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**TARPTAUTINIS VERSLAS IR KOMUNIKACIJA STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS (612N12002)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATION*
(612N12002)
STUDY PROGRAMME**
at ISM UNIVERSITY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Tarptautinis verslas ir komunikacija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612N12002
Studijų sritis	Socialinių mokslų studijų sritis
Studijų kryptis	Verslas
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3,5 m.)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	210 ECTS
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INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>International Business and Communication</i>
State code	612N12002
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Business
Kind of the study programme	University Studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3,5 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	210 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of International Business
Date of registration of the study programme	31 of August 2009, under the order of the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. 1-73

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I. INTRODUCTION

ISM University of Management and Economics was established in Kaunas in 1999 as the first privately owned institution of management education in Lithuania. The main founders of ISM are BI Norwegian Business School and The Norwegian Industrial and Regional Development fund.

ISM University of Management and Economics is an institution of undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate education in business, management and economics. The University serves as an advanced centre of market analysis, executive training and leading academic thought.

The Undergraduate School of ISM offers three undergraduate programmes taught in English, namely, Economics and Politics, International Business and Communication, and Industrial Technology Management, and another three programmes taught partly in English, in the areas of Economics, Business Management and Analytics, and Finance. The Graduate School of ISM offers Master level programmes in International Marketing and Management, Financial Economics, Innovation Management and Technology Transfer, and Information Technology Management. ISM also provides doctoral studies as well as executive training.

ISM runs its operations from two campuses: Vilnius, where the headquarters of the university are located, and Kaunas. The university is managed as one entity and academic quality provisions are the same regardless of the location, as the programmes delivered in the two locations, have the same learning outcomes, aims, structure, study management, quality assurance processes and teaching staff, while no significant differentiations exist in infrastructure and material provisions between the two campuses.

The International Business and Communication programme under review, is a first-level (undergraduate) programme that was created in 2011 as a result of a continuing development and expansion of ISM in specialized and more focused study areas in management and economics. The programme is offered in both Vilnius and Kaunas campuses.

The evaluation of the study programme took place on Wednesday 13th November 2013 at Vilnius campus. The team of experts is composed by Paul O' Sullivan (Head of the review panel; Ireland), Prof. Tatjana Volkova (Latvia), Prof. Pandelis Ipsilandis (Greece), Giedrius Romeika (academician, Lithuania), and Jolita Čeičytė (student representative; Lithuania).

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aim is to prepare students for professional careers and to develop their capabilities to lead and work in multinational and local globally orientated companies. A realistic set of specific objectives that students are expected to achieve, along with a description of the various types of potential employment positions, help in communicating the aims of the programme clear to anybody concerned.

Information about the programme is available at the English pages of the ISM web-site and also in the University brochure. As expected, published information about the programme's aim and objectives is adapted for marketing communication; even so the content conveys fairly the right information to prospective students.

The programme tries to create a distinct identity in Lithuania among the various business programmes by putting special emphasis in the interdisciplinary and international aspects of modern business and communication. There is no doubt that the programme excels in achieving a real international character that runs through all of its main features: Delivery in English, provisions for a 2nd language, internationalization of the content, high participation of foreign teachers, integration of foreign / exchange students, student mobility for studies and internship. The Expert Team observed that, in general, the role of Communication within this programme is facilitative and is not as well developed as the formal business domain. There is some treatment of organisational communication, and some interesting possibilities regarding interpersonal communication, but in the main, communication in this programme relates to the opportunity for developing English and other foreign languages and does not involve specialist studies in media, technology, or the other recognised domains of contemporary communication studies. Social partners, students and graduates did express high levels of satisfaction with the communication input as it is understood in the programme, and it clearly is well delivered, but the overall opportunity to develop formal communication study is not exploited. There is a tendency in the delivery team to regard fairly routine pedagogic approaches in relation to group work, team work, presentations and leadership – nowadays commonplace on good business programmes – as being somewhat exceptional. It might be argued that the programme under review would not in any way suffer if it was offered simply as a high-quality programme in International Business; but this is a matter for the Faculty and the Team to decide.

For example in the statements of the main aims of the programme (Self Evaluation Report (hereinafter referred to as "SER") paragraphs 17 to 21) make very weakly references to communication and only focusing in the cultural / language aspect which is any how part of the international dimension of the programme.

According to SER the development of the programme reflects the *"lack of experts with an international orientation in the Lithuanian labour market"* and it is targeted to serve those needs. Although no market research evidence exists to support this statement, its high demand among university candidates, show that it is well accepted in the marketplace. The number of graduates is still relatively small as the programme it is only in its fifth year of operation at Vilnius (since 2008) and just in the second year at Kaunas, so no available feedback can be derived from a representative sample of graduates. Moreover, no data regarding graduates opinion have been reported in the SER, although an Annual Alumni Career monitoring is performed by the Career Centre.

The large number of applicants for the programme and their high average enrolment scores is a definite indication that the programme is well accepted by students. Social partners also strongly testify about the programme's response to market needs.

It is noted that the programme has run for 5 years, and has therefore completed two full 3,5 year cycles. However, there have been no benchmark studies with other similar programmes though adjustments/improvements to the programme have taken place, such as the introduction of research and academic writing skills in the first year.

Learning Outcomes (hereinafter referred to as “LO”) at Programme level, both special and general are described in detail and are consistent with the programme aims and objectives. The aims and LO are generally set at proper level for a first cycle programme (according to Dublin Descriptors) with some overstatements (*.. understanding of contemporary theories and their applications in the research field of international business ..*) that could be avoided. In general, it could be argued that there are too many LO, and that the corresponding information on the Web (Web communication) which relies on a lesser number is much clearer in communicating to stakeholders. In certain places, the LO of the programme should be stated differently, given that they refer to LO at programme level, and not those appropriate to module level. This will make the picture much clearer for prospective students. Part of the detail provided could actually be moved and be included as LO at module level.

The title of the programme, its aims and objective and the associated LO are generally compatible with the offered qualification. Overall the programme has a strong international focus in many dimensions (delivery in English, providing skills for a 2nd language, participation of foreign professors, opportunities for joint degrees for students, content).

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum structure conforms to the ECTS system, meets legal requirements and the programme complies with the General Requirements of Lithuanian regulations for Higher Education. The curriculum is offered as a full time programme, where contact hours account for over one third (34,1%) of the total study workload for the first six semester that include course work.

Each semester includes 6 study subjects (except the first one that includes 7) for a total load of 30 ECTS per semester. The subjects cover three main dimensions: Languages, Business, and Communication (with the restriction noted in the previous section), while other subjects provide general knowledge and skills in Economics, Quantitative methods and Informatics.

Students must take two subjects for developing basic skills in two more languages besides English, while their English language skills are strengthened in the area of business terminology in the subjects English for Communication in Business I & II. Those two subjects have been placed in the right sequence and provide students with the special terminology used in the Business Subjects that follow.

Business subjects cover the typical topics in business and management but a core subject in management and business organization is missing. As a results, students proceed to take subjects in specific areas (marketing, finance, HRM, etc.) without having a chance to get an overview of business functions and management practices before. The Expert Team would also ask that the positioning of challenging mathematical modules might be moved from the first semesters to enable students to orientate fully to University life before major academic challenges are introduced.

As observed in Section 1, about programme aims and learning outcomes, the Communication area might be regarded as weak as it largely includes languages and general subjects without any specialization in specific communication forms like advertising, media communication, public relations, etc. or any link to modern communication technologies. The current nexus of innovation created by the intersection of business, communication and technology could provide this programme with a major opportunity for further differentiation as well as a pathway to leadership in Digital Marketing and eBusiness.

Students enjoy enough flexibility in choosing at least one elective subject per semester, from a list of various subjects mainly in the business and management area. The portfolio of electives does not lead to any specialization, as the claim made in the SER “*Possible specializations through electives:....*”. If the programme intends to award some specialization, this should be in a more structured way perhaps in clusters or modules of subjects. In any case electives have to be chosen in a more careful way, especially those delivered by visiting professors – students were critical about some cases – in a more structured way. The expert team welcomes the intentions of the programme study committee as stated during the visit, about considering plans to provide specialization paths, and its suggestion is that it could be done in a way that provides specializations in specific areas in business and communication, to reflect more the programme title.

The “capstone course” where students integrate knowledge and skills acquired in the taught subjects of the programme is commented as a good practice. The internship and the writing of the Bachelor’s theses also serve to integrate knowledge with practice and to build research skills. Although there is a clear process for monitoring and control of the Bachelor theses, and clear evidence of dedicated staff support for students, such a detailed process was not spelled out for the Internship placements. However, internship reports examined by the Expert Team were of high quality.

All modules have detailed descriptors that describe specific LO, with links to the overall programmes’ LO, the content the methods of teaching and assessment, suggested textbooks and references. It seems that a great amount of work went into developing subject descriptors. As long as this work reflects a collective effort of the majority of the staff, it provides the right basis for further development.

More emphasis should be given to updating the descriptors so that they include more recent articles from business and scientific journals as additional teaching materials that can be used to enhance research skills of students.

Clear guidelines are provided for the Bachelor theses which require students to formulate research questions and propose a research methodology. However, in the sample of theses provided to the Expert Team, some theses, which were excellent as empirical studies / situation analysis, did not include any significant research element and, in a number of cases, represented good consultancy reports rather than classical scientific inquiry.

3. Staff

The composition of the teaching staff on the study programme International Business and Communication fully complies with the requirements set by Lithuanian regulations for first cycle study programmes.

The composition of teaching staff meets the minimum requirement “*At least half of the subjects in the study field must be taught by scientists or scholars ...*”, since 68% of the subjects are taught by professors, while non-Ph.D. holders teach mainly foreign languages and subjects in communication. This again signifies the imbalance between business and communication subjects, where the later are taught mostly at a basic level.

The programme is supported at both sites (Vilnius and Kaunas) by an adequate number of academic staff (60 and 16 respectively), with more than 70% being employed on a full time basis, thus a significant core staff exists at both sites of programme delivery. In addition to Lithuanian academics a significant number of visiting staff, either practitioners in Lithuania (3) or academic staff from abroad (8). The later give a real international profile to the programme since they represent a real multicultural (beyond EU) environment (EU and Non-EU, Russia, USA, China, etc.). As it is stated in the SER the model of having part of the programme delivered by visiting professors introduces a possible risk concerning the development of the

subjects, continuity, etc., therefore a firm Quality Assurance process is necessary to ensure that the LO are achieved and the continuing development of the subjects.

Overall, this mixture of staff presents a strong advantage for the programme, as it provides a rich blend of academic, contextual and cultural / ethnical backgrounds that is crucial for the aims of the specific programme with an international character.

The involvement of visiting staff in teaching subjects related to Communication is limited, although industry professional could be valuable in bringing some real – life sense in an area where it is difficult to link theory with practice.

Professional development of the staff is achieved by participation in research conferences, study trips, teaching exchange visits and projects. ISM takes several initiatives for staff development in the areas of research, didactics, use of IT in teaching/learning, runs a teaching academy for staff twice a year and supports the participation of staff in International management Academy courses. Academic staff prepares annual development plans that are financially supported by ISM.

The research activity over the last years shows that individual members of staff have their own research interest and pursue research activities accordingly. However, there is a lack of research strategy that will aim in creating clusters of staff / researchers focusing on research and innovation that will give a research identity to the programme. The development of common research interest groups will increase team coherence, enhances the identity of the programme, enables staff to join research consortiums and exploit research funding that is available at European level, and will create opportunities for the students.

The Expert Team recognizes that overall the qualifications and the profile of staff is excellent. However, there was not a particularly strong sense of programme ownership exhibited by the staff, nor any significant common understanding of how to address problems such as the dropout rate. It is noticed that not such strong sense of programme ownership exhibited by the staff. For example while it became evident that most members of the staff care a lot about the development of the modules they teach, it was not the same intensity when matters of programme development were discussed. The Expert Team believe that staff should be actively and formally involved in the future development of the programme.

4. Material Resources Area

4.1 Facilities

4.1.1 Vilnius Campus

This is a city centre campus with a variety of buildings and spaces in various configurations which can accommodate a range of approaches to teaching delivery. The auditoriums, lecture rooms and teaching rooms accommodation is suitable for a delivery of a programme of this kind. There are three computer classrooms with 30 workstations in each, though these would also seem to be key resources for other undergraduate programs. A particular feature of the building is the provision of workspaces for students, which can accommodate the group work and case work aspects of the programme. Some of these are located within the library, but 54 of these spaces are located elsewhere in the building and provide for group and syndicate work to support the curriculum and the learning approach. 18 of these individual workplaces are computerised and are used in achieving the learning outcomes of the programme. This approach to creating learning ‘pods’ represents very good practice and an ambitious agenda for learning.

All auditoriums have state of the art technical provision and the campus has a 100% WiFi coverage.

The ISM has adopted a 'thin-client' architecture with very strong server provision and the dynamic capability provided by virtualisation. The computer provision is very positively future proofed with the potential to exploit cloud-based computing in the future. The Expert Team commends the strategic, forward-thinking provision in the area of computing within the school.

Similarly, printing provision is well planned, flexible and current and there is provision of mailboxes, cloud storage and a specialised help desk.

Moodle provides a virtual learning environment, though the extent, nature, application and strategic deployment of this resource was not fully evident on the field visit. There was a demonstration of sophisticated lecture capture software, and of telematics capability, but it was not clear how these state-of-the-art resources and the Moodle platform were deployed to effectively integrate the student learning experience in a two-campus delivery. The University is evidently totally compliant with international standards in relation to software licensing.

4.1.2 Kaunas Campus

The Kaunas campus is similarly a city-centre campus, with a variety of learning spaces and a computer classroom of 30 workstations. Pictorial evidence confirms the assertion that there are high quality well designed learning environments in Kaunas, which was not the subject of a field visit, and the standard of fittings and furnishings in design, quality and functionality, matched those on the main campus at Vilnius. The provision seems very adequate for the programme. It was not fully clear what was the total population making use of these resources. Again, there is very welcome and commendable provision of individual/group workplaces for students in a variety of locations including the library, and it is stated that 16 of these workplaces are computerised. As in the case of the Vilnius campus, there is 100% WiFi footprint (though no reference to the user load) and an adoption of 'thin-client' architecture and a flexible printing system. Cloud storage for staff and students and help-desk support are also provided.

The Expert Team welcomes the adoption of the Moodle learning platform, but the technical resources are not fully leveraged as in the Vilnius campus. Clearly there is a strategic plan in relation to IT support for teaching and learning into the future.

In both locations, the range and configuration of spaces is testimony to a range of interesting learning approaches and interactions. All students and graduates met with have laptops, though there appears to be little systematic use of the technology in lecture delivery and the organisation of learning in classrooms. The excellent IT infrastructure would seem to encourage a formal move to a strategic Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach, which might shift the emphasis on future capital spend towards the networks, software licenses and security.

4.1.3 Development Project

The SER provided detail of a fully funded plan for the upgrading of computer infrastructure over the next three years. This will include upgrading of audio/visual equipment in classrooms, the installation of podia, installation of a new studies information system, acquisition of new servers and PC renewal. It is not indicated if the objective is to create a Managed Learning Environment in computer laboratories. A very welcome and exciting dimension of the renewal project relates to the creation of eLearning potential through lecture recording technologies, distant-learning strategies and major renewal of the website as a portal. There is significant potential to further integrate the Vilnius and Kaunas campuses providing enriched learning resources and enhanced opportunities for student learning. The Expert Team commends the vision and foresight of the Faculty and the University. There is some reference in these plans to 'research', but in

general the provision of resources, including computer and library resources for staff and student research, was not strongly pointed out in the SER or during the visit.

4.2 Library Resources

The ISM library clearly has ambitions to provide leadership in the provision of learning resources in the country and the Expert Team endorses both the vision and ambition implicit in this sense of mission. Considerable detail regarding the holdings, the journal holdings and the eLibrary resources were provided. The English language holdings in the physical library and the eLibrary are sufficient to support the English language delivery of a Degree Programme in International Business. The Expert Team commends the provision of a range of dedicated English language Business newspapers and magazines on open access.

In common with all Business library provision in Lithuania, there is an excellent eLibrary resource spanning full-text journals and books, and representing all of the major databases that would be expected in a quality university internationally.

Access for full and part-time students is good, and the Expert Team commends the policy on opening hours. Lending policies seem generous in relation to the total stock, which may account for the emphasis on multiple copies of hard-copy publications in the total stock holding and resource expenditure. Library processes represent excellent practice and there is a commendable policy of consultation with subject experts, programme leaders and heads of department in planning expenditure and retention. The data provided by expert professional librarians gave a transparent insight into the operations of the library.

The library also commendably sees itself as having a role in the dissemination of research, and the initiation of an institutional repository in 2012 seems to be a very positive project which will stimulate awareness and dissemination in the research community.

There is reference to the interaction of the library website with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and presumably this integrates the library provision with the learning on both sites.

The Expert Team endorses the commitment of the library to the provision of information literacy training – which is an initiative under ISM Strategic Direction Programme – and the training of 650 users each year testifies to a real commitment to the resourcing of learning and research.

The SER also transparently presents data from the annual library survey of user perception and satisfaction, and there is clearly a strong culture of user engagement which the Expert Team commends.

However, the statement that the two branches of the library can accommodate only 118 readers (23 at computer workstations) does raise a number of questions about the total demand on the total library resource. The single largest drawback is the size and location of the library space, but the Expert Team can confirm that the library space on the Vilnius campus has been made aesthetically attractive and interesting as a learning environment. Even in this restricted space, the library staff has managed to provide an interesting variety of learning environments for individual and group work.

5. Study Process and Student Assessment

5.1 Admission Requirements

The study programme has been implemented in the Vilnius campus since 2009 and the Kaunas campus since 2011. Delivery through English in effect provides a filter which means that high performing students self select for the programme. It also means that international full degree students as well as Erasmus students are attracted, perhaps more so than to any similar undergraduate programme currently offered in Lithuania.

Average recruitment scores on the Vilnius campus have consistently been at the high end of attainment with Kaunas scores marginally lower. However, there does seem to be a very wide band between the lowest and highest scores admitted, particularly on the Vilnius campus. There are, no doubt, complex issues relating to the private and state funding of individual students, but the graduates spoken to, are of the view that their cohort – i.e. the 2009 recruitment – was less strong than the students currently being recruited.

There is some confusion in paragraphs 52 and 53 of the SER and the Expert Team assumes that the numbers cited in the final sentence of paragraph 52 relate to international full degree students (21 degree students).

The programme appears to be among the most attractive offerings in Lithuania with very significant numbers of applicants and in some years less than 15% of applicants succeeding in achieving entry. The admission requirements are well founded and the students admitted are well capable of benefiting from the programme and the students admitted should be well capable of benefiting from the programme. The competition for entry places contributes to the high average enrolment scores.

The programme is a very significant contributor to the University undergraduate population. A rationale for these very positive trends is provided. The recruitment performance on both campus locations is exceptional given the demographic and economic constraints which represent a huge challenge for undergraduate education in Lithuania. The programme clearly has sustainable student numbers and a positive future from a recruitment perspective.

Drop out numbers are presented for each campus, and the data raises a number of serious questions. While First year completion numbers would be regarded as acceptable internationally, the second year completion numbers in Vilnius show a very significant fall off. (There is some confusion around the drop out percentage presented in table 11 of the SER, though data supplied subsequently helped to clarify this matter). A rationale was provided in the SER to explain the dropout rate: it includes the students who do not follow the normal progress plan but stay behind until they successfully complete subjects of the earlier stages.

In addition to factors related to economic and health issues, which account for some cases of students discontinuing their studies, it was asserted in the SER, and subsequently in the visit, that the programme is too demanding for some students. This raises some concerns, both as to the student selection criteria and to support provided to “weaker” students. There was no information regarding how much attention, if any, the Programme Management Committee has given to the issue of high drop-out rates. The Expert Team acknowledges that there is an Advisory Team in place to mentor first year students and we were also told of a ‘Buddy System’ providing student to student support and these initiatives are certainly helpful to new students and might form the basis of a database of student profiles which could help track the drop out issue. The impression was formed that, even in this well-resourced environment with very committed management and staff, there had been insufficient attention paid to understanding this problem and that there was, in effect, no detailed analysis available of individual cases. During the visit, in discussion with various stakeholder populations, the Expert Team were informed that some students had an incorrect perception of the course and the institution, that others were simply not prepared to apply themselves, and that others again were easily dissuaded from continuing by the availability of easier options. There was even a suggestion that a high dropout rate somehow validated both the programme itself and the students who remained, in the sense of having high academic standards. Repeated assertions about the challenge the course posed for some students do not seem to be borne out by an examination of the curriculum, the assessments, or the student work – which are typical of a reasonably rigorous but not exceptionally challenging programme. A number of staff did assert that they expect the dropout problem to diminish as the programme evolves and matures, citing previous experience with other programmes. It was also evident that the processes for recovery of assessment failure by students may over-inflate the true dropout rate, and this was subsequently borne out by additional data provided.

However, the Expert Team believes that the Programme Team should recognise that there are common problems of school to university transition which almost all business schools internationally are alert to, and it may be fruitful to examine this issue in terms of *Transition Strategies*, and strategies to enhance the *First Year Experience*.

In addition, it was felt that some re-ordering of module sequence of first year modules might also prove beneficial as would additional supports on more challenging maths modules.

5.2 Organisation of the Study Process

The organisation of the study process is fully adequate to achieve the overall learning outcomes of the programme and as has been noted in Sections 1 and 2 of this Evaluation Report in the Programme analysis part, the overall curriculum meets the legal requirements and the study process is appropriate to the achievement of the individual module outcomes also.

5.3 Student Research Activity

There was no specific provision cited related to the fostering of research and artistic activities amongst the student body, but the course is still in its early days, and there was a clear willingness on the part of staff to encourage a spirit of scientific enquiry in the student body. Even within the actual programme structure, there is less formal attention to the teaching of scientific research method than might be expected, though there is a module on academic writing introduced in the first year, apparently at the specific request of the first cohort of students who felt that they needed such an input to support their coursework. This may be well positioned from the point of view of general coursework, but it is likely that a further formal input around research methodology should be provided closer to the actual implementation of the Theses.

5.4 Student Mobility

As befits an International Business Programme, Student Mobility opportunities are available from the second year onward within the Erasmus Socrates framework or on the basis of University bilateral agreements. International academic partnership has grown fourfold in the five year period to 2012, and have globalised from 15 European countries in 2007, to 44 countries around the globe in 2012. The Expert Team commends the policy and strategy in relation to the selection of international partners, and the clear criteria for partnership adoption decisions. ISM is particularly ambitious in seeking to work with accredited schools internationally and it remains global in its ambition to open up partnerships in new geographies. Networking, referral are all effectively deployed and the university resources staff participation in both international education and management education conferences. There is a process for regularly reviewing the quality and effectiveness of mobility and staff and student feedback is systematically collected. All of this will prove invaluable in supporting the journey of ISM to international accreditation status, which is a highly appropriate strategic trajectory for such a school.

Nonetheless, despite these impressive strategic approaches the numbers of students participating in Erasmus and other bilateral movements remains small in the context of the overall programme numbers in both campus locations. The Expert Team commended the inbound mobility of international students, and the presence of full programme international students. The commitment to internationalisation was also evident in the choice of companies for Professional Practice, and the graduate and student meetings provided strong evidence that these companies, in turn, were prepared to provide mobility opportunities for the internees in many cases. Overall the standard of internship reports provided for review was excellent, and testified to an internationally focused experience.

5.5 Student Support

There is a positive policy of providing information to prospective students through Open Days, as well as Summer Schools and specialist pre-University programmes. High numbers of final year high school students are thus introduced to the programme and the campus. It was stated that this practice should help to ensure that prospective students fully understood the requirements of the programme, and had matched their expectations to the reality which they would experience. It will be interesting to see if this has the desired impact on the dropout rate.

The Career Centre provides a comprehensive programme to help students with career entry, including developing writing skills, arranging meetings with the business community, advice on job search and advice on internship. There appears to be a regular emphasis on introducing students to the practical world of real business through seminars, training events and open lectures, with up to 20 events organised each year. Social partners, particularly companies, are involved in these events and in student competitions.

The Career Centre also organises an internship evaluation survey, which gathers feedback across a range of skills, competences and performance matrices.

On the basis of the information supplied, it would seem reasonable to infer that the majority of graduates achieve satisfying professional careers at the appropriate level. The graduates met with were pursuing interesting options in employment, in further study, and in entrepreneurial start-up. The social partners testified to their willingness to employ ISM graduates, and their belief that this programme in particular provided a good fit with real marketplace requirements. There is a very active and engaged relationship with social partners, particularly with business companies and social partners, graduates and students all share a high level of confidence that the ISM brand will prove of great value in achieving their career entry and subsequent success.

6. Programme Management

The Self Evaluation Report gave a very clear and detailed description of programme management arrangements and the policies and operations in relation to quality assurance and quality enhancement. The roles of the Rector, the Senate, the Rectorate, the Board and the Programme Committee are all defined and described. In addition, the role of the Head of Quality Centre and the Head of the International Department and the support they provide to the programme are also presented.

The Dean of the Faculty has overall responsibility for quality assurance on all programmes within the remit of the Faculty. He is also responsible for staff competences and necessary staff development. The Heads of the Subject Groups and programme leaders are responsible for the quality and academic standard of the programmes within their discipline areas but overall responsibility rests with the Dean. The SER clearly identified that programme management arrangements are at the level of the individual programme through the work of a Programme Committee, which has responsibility for reviewing the programme learning outcomes, debating and approving changes and authorising the development of new study programmes. (Alternative arrangements are also acceptable, such as a Faculty level Committee managing a group of programmes.) In this instance, the role, responsibilities and accountabilities of the individual Programme Committee are spelt out in great detail. It was not clear, however, during the visit, that such a Programme Committee fully functioned in the way described. There clearly is much open dialogue between students and teaching staff, and between students and management, and again between teaching staff and management, but this tends to occur through informal and ad-hoc channels, and does not represent the kind of rights based engagement of students and staff with the management of the programme as described in the SER, and as is common practice in Business Schools internationally.

The Expert Team agreed that there is a Programme Committee for this programme, but feel that its constitution and working procedures might be reviewed with a view to providing a forum where feedbacks from all stakeholders can be evaluated and discussed and appropriate recommendations made to be progressed within the structures of ISM. It is always helpful if such a committee has formal records and minutes, and many Business Schools find it helpful to integrate all the available inputs into the formulation of an annual Quality Enhancement Plan which captures the agenda for continuous improvement and reviews progress made to date.

The Expert Team acknowledges instances where the student voice clearly was heard in bringing about programme change, but this was clearly through channels other than the Programme Committee.

The Head of the Quality Centre promotes University level learning and Quality Assurance policies in liaison with the Deans and Heads of Subject Group and is responsible for liaison with external Quality Assurance agencies, and this is clearly a very effective unit which testifies to a real quality culture in the university. The Office of Student Association is responsible for regular research surveys and the measurement of student satisfaction.

There is overall a positive policy of promoting student participation in governance and decision making at all levels up to and including the University Senate, but, again, students met on the visit were unaware of a role or representation on the Programme Committee. A comprehensive and effective programme approval process is described together with processes for course changes and modifications and these arrangements benchmark positively with best international practice at the higher levels of decision making. The arrangements for programme monitoring at Institutional and programme level are generally clear and effective. The data inputs to the plan are provided by the Quality Centre and by employer satisfaction surveys, annual career monitoring and the evaluation of staff development needs. These arrangements and their implementation again represent examples of best international practice. There is a further commitment to providing feedback by the Heads of the Subject Groups to teachers and students.

There appears to be an active engagement by social partners in the evaluation and improvement processes detailed above and the Expert Team regard the internal quality assurance measures as effective and efficient and benchmarking well with best international practice which may result in quality improvements.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Study Programme Committee should clarify the programme's aims and learning outcomes, taking appropriate action to align them with the programme title, with respect to achieving more of a balance between the domain of business and that of communication.
2. The Study Programme Committee should review the curriculum with respect to the offerings of electives which must serve the student needs for acquiring specialized knowledge in specific international markets, business / management areas or communication. It is also necessary that more attention is given to enhance the exposure of students to research methodologies, both as study elements within individual subjects and mainly in connection with the writing of the bachelor thesis.
3. Management should initiate a project to investigate the complex factors underpinning dropout rate. In addition to the excellent current interventions to support first year students, such as the dedicated Academic Advisor and the 'student buddy' system, management should develop strategies (including a Transition Policy and a First Year Experience focus) which may help with student retention.
4. The Management should fully implement the kind of Programme Committee which is well described in the SER in terms of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, and should ensure full participation of stakeholders on a formal basis.

IV. SUMMARY

1. This is a very good version of an International Business programme delivered by a Faculty which has a full understanding of the different strands which contribute to the internationalisation of a student's experience. These include curriculum content, modules (both mandatory and elective), the international experience of local staff, the use of visiting international staff, the topics addressed in the final thesis and the management and focus of the internship Professional Practice component, as well as international partnerships and aspirations to international accreditation. The present title of the programme would seem to promise a much fuller treatment of Communication as a domain of study, whereas in reality this part of the programme amounts to well-delivered foreign language teaching and little else. The programme would not significantly suffer by being regarded as, and promoted as, an International Business programme, but this is a matter for the local team.
2. The SER is well presented and generally meets the information needs of the Expert Team. While it does not follow in detail the layout suggested by the template, the major sections are covered in detail and there is evidence of a worthwhile review process involving the work of the Self Evaluation Group, including student inputs – though there might well have been more attention given to debate and discussion in a committee format.
3. The programme aims are clearly stated, appropriate to this level and in full accordance with national and university regulation. While there are too many programme level learning outcomes, the version appearing on the website indicates the very good understanding which the team has of learning outcomes. Information regarding the programme is clear and accessible to students. The programme is as yet only in its 5th year of operation at Vilnius and in its 2nd year at Kaunas so no graduate placement data is available but the strong demand for the programme, the excellent entrance scores and the engagement of social partners suggest a good fit with available market opportunity. Learning outcomes are consistent with level, aims and objectives, but perhaps the inclusion of Communication in the programme title might raise expectations that other learning outcomes related to this domain would also be addressed. Overall, the Communication area of the curriculum appears to have 'minor' rather than equal status, and it seems to be weaker than the business area, lacking in particular in specialisations.
4. The curriculum structure conforms to the ECTS structure, meets legal requirements and the programme complies with the General Requirements of Lithuanian Regulations for Higher Education. The logic, progression of the programme is appropriate and non-repetitive and the Expert Team commends the capstone course, the integrative contribution of the thesis and the Professional Practice module. There would be value in considering the time table arrangements for first year students to take account of the undoubted challenges for students involved in transition from high school to university. The very early placing of certain analytic subjects might be considered.
5. The composition of the teaching staff fully complies with Lithuanian regulations for first cycle study programmes but it is notable that there is less strength in depth in the Communication teaching team (foreign language teachers with some domain experts) and as Expert Team noticed during the visit, these subjects appear to be taught at a fairly basic level. The staffing is adequate to the needs of the programme and there is a commendable engagement of foreign teachers as well as a flow of visiting staff. Professional development of staff is well resourced within an overall performance management framework, and there is some attention to supporting staff research. The use of educational technology might allow sharing of such resources between the sites, and a stronger pattern of interaction between the sites and, in particular, between the students in the two locations.

6. Resources in both campus locations are of high quality. The ISM has adopted a thin-client architecture, a strong server provision and the dynamic capability provided by virtualisation. There is a detailed description of a fully funded development project which will provide for renewal and upgrade of the Audio/Visual and IT infrastructure with considerable potential for eLearning development.
7. The study process and the policies and procedures around student assessment fully meet the regulatory requirements of the country and the University. Recruitment is very strong in both locations. Information provision to students is transparent and effective and feedback from students is incorporated into deliberation and decision making. The failure rates and dropout rates are a matter of concern, and there is a need for the teaching team to arrive at an understanding of the totality of issues which contribute to this problem. Further attention might also be given to school to University transition and the First Year Student Experience.
8. Programme management provision is in accordance with national and university requirement with the roles of the Academic Board and the Programme Committee well defined in the Self Evaluation Report. However, there is less conclusive evidence on the ground that Programme Committee arrangements and accountabilities are fully implemented. There is a positive policy of promoting student participation in governance, but there does not appear to be effective student engagement with the Programme Committee. The programme approval and modification process is detailed and appropriate. A Quality Enhancement Plan approach is taken on an annual basis and this is commended.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *International Business and Communication* (state code – 612N12002) at ISM University of Management and Economics is given positive evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	4
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:	20

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

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

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

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

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Paul O'Sullivan

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. dr. Tatjana Volkova

Prof. dr. Pandelis G. Ipsilandis

Giedrius Romeika

Jolita Čeičytė

ISM VADYBOS IR EKONOMIKOS UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINIS VERSLAS IR KOMUNIKACIJA* (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 612N12002) 2014-01-22 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-50 IŠRAŠAS

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

ISM Vadybos ir ekonomikos universiteto studijų programa *Tarptautinis verslas ir komunikacija* (valstybinis kodas – 612N12002) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	4
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	20

* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

IV. SANTRAUKA

1. Fakultetas pasirinko labai gerą tarptautinio verslo programos kryptį, kai studentai supažindinami su įvairiomis verslo tendencijomis, kurios prisideda prie studentų patirties tarptautiškumo. Tai apima programos turinį ir modulius (privalomieji ir pasirenkamieji), programos dėstytojus turinčius tarptautinės patirties, kviečiamus dėstytojus iš kitų šalių, baigiamųjų darbų temas, taip pat skiriamas didelis dėmesys profesinei praktikai, plėtojama tarptautinė partnerystė ir siekiama tarptautinės akreditacijos. Sprendžiant iš studijų programos pavadinimo, komunikacijos sričiai turėtų būti skiriamas nemažas dėmesys, tačiau komunikacijos dalis realiai yra profesionalus užsienio kalbos mokymas. Galbūt ši studijų programa galėtų vadintis „Tarptautinis verslas“. Tai nuspręsti turėtų studijų programos vykdytojai.
2. Savianalizės suvestinė parengta gerai, joje pateikta pakankamai informacijos ekspertų grupei. Nors savianalizės suvestinė nėra parengta tiksliai pagal nustatytą formą, pagrindiniuose skyriuose išdėstyta informacija yra išsami ir vertinimas atliktas tinkamai, įskaitant savianalizės rengimo grupę ir studentą, vis dėlto norėtusi, kad daugiau dėmesio Studijų programos komitete būtų skiriama debatams ir diskusijoms.
3. Programos tikslai apibrėžti aiškiai, jie atitinka studijų pakopą ir nacionalinius bei universiteto nuostatus. Nors programos studijų rezultatų yra daug, jie konkrečiai apibūdinti šios studijų programos aprašyme interneto svetainėje. Informacija apie programą aiškiai pateikiama ir prieinama studentams. Vilniuje ši programa pradėta vykdyti prieš penkerius, o Kaune prieš dvejus metus, todėl duomenų apie absolventų įsidarbinimą dar nėra. Šios studijų programos populiarumas, puikūs stojimo rezultatai ir socialinių partnerių įtraukimas leidžia manyti, kad programa visiškai atitinka rinkos poreikius. Studijų rezultatai atitinka studijų pakopą, tikslus ir uždavinius. Kadangi programos pavadinime yra žodis „komunikacija“, norėtusi, kad būtų numatyti ir šios srities studijų rezultatai. Apskritai, komunikacijos dalis šioje studijų programoje nėra lygiavertė verslo daliai ir jai skiriama per mažai dėmesio, ypač specializacijose.
4. Studijų turinys atitinka ECTS reikalavimus, teisinius reikalavimus, Lietuvos aukštojo mokslo įstatymo bendruosius reikalavimus. Studijų programa sudaryta logiškai ir dalykai dėstomi nuosekliai, nesikartoja. Ekspertų grupė gerai vertina baigiamąjį kursą, teigdama, kad

baigiamieji darbai pritaikomi praktikoje, o profesinė praktika susijusi su studijuojamu dalyku. Pirmakursių tvarkaraščiai turėtų būti sudaryti taip, kad jiems būtų lengviau pereiti nuo mokyklos prie universiteto iššūkių. Turėtų būti apsvarstyti per anksti dėstomi kai kurie analitiniai dalykai.

5. Dėstytojų sudėtis atitinka Lietuvos teisės aktus, reglamentuojančius pirmosios pakopos studijų programas. Komunikacijos srities dalykų (kuriuos dėsto užsienio kalbos dėstytojai ir keli šio dalyko specialistai) dėstymas galėtų būti gilesnis, kaip ekspertai pastebėjo, yra mokoma gana vidutiniu lygiu. Studijų programos dėstytojų skaičius pakankamas. Pagirtina, kad dirba užsienio dėstytojai ir atvyksta kviestiniai dėstytojai. Darbuotojų profesiniam tobulėjimui sudarytos geros sąlygos pagal bendrąją veiklos vadybos programą, remiamas darbuotojų mokslinis darbas. Mokymo technologijų panaudojimas galėtų užtikrinti resursų pasidalijimą tarp universiteto padalinių, sustiprintų jų tarpusavio bendravimą, ypač tarp Vilniuje ir Kaune besimokančių studentų.
6. Universiteto padaliniai Vilniuje ir Kaune aprūpinti aukštos kokybės įranga. ISM įdiegė klientinę kompiuterinę architektūrą, galingas tarnybines stotis ir virtualią architektūrą. Parengtas visiškai finansuojamas projektas, skirtas garso bei vaizdo ir IT infrastruktūros atnaujinimui, siekiant užtikrinti nuotolinio mokymosi galimybes.
7. Studijų procesas, studentų vertinimo politika ir procedūros visiškai atitinka šalies ir universiteto norminius reikalavimus. Norinčiųjų studijuoti skaičius abiejuose padaliniuose yra didelis. Studentams pateikiama informacija yra aiški ir tinkama, svarstant ir priimant sprendimus atsižvelgiama į studentų atsiliepimus. Reikėtų susirūpinti dėl studentų skolų ir nebaigusiųjų studijas studentų skaičius. Dėstytojai turėtų stengtis nustatyti visas šių reiškinų priežastis. Daugiau dėmesio reikėtų skirti pirmakursių perėjimui iš mokyklos į universitetą ir pirmųjų metų studento patirčiai.
8. Programos vadyba vykdoma pagal nacionalinius ir universiteto reikalavimus kartu dalyvaujant Akademinei tarybai ir programos komitetui, kurių puikiai apibūdinti savianalizės suvestinėje. Vis dėlto yra nepakankamai įtikinamų įrodymų, kad Studijų programos komitetas visiškai įgyvendintų savo susitarimus ir atsakomybes. Studentai skatinami dalyvauti studijų programos valdymo procese, bet yra nepakankamai aktyviai įtraukti į Studijų programos komiteto veiklą. Studijų programos tvirtinimo ir keitimo procedūra išsami ir tinkama. Pagirtina, kad kasmet rengiamas Kokybės gerinimo planas.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Studijų programos komitetas turėtų patikslinti studijų programos tikslus ir studijų rezultatus, kurie atspindėtų studijų programos pavadinimą, suteikiant vienodą svarbą verslo ir komunikacijos sritims.
2. Studijų programos komitetas turėtų peržiūrėti programos pasirenkamuosius dalykus ir užtikrinti, kad šie dalykai atitiktų studentų poreikį įgyti specialių žinių apie tam tikras tarptautines rinkas, verslą ir (arba) vadybą ar komunikaciją. Daugiau dėmesio reikėtų skirti mokslinių tyrimų metodikoms: su jomis studentus supažindinti dėstant atskirus studijų dalykus ir siekti, kad studentai gebėtų jas taikyti rašydami baigiamąjį bakalauro darbą.
3. Vadovybė turėtų išanalizuoti visumą veiksnių, lemiančių studentų nubyreėjimą. Nors pirmakursiams integruotis padeda atsidavę kuratoriai ir veikia pagalbos studentams sistema, tačiau vadovybė turėtų išvystyti strategijas (sutelkiant dėmesį į pereinamojo laikotarpio politiką ir pirmųjų metų patirtį), padedančias studentams nenutraukti studijų.
4. Vadovybė turėtų užtikrinti, kad savianalizės suvestinėje aprašytas Studijų programos komitetas vykdytų savo funkcijas, atsakomybes ir vaidmenį taip, kaip aprašyta savianalizės suvestinėje bei oficialiai užtikrintų socialinių dalininkų dalyvavimą.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso¹ 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

¹ Žin., 2002, Nr.37-1341.