MARIJAMPOLĖS KOLEGIJOS

vadybos ir verslo administravimo krypties studijų programų išorinio išsamiojo

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

Marijampole College

study field of management and business administration
external assessment of
study programmes

Final Report

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Vilnius
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Title of study programme	Accountancy	Catering Business Administration	Business Information Systems	Business Management
State code	65303S124	65303S128	65303S129	65303S130
Kind of study[1]	Non-university	Non-university	Non-university	Non-university
Mode of study[2] (duration in years)	F (3), PX (4)	F (3)	F (3), PX (4)	F (3), PX (4)
Volume of study programme in credits	120 credits	120 credits	120 credits	120 credits
Degree and (or) professional qualification to be awarded	Accountant	Administrator	Administrator	Manager
Programme registration date, order No.	2001-08-28, Nr. 1234	2001-08-28, Nr. 1234	2001-08-28, Nr. 1234	2001-08-28, Nr. 1234

1. Introduction

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[1] **NU** – Non-university studies; **U** –Uundergraduate studies; **M** – Masters' studies;
   SP – Specialised Professional studies; **I** – Integrated studies;
[2] **F** – Full-time; **PE** – Part-time (Evening); **PX** – Part-time (Extramural).

Marijampole College was founded on the basis of the former Marijampole College of Agriculture in 2001. It has started to offer the four programmes in the study field of Business administration and management in the same year. The College comprises of two faculties, and the Faculty of Business and Technologies, comprising of 7 departments, is in charge of the Accountancy, Catering Business Administration, Business Management, Business Information Systems programmes.

The self-assessment report (SAR) for the programme was prepared by a self-assessment group headed by the Dean of the Faculty of Business and Technologies, comprising of further teaching and support staff, and one student. The group was formed in June, 2003 and the SAR was completed in September, 2003.

The site visit took place on Thursday, 24 February, 2005. The visiting experts were: Prof. Ernö Zalai (Hungary, sub-team leader), Professors Milan Maly (Czech Republic) and Alfredas Chmieliauskas (Lithuania), and accreditation experts Jeffery H. Butel (UK) and Fritz W. Peter (Germany).

The SAR includes extensive and supporting annexes, is well structured, and follows properly the guidelines. It provided a sound basis for the site visit and assessment of the programmes.

2. Aims and goals of the Study Programmes

Non-university Accounting study programme:

Strategic guidelines for Marijampole region stress the importance of developing the human resource potential of SMEs, for instance with regard to the agricultural and tourism/recreation sectors. Being one of the basic internal functions of any business organisation, accounting is of particular importance in SMEs. The process of conversion to market economy has produced a significant demand for professional accountants, especially in rural areas. Therefore establishing a study programme in Accounting at Marijampole College is justified by the real needs of the labour market. This has been confirmed by both graduates and their employers during the meetings arranged for the expert team.

Non-university Catering Business Administration study programme:

Strategic guidelines for Marijampole region stress the importance of developing the human resource potential of SMEs in both agricultural and tourism/recreation sectors.

In the recent years the south-western part of Lithuania (surrounding Marijampole region) is restoring its attractiveness as a resort area. New hotels, spa facilities and restaurants were opened in the region to serve the needs of the foreign tourists (mostly from Poland, Russia, Belarus) and Lithuanians coming mostly from the two major cities of Kaunas and Vilnius. Establishing a study programme in Catering Business Administration in the centre of the region is clearly meets the demand for such a provision. According to comments made by the graduates and their employers the programme seems to be well fitted to the needs of regional businesses.

Non-university Business Information Systems study programme:

The growing demand for IT professionals able to provide the relevant information for administrative needs or decision making processes is becoming even more important in a context of national and international requirements for standardising business processes in an organization. Even small regional/local businesses are required to comply with certain standards in computer-based accounting, labelling of products, etc. Marijampole region features many new hotels, restaurants, spa facilities as well as SMEs with their IT resources; at the same time it is suffering from the lack of skilled personnel able to properly handle these resources, such as accounting systems, customer reservation systems. Study programme in Business Information Systems at Marijampole College preparing the administrators of business information systems is clearly targeted to meet the demand of middle level IT in the south-west part of Lithuania.

Non-university Business Management study programme:

Developing the human resource potential for SMEs in the agricultural sector has been set as one of the strategic priorities of the Marijampole region. The study programme on Business Management at Marijampole College focuses two main areas:

- educating specialists in agricultural trade and commerce which is of big importance for the rural area bordering with the two major neighbouring countries (Poland and Russia);

- preparing managerial personnel for Marijampole city economic development and its business promotion.

The programme seems to properly reflect the needs of social partners in Marijampole region as was demonstrated during the meeting with the employers and graduates. The content of the study programme is also backed by the recent research into the business environment in Marijampole County.

3. Analysis of the Programme

3.1. Study programme *Accountancy (non-university studies)*

3.1.1 Structure, contents and study methods

The programme consists of 120 credits. These may be taken over three years (six semesters) full-time or four years (eight semesters) part-time. There are two specialisations: *Trade Enterprise Accounting* and *Agricultural Accounting*.

General Higher Education Subjects comprise 36.5 credits, Subjects for the Acquisition of Professional Qualification 46.5 credits, Subjects of Professional Specialisation 12 credits, Practical work 21 credits and Final Examination 4 credits. As can be seen by the amount of credits achievable (12) professional specialisation is limited to 10% of the study programme. Electives can either be chosen from Professional Studies (*Assurance* or *Logistics*, 2 credits) or from General Studies (foreign language, 4 credits).

The subjects studied are on the whole appropriate. There is possibly room for additional mutual references among them. For example, *Philosophy*, *Sociology* and *Psychology* could refer more visibly to "*Ethics and*

Etiquette" or "*Labour and Civil Security*". There is some unbalance in terms of intellectual challenge between such subjects as *Ethics* and *Etiquette* or *Labour* and *Civil Security*.

There is appropriate emphasis on practical work and on 'active-learning', and the scheduling of subjects is intended to ensure that students have the necessary theoretical underpinning to gain maximum benefit from their practical experience. It is surprising, however, that the number of planned self-study hours declines through successive years of the programme. To change this to some degree the number of lectures has been reduced to an average of 32, yet this still seems high.

3.1.2 Execution of studies and support for students

The number of classroom hours, as noted above, is high, however, the way of teaching eases the workload to some degree. There is primary reliance on final examinations; they constitute between 50 and 60% of the overall assessment. This assessment method might in some cases be less practicable or appropriate. Skills like, for instance, presentation techniques in the sense of oral presentation or reporting (as part of *Management* or *Business Statistics*, etc.) can, of course, not be appraised by written exams, yet the importance of these skills is growing in modern management. Students receive continuous feedback on their progress and there is a re-sit facility. Students may appeal in the event of dissatisfaction with the assessment outcome.

The College has steadily improved the learning environment: modernized classrooms in larger number, more up-to-date IT equipment, additional available foreign literature. Some further additions, especially with respect to the latter, should be made, however, to expose the students and accustom them to international literature and thinking, even more so, as some students do not make enough use of the literature available "because of insufficient skills in foreign languages" (as the Self-Assessment Report states on p13). When questioning students and graduates, it also became obvious that a number of them feel shy to apply their language abilities.

Students are also supported socially (some forms of limited financial support). There are a number of scholarships available.

3.1.3 Variation in the number of students

The number of students' entrants has risen from 30 (first intake, 2001/02) to 37 (second intake, 2002/03) in day-time studies, and from 30 (first intake, 2001/02) to 34 (second intake, 2002/03) in the part-time programme.

Of the students belonging to the first intake 6 were excluded from the study programme, 4 because of poor progress, 1 for poor attendance; 1 student took academic leave (Self-Assessment Report, p13); of those from the second intake 7 students were excluded: 2 took academic leave, 5 quit by themselves (SAR, p13). Thus the wastage rate is 20%, or is close to 20% with respect to the second intake.

The College faculty administration states in its report that drop-outs resulted mainly "from family problems, poor basic knowledge of general compulsory subjects, lack of motivation for accountant's

profession and weak eagerness to study" (SAR, p13). Further long-term statistics and in-depth analysis will reveal more accurately underlying causes that possibly could then be confronted.

3.1.4 Teaching staff

No professors or "docents" teach on either of the programmes, with some 20% of the teachers possessing less than 3 years of practical work experience in the field of the subject taught – as far as Subjects for Acquisition of Professional Qualification and Professional Specialisation are concerned. In the field of General Studies almost all of the teaching is performed by instructors who possess no less than 3 years of experience. Though there is clearly a relatively low level of academic standing and experience of staff, student feedback suggests that they are generally happy with the standard of teaching they receive.

The College is well aware of the need to invest in staff development and recruitment in order to further support the programme and the learning of its students. A system of staff qualification improvement has been established at the College, the general vision of which is to support life-long learning for all faculty staff. One of the declared goals is to improve language skills. Judging from impressions gained on site visit some priority should indeed be given to this goal. Even though the perspective of Marijampole College is to serve the regional market demands there should be higher emphasis on languages in view of the needs of general international market integration.

The College arranges for staff self-education by establishing so-called "open lectures" where teachers can visit their colleagues' lectures to learn from these or to give advice to them. To give just one further example of support measures for staff development: "According to the Statute of Marijampole College teachers at the Faculty are allotted a one-year-period for making scientific research to develop scientific as well as professional competence every five years." (SAR, p15)

3.1.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the Programme

Advantages:
- student applications and entry seem to develop positively
- graduates and employers are supportive and express positive views; the programme is clearly serving the regional demand
- the College supports the further improvement of academic staff; emphasizes skills development
- "open lectures" – as one form of self-education of staff – are offered
- active support given to students to learn – not so much by the curriculum (which carries a heavy workload) but by the commitment of many teachers during classes, i.e. by the way teaching is performed
- regular feedback given to students on their progress

Disadvantages:
- further profiling of the programme seems possible, for instance, by merging subjects into wider areas
- the link between general (academic) subjects and professional ones could in some cases be made more visible (*Philosophy – Business Ethics*)

- the student workload is too high, limiting the range of time where self-study must be organized by the individual himself; self-study hours should increase through the years of the programme

- limited opportunities to take electives

- final examinations represent at least 50 per cent of the final assessment for *all* subjects

- wastage rate high; it should be analyzed further by systematic use of statistics

- staffing experience and academic standing need to be enhanced

- insufficient library stock in foreign languages

- recommended literature should regularly include texts in English – possibly also in a further language, to strengthen the international perspective – and should group the literature in "required" and "additional" titles

- IT provisions have been greatly improved and can be regarded quite satisfactory in some respects; there remains considerable scope for improvement

3.2. Study programme *Catering Business Management (non-university studies)*

3.2.1 Structure, contents and study methods

The content of the curriculum of the study programme meets the goals of this programme: to help students to acquire the professional competencies needed for the proper understanding of the economic and social environment, to develop their abilities to conduct market research, to write business plans, to improve the quality of enterprise activities as well as to manage enterprise resources and staff.

The strong point of this study programme is its professional activity component, which is represented by practices at different catering enterprises.

The team feels, however, that the specialisation offered by the study program is somewhat too narrow. The experience gained from the other similar institutions and programs shows a broader conception of this field of studies, they include, as a rule, either tourism, or hotel services, or health resort services or some other service areas as well.

The curriculum is otherwise balanced enough. Theoretical subjects make up about 26%, subjects of professional qualification about 37%, professional practice about 17% of the curriculum and there are as well some elective subjects, which represent only 5 % of it. (We would like to note that the combination of Ethics with Etiquette is somewhat unusual.)

3.2.2 Execution of studies and support for students

The total number of teaching hours is equally divided into three years of studies. The share of theoretical studies in the study programme is 1262 hours, that of the seminars amounts to 1389 hours, 1113 hours are planned for self-study, 796 hours are devoted for practice and 240 hours for the preparation of the final diploma work and related practice.

From this we can conclude that the programme relies to a large extent on practical training and the self study of the students. If, however, one takes it into consideration that the total number of in class hours a week is 32 (!) than the above shares are less indicative. The team suggests a further reduction in the number of in-class hours, not more than 22-24 hours a week (and not more than 7-8 courses taken parallel). That may need to reconsider the curriculum, the consolidation and modernization of the content of the courses offered in the study programme.

From the SAR it was not clear enough how the College combines various teaching methods and evaluation schemes to assess the knowledge of the students in different courses. Our discussion with the faculty as well as the students indicated that lectures and notes taken during them constitute an overwhelmingly large part of the source of knowledge students are supposed to acquire. The marginal importance of literature reading is manifested by the too long lists of recommended literature (in some courses above 30 in one course).

3.2.3 Variation in the number of students

Table 1, prepared on the basis of the SAR, shows the changes in the number of students in the Catering business administration study programme. The figures do not show significant fluctuation, but, of course, one has to take it into account that only a short period of time has yet passed since the introduction of the programme.

Table 1: Total number of students

Year	M	F	Total
2002 – 2003	14	17	**31**
2001 – 2002	4	26	**30**

The figures provided indicate that the number of students who cancelled their studies did not exceed 10 per cent.

3.2.4 Teaching staff

As far as the academic staff of the College is concerned, the situation is very similar to comparable other non-university study programmes. There is total absence of senior lecturers (professors and associate professors – docents) and the teaching duties are performed mostly by junior teachers. The number of teachers with doctoral degrees is smaller than average among them. On the other hand, 24 teachers (92.3%) are employed full time, unlike in many other colleges. Some teachers possess, on the other hand, valuable work experience, and the College brings in instructors from the world of practice as well.

According to the SAR, teachers, who do not have enough work experience are expected to improve their practical skills in the field of subject they teach by means of participating in different projects, seminars and events related to practical work experience.

3.2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the Programme

<u>Advantages</u>:

- The programme meets, on the whole, the overall regulations and requirements set for non-university studies;
- there is a demonstrated need for and support of the programme in the region; the College is serving as the training place for the south-western part of Lithuania,
- it provides knowledge and skills that is relevant and needed for the administration of catering and other services;
- the programme has the minimum sufficient number of professionally well-trained academic staff;
- the College has modern audio-visual equipment and computers supporting modern teaching methods.

<u>Disadvantages</u>:

- The programme is overspecialised;
- the shortage of senior lecturers, esp. with doctoral degrees;
- mission and vision as well as the future strategic plans are missing in the SAR;
- there is not enough flexibility in the curriculum (small number and narrow scope of electives);
- the number of weekly hours in class is too high and students are not sufficiently motivated to learn on their own;
- low level reliance of textbooks, foreign languages and foreign contacts;
- there is no differentiation between required and additional course references;
- library is modestly supplied by up-to-date text-books and journals, especially in English;
- minimal foreign contacts and personal experiences from similar institutions abroad.

3.3. Study programme *Business Information Systems (non-university studies)*

3.3.1 Structure, contents and study methods

The programme consists of 120 credits. These may be taken over three years (six semesters) full-time. There are two specialisations: Accounting and Management Systems and Publishing Systems.

Main parts defining the structure of the programme:

- "General Higher Education Subjects" comprise 36 credits (= 32% of study volume),
- "Subjects for Acquisition of Professional Qualification", 46 credits (= 36% of study volume),
- "Subjects of Professional Specialisation", 12 credits (= 11% of study volume),
- "Professional Practice" comprises 20 credits (= 18% of study volume),

The first group of subjects – "General Higher Education Subjects" – is intended to provide a basis for further studies as well as for a human and social development of a person. Significant emphasis is placed

here on teaching languages (12.5 credits) and other social sciences and humanities (Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology). Although some course titles indicate rather strange combinations of topics, e.g., Ethics AND Etiquette, Specialist Language AND Office Work.

The second group of subjects – "Subjects for Acquisition of Professional Qualification" – focus on two areas as implied by the programme title: (1) business and management, and (2) information systems. Subjects in the first area should cover the main functions of business administration therefore it is somewhat strange that they do not include a course on Human Resource Management. The second area is represented by the broad spectrum of IT-related subjects, including hardware, software, information system components, etc. Two purely mathematical courses (Discrete Mathematics and Statistics) are also included into this group.

It should be noted that the subjects of the second group (and the whole study programme in general) are much more oriented towards the first specialization (Accounting and Management Systems). The second specialization (Publishing Systems) would not require so many business-oriented subjects and one would expect much more emphasis on arts and design instead.

The third group of subjects – "Subjects of Professional Specialisation" – is targeted at the development of the necessary qualifications defined by the specialization titles: Accounting and Management Systems, and Publishing Systems. Again, the second specialization seems to be supported in a rather fragmented way throughout the whole study programme, mostly by the single subject in this group, i.e., Computer Publishing Systems.

The fourth group of subjects – "Professional Practice" – consists of four different IT-related practical assignments, including the practical placement ("Final Practice").

The final thesis ("Final Work") is assigned 6 credits.

The offer of elective courses is limited: students have to choose 2 courses out of four.

In general, the curriculum seems to be adequate for the development of professional competencies of administrators in business information systems by focussing (according to SAR) on "developing, investigating and improving computer systems at business and state organizations". However, the specialisation in Computer Publishing Systems needs a stronger support throughout the study programme.

3.3.2. Execution of studies and support for students

The breakdown of the study programme by teaching formats (according to SAR) is the following:

- lecturing –1089 h (23 %),

- seminars – 1509 h (31 %),
- practice – 800 h (17 %),
- self-study – 1162 h (24 %),
- final examination – 240 h, (5%).

Although the SAR states that lecturing makes up 23% of all study time (including students self-study time) but considering only the contact hours the proportion of lecturing is about 42%. This results in a comparatively high daily workload (of rather passive participation nature) for students. Therefore the College has initiated certain efforts to reduce the number of contact hours to give students more time to "digest" the material and to study it independently. Of course, this would require a solid back up in both subject matter (development of the library stock, expansion of IT functionalities) and teaching methodology (implementation of proactive formats of learning: group work, roundtables, discussions, etc.)

3.3.3. Variation in the number of students

Table 2: Total number of students

Year			
	M	F	Total
2002 – 2003	44	18	**62**
2001 – 2002	21	9	**30**

Table 2, prepared on the basis of the SAR, shows the changes in the number of students in the Business Information Systems study programme. The female/male ratio among the students is about 1/2.

The drop-out rate is slightly more than 10% (including those students who took an "academic leave"). The main reasons for cancelling studies according to the SAR are family and health problems, and also lack of motivation. Trying to minimize the number of drop-outs the College is introducing such measures as flexible class schedules, individual consulting etc.

3.3.4. Teaching staff

One of the greatest challenges that the College is facing with regard to the quality of studies is the development of its teaching staff. National Law on Higher Education requires that college teachers should have at least Master's degree (or equivalent). According to the SAR, among the 24 teachers involved in Business Information Systems study programme only one of them has Doctoral degree and four have Master's. The SAR attributes the problem to the general situation in Lithuanian higher education: current salary system makes it more attractive for teachers having scientific degrees to get employed on a full-time basis at universities rather than at colleges. Therefore, the College has to rely mostly on hiring part-time

teachers with the degrees and also on gradually developing its permanent academic staff by encouraging and supporting their studies in both Master's and PhD programmes.

Another challenge is to maintain the teachers having relevant practical experience, especially within the largest group of subjects related to "Acquisition of Professional Qualification". According to SAR, only slightly more than a half of the teaching staff (58,3%) has the formally required work experience. This situation is mostly reflects the fact that IT specialists (required to develop practical skills within the Business Information Systems study programme) primarily are seeking employment in a business sector rather than choosing an academic career. One of the possible solutions may be in employing practitioners on a part-time basis (mostly for supervising short time practical assignments) and teaming them up with full-time college teachers.

3.3.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the Programme

Advantages:

- Study programme supports the development plan of Marijampole region and was designed according to the results of research on the demand for the specialists in the field in the south-western part of Lithuania.
- The representatives of both business and public institutions are participating in the Programme Committee and in Final Assessment Commissions.
- Specialization in Accounting and Management Systems provides comprehensive professional education based on generally well-balanced up-to-date curriculum.
- The part of the programme dedicated to "Professional Practice" is quite well developed (four different IT-related practical assignments, including the practical placement).

Disadvantages:

- Specialisation in Computer Publishing Systems needs a stronger support throughout the study programme.
- Limited pool of elective subjects.
- Lack of the research-oriented teaching staff and staff with scientific degrees.
- Lack of the teaching staff having relevant work experience.
- Limited library and IT resources.

3.4. Study programme *Business Management (non-university studies)*

3.4.1 Structure, contents and study methods

The programme comprises 120 credits and may be taken full-time over three years or part-time over four. General Higher Education Subjects comprise 34.5 credits, Subjects for the Acquisition of Professional Qualification 43.5 credits, Subjects of Professional Specialisation 14 credits, Practical Work 22 credits and Final Work Writing (Diploma) 6 credits.

There is appropriate emphasis on practical work and on 'active-learning', and the scheduling of subjects is intended to ensure that student have the necessary theoretical underpinning to gain maximum benefit from their practical experience. It is surprising, however, that the number of planned self-study hours declines through successive years of the programme.

The rationale for some General Subjects, such as *Sociology*, is not clear, while the provision of subjects for the Professional Qualification is fragmented. There would appear to be scope for some rationalisation and amalgamation. There is a mismatch in terms of intellectual challenge between some subjects, for example, *Business Economics* and *Hygiene.*

There is very little choice, with just 8 credits available for electives. While the provision of a common core is important, there is scope for allowing greater specialisation, especially in the later years of the programme.

3.4.2. Execution of studies and support for students

The student workload is evenly spread across the years of study. However, in spite of a recent reduction, the weekly contact hours are still very high at just under 32. The College may wish to consider reducing this further.

Students receive continuous feedback on their progress and there is a re-sit facility. Students may appeal in the event of dissatisfaction with the assessment outcome. Students have the option of pursuing an individual schedule of studies to accommodate personal circumstances.

There is a heavy reliance on final examinations; they constitute between 50 and 60 per cent of the overall assessment. This distribution is not necessarily appropriate for all subjects being studied and the College may wish to consider wider implementation of more varied and appropriate assessment tools.

The SAR gives considerable detail about academic support for students but says very little about non-academic support. There are, however, a number of scholarships available.

3.4.3. Variation in the number of students

A full analysis is difficult because only two years' data are available.

Admission to the full-time programme has been constant for 2001-02 and 2002-03 at 29. The equivalent numbers for the part-time programme are 47 and 33 respectively. It is not clear if this last figure is a 'blip' or a downward trend. For both programmes a significant number of students have, for various reasons, withdrawn. The SAR points to lack of motivation, family commitments and health as the main reasons for withdrawals. However, the College may wish to adopt a more proactive approach to the relatively high 'wastage' rate.

3.4.4. Teaching staff

The SAR indicates that no professors or docents teach on either of the programmes. On the full-time programme around 40 per cent of teachers "had three or more years" experience and on the part-time, this is

60 per cent. There is clearly a relatively low level of academic standing and experience of staff, although student feedback suggests that they are generally happy with the standard of teaching they receive.

The College is well aware of the need to invest in staff development and recruitment in order to further support the programme and the learning of its students. To this end it has, since writing the SAR, appointed new academic staff.

3.4.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the Programme

Advantages:
- developed after widespread consultation with interested bodies
- appropriate emphasis on skills development
- emphasis on students' active learning
- feedback to students on their progress

Disadvantages:
- limited opportunities to take electives
- high contact hours
- self-study hours decrease through the years of the programme
- final examinations represent at least 50 per cent of the final assessment for *all* subjects
- wastage rates are high
- staffing experience and academic standing need to be further enhanced
- insufficient library stock in foreign languages
- IT provision has improved recently but would benefit from further modernisation and expansion

4. Material conditions

Teaching rooms and spaces in the library and IT suites are deemed appropriate. However, library stock, in foreign languages is limited and needs to be enhanced. There are appropriate arrangements for the requisitioning of new books and periodicals.

While the quantity of IT provision appears adequate, some machines are outdated.

5. External relations

The College is outward-looking and has established links both within Lithuania and externally. These links address employers' needs, curriculum renewal, student exchanges and the possibility of students progressing to further studies at universities. While these are quite comprehensive nationally, there remains

considerable scope for extending international links, so that students, and staff, may be exposed to modern business practice.

6. Feedback

The College is actively seeking feedback from employers. Numerous direct links have been established to representatives of companies who give feedback on different levels. The employers appreciate the competencies of College trained personnel. Quite a number of employers – as well as graduates – are engaged for the benefit of the College.

Extensive feedback was utilised in order to establish and formulate the programmes of study. Continuing feedback occurs under two headings: external and internal. The external system taps in to private and public sector organisations, in order to benefit from expert opinions, and it is intended to introduce a procedure to ascertain graduates' views one year after graduation. The internal system employs consultation procedures, including student opinion questionnaires and the work of the Department of Quality Assurance and Innovation.

The College appears to have a very comprehensive set of systems and procedures for feedback which it is seeking to enhance. Student feedback and teachers' self-assessment at the end of a course provide information on content quality and individual teacher's performance.

7. Internal assurance of study quality

The Department of Innovation and Quality Assurance was established in 2001. It has set out a framework for assurance and enhancement of the College's provisions. Its activities are appropriately focused and it has set clearly thought-out priorities for its activities.

The method involves reflective self-assessment at various levels with student views being given appropriate prominence. The quality of study programmes is assessed twice a year, at the end of each semester. The questionnaires used at the various stages are comprehensive and well-focused on key issues. Students pointed to improvements made as a result of their comments.

8. General assessment of the programmes within the study field

The programme has several strengths, there is a demonstrated need for and support of the p rogramme in the region and is serving well regional demands. The College has the minimum critical number of professionally trained academic staff. Numerous internal measures are in force to further improve study resources and the level of academic teaching. However, there are a number of areas that require improvement.

8.1 Recommendation to the higher education institution

The educational policy of the College should change more to a market-driven perspective, taking into account regional demand (of the businesses etc.) as well as the students at hand. The College should shift emphasis from "educating" students to "motivate" them by the content of the course and by using modern teaching methods, adopting a marketing (or service) approach when addressing students or graduates, businesses or the public in general. This requires regular training of the faculty and staff, including those working in the management of the College and Departments. The College in its entirety should undergo further reform and modernization. Much has been done along this road already, yet the changes with respect to managerial aspects, curriculum aspects or teaching methods are in part still not fully developed for programs sustainable on the longer run.

In particular, we would like to call attention to the following considerations:

- Statistics should be presented with more accuracy and in more details, in order to provide transparency for the College itself to monitor closer its activities, as well as for prospective students and public in general.

- Support and resources given to students and improvement programmes could be pointed out more "aggressively" to the general public to enhance the College's image and appeal.

- Language abilities of both students and faculty should be improved to enable them to be self-confident and pro-active in performing in an international setting.

- The College should reassess the structure of its programmes. Business Information Systems, as it stands now, is rather technical and does not match the level of similar undergraduate study programmes. It could be merged partly with Accountancy, and partly with Business Management as specialization. Also, Catering Business Administration offers a rather narrow specialization and could be broadened into the area of tourism.

- The general subjects should be linked better with the professional ones in their content.

- Course syllabuses should be supported with standard textbooks and more relevant recommended literature by: (a) including recent texts in English, (b) avoiding long and rather formal lists of recommended literature, (c) grouping the literature into "required" and "additional".

- The shortage of library resources should be eased.

- To help students achieve self-reliance the study programmes should offer more electives, increase the role of self-study, further reduce the number courses and in-class hours, increase opportunities for group work, oral presentations and targeted communication during classes, to mention but a few elements.

- Networking with businesses and organisations should be maintained and strengthen by involving specialists from businesses in training students and creating an alumni organisation.

- The "international" dimension of studies should be increased by participating in international exchange programmes.

8.2.Proposal on accreditation

Marijampolė College:

- Non-university study programme *Accounting* (state code 65303S124) is given **conditional accreditation**
- Non-university study programme *Catering Business Management* (state code 65303S128) is given **conditional accreditation**
- Non-university study programme *Business Information Systems* (state code 65303S129) is given **conditional accreditation**
- Non-university study programme *Business Management* (state code 65303S130) is given **conditional accreditation**

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Members: ………………………….… Prof. Heinrich Stremitzer

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