inexperienced or not.

3.2.2. Consistency of teachers' professional development

Teachers have ample opportunities to develop their professional and scientific skills. During the site visit, it became clear that training in teaching skills is mainly provided to new teachers. We are of the opinion that somewhat more attention could be given to the training and pedagogic skills development of the tenured teaching staff. Students reported significant variations in the performance of the teaching staff in terms of their ability to teach, their willingness to give feedback on assessments and their availability to offer advice to students.

4. Facilities and learning resources

4.1. Facilities

4.1.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies

In general, the suitability of premises for studies is good. Lecture halls are of good quality, other teaching rooms are well-equipped and flexible, with projection and other equipment, and seem

sufficient in number, although as some facilities are shared there is some competition with other departments. Library study facilities are good and conveniently located.

4.1.2. Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies

There are ample labs equipped with modern computing facilities; neither teachers nor students voiced any complaints about either the availability of access to, or quality of, these resources.

4.1.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training

There appeared to be a good range of appropriate placement locations available, and good relations with employers sponsoring these. Students generally reported no difficulties in finding placements of an appropriate nature.

4.2. Learning resources

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

Library stocks of printed materials seem appropriate and adequate to student numbers and demand. A shortage of textbooks and other printed materials in Lithuanian was commented on by some, but overall provision is sound.

4.2.2. Suitability and accessibility of learning materials

A VLE (Moodle) is provided and student have external access to library databases both internally and externally via VPN. Some teachers also support other electronic delivery methods for materials (e.g. websites) as they prefer not to use Moodle “due to its complexity”. We would suggest that this reflects a training issue and one instance of where a formal CPD policy (referred to in 3.3.2 above) might be applied beneficially.

5. Study process and student assessment

5.1. Student admission

5.1.1. Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies

According to the SAR (p. 15), admission to the revised study programme of Information Management began in 2008. There is an entrance examination for applicants who have graduated from any other than information and communication study areas.

It is indicated, however, (p. 15) that “a tendency has been observed that the majority of students admitted to this programme of the second cycle studies have acquired a bachelor’s degree in the communication and information study field. A conclusion could therefore be drawn that course units of greater depth should be introduced in the study programme, since due to inadequate preparation for the entrance examination the number of students from other study fields is very small.”

So, in principle the Information Management programme is open to graduates of the Faculty of Communication and other social or humanities study programmes, but in practice the typical student holds a bachelor’s degree in the communication and information study field.

It is our opinion that this fact should lead to a discussion and possible revision of the Information Management programme as “expansive” meant for different graduates, (cf. SAR p. 8. which is also mentioned under Weaknesses in the SAR p. 19).

5.1.2. Efficiency of enhancing the motivation of applicants and new students

It seemed to the ET that whilst the University has in place some initiatives to attract new students generally, there was little evidence of active initiatives to encourage application to this specific programme from within the Faculty. Whilst this may be understandable when application numbers are

healthy, it does seem to be a little complacent given that applicant numbers overall are on a falling trend, and we would advocate a more proactive approach to encouraging recruitment, particularly as there may initially be a lack of clarity as to what differentiates this programme from others in the minds of the students.

Those students who have come from Faculty programmes were very clear that the Masters programmes deepened their knowledge. This again could be an indication, cf. item 5.1.1. above of a possible revision of the Information Management programme to a deepening programme.

Is it the programme achievable for those who come from another discipline? The students asked were not aware of any help from faculty to make up ground but potential students had to pass an entrance exam if they came from another discipline. There are no formal “levelling studies” but such students are given help on a 1:1 basis.

5.2. Study process

5.2.1. Rationality of the programme schedule

The schedule seems to be working. In our meeting with students we ascertained that 3 out of 6 have jobs. Those with jobs work less than 40 hours on the programme but still get good grades.

5.2.2. Student academic performance

Neither teachers nor students reported any problems in this respect. Employers indicated that alumni do not always meet all practical requirements but that this could be rectified easily at the beginning of their employment. Students are involved in research assignments and research programs. 3 out of 11 students have dropped out because of jobs. We were told that students often return, not to full time, but to part-time programme.

According to the SAR (p. 19), “The Department of Information and Communication involves students of the Information management study programme in research activities of the department. In 2009, the section of master degree students was also involved in the discussion of issues of the annual national conference of researchers in the field of information and communication. Supervised by the teachers of the department, students wrote and delivered scientific papers and participated in the discussions about the issues under consideration. Students from other higher education institutions, who are interested in the relevant issues of information and communication sciences, also took part in the conference and delivered reports.”

5.2.3. Mobility of teachers and students

It is indicated in the SAR (p. 17) that “The teaching staff of the Faculty of Communication at Vilnius University take an active part (as members or coordinators) in various international projects.” The SAR, however, contains no information on exchange agreements nor on teacher or student mobility for this particular programme.

However, from the SAR, p. 29, it appears that VU Communication Faculty actively participates in ERASMUS programme, over 100 students and 30 teachers had an internship at universities from Amsterdam, Groningen and Saxon (The Netherlands Kingdom), Leicester and London (United Kingdom), Berlins Humboldtun and Hanover (Germany), Lund and Borås (Sweden), Tampere and Oulu (Finland), Rome and Sienna (Italy). There were more than 160 foreign ERASMUS exchange students (mainly from Germany, Spain, Turkey and Poland), studied at the Communication Faculty and also 35 foreign teachers, who delivered lectures. It is not clear from the SAR, however, how many of these involved teachers or students are from the Information Management programme. Alumni, whom we met during the on site visit, informed us that in the past, several students have taken advantage of these arrangements. None of the students, whom we met, had participated in an exchange. We are not aware of any foreign students attending the Information Management Masters

programme. The main explanation probably is that most courses are taught in Lithuanian. In the longer term teaching Masters programmes in English should enable 2-way exchange of students.

5.3. Student support

5.3.1. Usefulness of academic support

Students generally reported to be satisfied with the academic support they were getting. Academic student support is provided through teachers' consultations, discussions about professional activities, subjects of the study programme, their strengths and weaknesses, and career opportunities.

5.3.2. Efficiency of social support

No substantive mention of student social support is made in the SAR, however the observed facilities were good and plentiful, with plenty of student social space in and around the department which was well used, social clubs and activities, refectories, etc. There was no complaint from the student body in regard of social facilities and support.

5.4. Student achievement assessment

5.4.1. Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity

There is no explicit information on correlation of types of exams, criteria for exams and intended learning outcomes.

But although there are no formal descriptions on assessment criteria there seem to be sufficient informal means of communication to assure that they are well understood. As long as the numbers of students are as small as they are at the moment we think this is fair. When the number of students is increasing, more formal methods of communication should be considered.

5.4.2. Feedback efficiency

The same holds for feedback efficiency. Although occasional shortcomings are reported by students, in general the feedback seems to be good. Again, we recommend more formal, written feedback in case the number of students is increasing.

5.4.3. Efficiency of final thesis assessment

According to the students we spoke to final thesis assessment seems to be good.

5.4.4. Functionality of the system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education

There was no indication in the SAR of any system for this activity, which was confirmed by conversations with teachers who indicated that the intention was that this would be addressed when the move to modular teaching happened. At present such issues are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and cases appear very rare – no students reported having need for this.

The ET suggests that a clear written system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education should be developed and made widely available to students.

5.5. Graduates placement

5.5.1. Expediency of graduate placement

Of the students we met with, many of them already have jobs as for example communications manager in a public sector organization, programmer with duties to examine information and information filtration. And those with no job already had a clear idea of what they aim at, for example work with Information Systems both as an Information Systems Manager, creator and train users;

strategic management and project management; the link in the chain between programmers and users trying to reduce misunderstandings between users and programmers; to develop complex information systems, etc.

6. Programme management

6.1. Programme administration

6.1.1. Efficiency of the programme management activities

In the Faculty, the quality of the study programme is controlled by the a study programme's committee, the branch department of the Communication Faculty, the Faculty's Study Council commission, the Faculty's Dean for study affairs, Council of the Faculty, which is also responsible for physical conditions and for the study process.

6.2. Internal quality assurance

6.2.1. Suitability of the programme quality evaluation

In 2008, the Quality Management Centre was established, whose main activities would be: developing the valuation criteria and rates/indicators, collecting and processing/handling the information about study quality, quality management and assurance of the study quality at Vilnius University. At the moment, the implementation of the study quality ensures the Study department. It is discussing on the study programmes, cogitating and confirming the study programmes, results of self-examination at VU Study Commission, VU Senate.

Additional evaluations are done at the faculty level because there is a need for more detailed program oriented information. Individual teachers also evaluate their courses, either in discussions or in printed questionnaires. (SAR, p. 32).

6.2.2. Efficiency of the programme quality improvement

Evaluation results are reported back to all those concerned. There is, however, no formal mechanism to check on the follow-up of these findings. A greater degree of formalization of the process is recommended.

6.2.3. Efficiency of stakeholders participation.

Students participate in the evaluations by filling in questionnaires and discussions with the teaching staff. We did not find any proof of formal feedback of the evaluation findings to the students.

We are not aware of any formal evaluation efforts aimed at the teaching staff. Communication with teachers from other than the information and communication department seems to be limited. There are no formal ways of reporting back university or faculty evaluation results to the teaching staff. Neither are there feedback mechanisms for the evaluation results of individual teachers to the faculty or university as a whole. Although, looking at the limited numbers of students we do not recommend very formal evaluation procedures some more stringent procedures are recommendable in our view.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The ET recommends that there is an elaboration of the rationale of the fields with the programme and a “sharpening” of the Information Management core.

3.2. The ET strongly recommends that there is action to align the learning objectives at programme level with learning objectives at course level

3.3. The ET recommends that there is alignment of courses and course titles with the learning objectives at programme level.

3.4 The ET recommends that consideration is given to greater formalization in the provision of feedback to students

3.5 The ET recommends that consideration is given to more formal mechanisms for acting on feedback from the internal quality assurance procedures.

3.6 The ET recommends that the programme team gives consideration to use of Dublin Descriptors.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Information Management* (state code – 61209S103 (new code - 621P10002)) is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	3
4.	Material resources	4
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	19

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

2 (poor) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

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