



VILNIAUS VERSLO KOLEGIJOS

vadybos ir verslo administravimo krypties
verslo vadybos studijų programų
išorinio išsamiojo

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

Vilnius Business College

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

Final Report

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

prof. Ernő Zalai

Nariai:
Team members:

prof. Jeffery Butel
prof. Virginijus Kundrotas
prof. Brian O'Connor
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1. Introduction

Title of study programme	Business Management
State code	65303S134
Kind of study	Non-university
Mode of study¹ (duration in years)	F (3), PX (3,5)
Volume of study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualification to be awarded	Manager
Programme registration date, order No.	2001 08 31 Nr. 1254

The self-assessment reports (SAR) for the non-university programme were produced in the spring semester of 2008 by the self-assessment group. Each member was allocated a specific aspect of responsibility. This is the second external review of the programmes; they received conditional accreditation in the first evaluation in 2005. The self-assessment document is sufficiently detailed and includes extensive and supporting annexes. It provided a sound basis for the site visit and assessment of the four programmes.

The site visit took place on Thursday, 20 November 2008. The visiting experts were: Ernó Zalai (HU, team leader), Jeffery Butel (UK), Virginijus Kundrotas (LT), Brian O'Connor (IR), Tiiu Paas (EST).

2. Aims and goals of the study programme

The study programme aims to produce a business manager able to demonstrate fluency in at least one foreign language; understand market patterns and regularities, make independent decisions, launch and develop private business, run a department or enterprise; master personnel management; draw up business plans and investment projects, apply information technologies, collect and process information and carry out market research.

A business manager must be able to apply his/her qualification in production, trade, state, finance or service entities.

From the experts' meetings with students and graduates it would appear that the aim "to demonstrate fluency in at least one foreign language" is too ambitious; few students demonstrated a very high level of English.

¹ **F** – Full-time; **PE** – Part-time (Evening); **PX** – Part-time (Extramural).

3. Analysis of the programme

3.1. Structure, contents and study methods

The institution commenced with one study programme – Business Management. Currently, (starting from 2002) the college provides, in addition, three new study programmes: Insurance Management, Applied English language and Computer programming.

Three modes of study are available to students: full-time, part-time evening and part-time Saturday studies. At the time of the visit there were a total of 576 students on the Business Management Studies programme: 99 full-time students, 208 part-time evening studies students and 269 part-time Saturday studies. Recruitment levels reflect market forces.

The College runs a Socialisation week for students during the first week for first year students. Academic staff and second, third and fourth year students participate and this helps to create a community ethos.

The curriculum is well designed and complies with traditional business and management programmes nationally and internationally. However, the elective subjects have not been articulated in the report with the result that the programme structure looks rather inflexible. The College regards the specialisations as electives. However, more freedom to choose elective courses is needed.

It is observed that final theses have been meeting the formal requirements although the literature lists in number of theses is rather short and contains mainly Lithuanian textbooks and internet resources. English language references are often lacking.

3.2. Execution of studies and support for students

Admission follows the stated procedures. The College offers discounts on tuition fees for those who show good academic results and provides flexibility in payment schedules.

Subjects are delivered by practitioners who have more than 5 years working experience. The study day commences at 8 a.m. and continues until approximately 3 p.m., providing students with self-study time. The typical core course class size varies between 15 and 50 students per class.

Students confirmed that learning materials prepared by the academic staff and Lithuanian literature has been used during the study process. However, they also reported that English textbooks have been used in some courses.

The studies are well organised and graduates expressed satisfaction with the way teaching was organised in the College and they valued lecturers' professional delivery of materials.

English language skills could be better developed. Special focus should be given to spoken English. Some of the students and graduates who met the experts did not demonstrate high levels of ability in the language.

3.3. Variation in the number of students

The number of the entrants is constantly increasing. The most popular type of studies is part-time (Saturday), followed by evening studies. The tendency is for the average age of entrants to be falling. The number of the full-time students is fluctuating and the tendency is rather difficult to forecast.

There are 99 students studying full-time, 208 students part-time evening and 269 part-time Saturday. Altogether, currently there are 576 students in Business Management studies.

The students who met the experts (22 full-time and 1 part-time student) mentioned that they chose the College because of its good learning environment, the possibility of foreign exchange programmes to other institutions of higher education. Many applied on the basis of personal recommendation.

3.4. Teaching staff

The institution has around 60 academic staff. However, the majority are employed full-time in other Lithuanian institutions of higher education. Eight lecturers combine their teaching activity with administrative work. Half of academic staff have worked continuously for a number of years, demonstrating a long term commitment. In addition, 23 administrative staff are employed.

English classes for academic and administrative staff have been provided at the College. The teaching staff met all spoke English, provided professional comments on the content of subjects as well as methods used and demonstrated high levels of motivation.

3.5. Advantages and disadvantages of the programme

Advantages

- The programme is designed and developed based on market demands.
- The employers consider that graduates have good IT, marketing and presentation skills in comparison with graduates from other colleges.
- Socialisation week is a very positive experience for students and staff.

- The atmosphere at the College is good with shared values and goals.
- The efforts to internationalise College are very positive.

Disadvantages

- According employers graduates are good in applying more basic skills and but less so in coping with more complex tasks.
- A number of the students met were shy and reluctant to express themselves in English. They explained that due to the lack of English language skills they are not able to express themselves as they would wish.
- Students rely heavily, almost exclusively, on the materials given to them by professors (teaching notes) and do not make much use of additional literature.
- The lack of English textbooks is disappointing.

4. Material conditions

For 15 years the college had been located in rented premises. Since 2005 the College has occupied new premises, which they own. This comprises 1100 m² of renovated space, which includes 13 classrooms (including computer rooms), a library and administrative facilities. The College also has plans to rent more facilities in the near future.

The College has a modest library and makes efforts to buy at least one or two copies of textbooks in Lithuanian, but also in English. Library funds, according to the self-assessment report, amount to 19,000 Lts. This represents about 50 Litas per student. Looking to the library funds it is clear that more resources need to be spent to obtain the most recent literature in the area of management and business, particularly in English.

The library facilities incorporate a reading room. The library is supervised by one employee. The library is open from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm and is equipped with five computer workplaces.

Computer facilities are sufficient and graduates and students are satisfied with the number of PCs available to them.

Teaching notes and other information from the teaching staff is placed on the College's website and deposited in the library so that every student may access the necessary information on the campus or remotely.

5. External relations

The College has been seeking to expand its external links. They obtained the Erasmus University Charter in 1999 and are seeking to expand students' international mobility. During the year 2007/2008 10 students have been on an Erasmus exchange programme abroad.

The College has partner institutions in a number of countries including Finland, Slovakia, Latvia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The majority of these institutions are higher education institutions providing professional programmes.

In 2007/2008 seven teaching staff visited the College from foreign partner institutions and have been teaching various classes. The subjects included business management and administration, business simulation activity; IT-related subjects, and business writing.

The College is involved in various international projects including EIT (English for Information Technologies) Leonardo da Vinci project, ICT4T (training for trainers) project, and 4-e trainer (valorisation of the best e-learning practices) project. They take part in and organise international conferences.

In order to expand the relationship with the business community the Competence centre has been established with the goal of providing training courses for business enterprises. The students are also involved in those Competence centre activities.

6. Feedback

Questionnaires are provided for the students at the end of each semester to express their opinions about the quality of the course and competences of the lecturer. The students permanently express their opinion.

The students and teachers have a good professional relationship. Lecturers provide feedback to the students in oral and written form.

Graduates expressed satisfaction with the support they have been received from their teachers in theses supervision and during the study process in general.

7. Internal assurance of study quality

The quality of the study programmes is evaluated at the end of every semester. Each department discusses the survey results and prepares its response. Any suggested changes are then discussed with senior management. In addition, students advised the experts that they felt able to communicate their concerns through student representatives and that any concerns were taken seriously.

The quality of teaching was evaluated by the consultancy company *EKT grupė*. This demonstrates the openness of the college to external scrutiny. External links of the college mean that it is made aware of quality assurance methods and processes elsewhere while the relatively small size of the student body means that staff are also made aware of any concerns by informal means.

8. General assessment of the programme within the study field

8.1 Recommendation to the higher education institution

The aim 'to demonstrate fluency in at least one foreign language' is too ambitious and is not achieved yet. To change this aim into more realistic would make a programme more realistic.

More freedom to choose elective courses is needed. More elective courses should be offered to the students.

More ambitious demands towards longer list of literature writing final theses should be settled. The use of English textbooks should be also required.

More resources should be spent in the College for obtaining most recent literature in the area of management and business. Especially it should be said about English literature.

8.2. Proposal on accreditation

Vilnius Business College:

- Non-university study programme *Business Management* (state code 65303S134) is given **full accreditation**

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Members: Prof. Jeffery Butel

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