



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Klaipėdos valstybinės kolegijos

***ODONTOLOGINĖS PRIEŽIŪROS STUDIJŲ  
PROGRAMOS (65308B105, 653A52005)***

**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT  
OF *ODONTOLOGICAL CARE* (65308B105, 653A52005)  
STUDY PROGRAMME  
at Klaipėda State College**

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## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Odontologinė priežiūra</i>
Valstybiniai kodai	65308B105, 653A52005
Studijų sritis	biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	burnos priežiūra
Studijų programos rūšis	koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (3)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	gydytojo odontologo padėjėjas, odontologijos profesinis bakalauras, odontologinės priežiūros profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2002-06-26

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## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Odontological Care</i>
State code	65308B105, 653A52005
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Oral Care
Kind of the study programme	College Studies
Study Cycle	first
Study mode (length in years)	full-time (3)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Odontological Care, Dental Assistant, Professional Bachelor of Dentistry
Date of registration of the study programme	2002-06-26

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The study programme of Odontological care (OC) is implemented by the Faculty of Health Sciences, Klaipėda State College (KSC). In 2009, Klaipėda College was affiliated to Klaipėda Business and Technology College and renamed Klaipėda State College (KSC). The status of Klaipėda State College, the legal form of which is a public institution, was approved in August 2011. The college has three faculties (Health Sciences, Social Sciences and Technology) and implements 28 study programmes, five of them are biomedical sciences. The study programme of OC is implemented by the Faculty of Health Sciences and carried out by the Department of Oral Health.

The following report is based on the structured Self-Evaluation Report (SER) provided to the panel/expert team well in advance by the KSC for individual review and on the members' experiences and observations gathered during the site visit on 2 October, 2012. The guidelines for the review have been in the methodology and on the template of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) in Lithuania. All of the expert team's comments and recommendations are offered with the intention of ensuring that the programme achieves the highest level of quality consistent with its high aspirations and facilitates the Committee of the Study Programmes in its work for passing the accreditation resolution. The expert team, led by Dr Michael Emery (UK), feels that the provided documentation was sufficient and as thorough as could be expected.

## II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

### *1. Programme aims and learning outcomes*

The aim is properly formulated and related to the purpose of the programme, the type and cycle of studies. It also reflects Lithuanian and international directives, KSC Integrated Development Strategy and the Regional Development Perspective. The expert team emphasises the potential and significance of this programme within the oral health care system of the country. Delegation of the traditional duties of dentists has shown to increase the efficacy of service production. Furthermore, the dental assistants with proper training in prevention can play a major role in oral health promotion activities in and outside of dental practices. However, close connection of and similarities with the programme of Dental Hygiene (DH) call for greater cooperation between these two programmes. Eventually merger of these two programmes in the near future is on the agenda of the administration and key staff is strongly supported by the staff as well as the expert team.

The learning outcomes follow Lithuanian and international directives and they have been formulated in regard to research findings and experience of international partners in addition to the results of the professional field study reflecting the opinion of employers from Western Lithuania on the competence of the professionals trained. The expert team appreciates the real life feedback method used in this process.

The learning outcomes of the OC programme include all skills traditionally related to the activities of a dental assistant. In addition, the intended learning outcomes reflect also quite demanding abilities of graduates from the OC study programme e.g., assessing the individual needs of a patient in relation to oral health and assessing oral health of the society; the need for preventive interventions and their effectiveness in a standardized manner is not traditionally included in respective European curriculums. Achieving and assessment of all the present learning outcomes place challenges to the teachers. The information regarding the programme and its learning outcomes is accessible in the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System and through special recruiting campaigns. This is deemed significant by the expert team in order to recruit motivated and enthusiastic applicants for the programme.

Defining the learning outcomes is based on principles of Bloom's Taxonomy. But how the learning outcomes are continuously standardised and assessed and revised accordingly needs more clarity. According to the report the KSC OC study programme is consistent with study programmes of the oral care study field implemented at other Lithuanian colleges. However, the potential of cooperation as to defining, assessing and revising the programme aims and learning outcomes let alone actual mutual training activities seems to remain underutilized. This should also be put into a more international context.

## ***2. Curriculum design***

The OC study programme consists of 180 ECTS credits and it has been recently revised. All 3 study years are equal in volume (60 ECTS credits).

The programme consists of general college subjects (21 ECTS credits), study field subjects (147 ECTS), professional practice (30 ECTS credits), internships (30 ECTS credits), preparation for the qualifying examination and for defence of the final thesis (12 ECTS credits), and elective subjects (12 ECTS credits). The scope and duration of the programme is sufficient to achieve learning outcomes and the OC study plan is in compliance with the National Requirements and Regulation Practices.

General College study subjects are dominant during the first year of studies the amount of which was considered heavy by the students met by the expert team. Study field subjects start in

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the first semesters, and optional from the third semester. The scope of practical training is constantly increasing every year. However, it is recommended by the experts that students should have earlier exposure to the practical aspects of their professional duties. Furthermore, increasing vertical integration of the study subjects from the very beginning could increase the motivation for basic studies and it would enhance the growth of professional identity from early on of the students. The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is facilitated by different modes of studies (lectures, small groups and individual work) and it depends on the aims and characteristics of the subject. However, the rooms viewed by the experts and available for small groups might place a challenge.

The scope of OC studies and the sufficiency of the content are based on state and regional frameworks, professional requirements, and regulatory documents and in conformity with learning outcomes. The programme content is comprehensive but not fully supporting the learning aims. There is room for improvement in teaching e.g., the team work concept including four-handed dentistry and ergonomic working. As stated, there is a considerable overlapping with the DH programme in curriculum and in teaching.

### ***3. Staff***

The qualification of the teachers working in OC programme is sufficient for its successful implementation. It also corresponds with the requirements indicated in legal acts. The OC study programme is implemented by 25 teachers, 17 of which teach study field subjects, 8 general College subjects and 11 of them are working full time. The implementation of the OC study programme involves teachers–practitioners: five dental hygienists and four dentists working full-time at personal health care establishments providing OC and dental DH in Klaipėda City and Klaipėda region. Out-reach clinical training gives good opportunity for positive competence development but also carries challenges in terms of the assessment students' learning outcomes and quality of teaching. However, the expert team acknowledges the positive attitude and activities of the social partners of the programme.

The recent turnover of teachers has been high having positive contribution on the study programme creating new and favourable conditions for the programme content revision. The experience and age distribution of the staff is favourable for the continuation and further development of the programme. The enthusiasm and dedication of the staff offering a good momentum for further development of the programme is commendable.

Yearly professional development plan of several opportunities by the Department indicates events, which teachers intend to attend, and allows a teacher to get funding from the college for

participation. The teachers' further participation in pedagogical development seminars organized by KSC Continuing Studies Centre is strongly supported by the expert team.

Teachers implementing the OC study programme are actively involved in student consultation and public activities. An increase in activities among the staff for international cooperation and international exchanges should be further supported. Encouragement of the staff members to further develop their skills and confidence in the use of English language has the full support of the expert team. This support goes also to the staff's research activities where interesting new projects have been started. Allowing the staff members to fully participate in these activities gives also the students an important exposure to current scientific work.

#### ***4. Facilities and learning resources***

The programme has sufficient number of premises for its implementation supported by the cooperation agreements with social partners. The infrastructure within the faculty facility includes lecture halls, simulation laboratories and classrooms, clinical units, library, teachers' rooms; reading and computer rooms. The facility is under the process of being fully equipped in terms of simulation laboratories as well as the clinical units. The total amount will increase from present 4 to 10 fully equipped dental units absolutely necessary for the training programme. The expert team recommends the staff to have this process completed as soon as possible as currently the situation is just workable; more practical rooms are now required.

The library of the KSC Faculty of Health Sciences has 34 workplaces, 15 of which are computerized. All necessary information about databases is provided in the electronic catalogue at free access at the college or at home. There is a reading room with wifi freely available. Most of the periodicals are on-line and may be accessed via electronic resources of the library or via VPN at home. Relatively, the library is quite small.

#### ***5. Study process and student assessment***

Admission requirements are well-founded and clearly formulated. Students to the study programme of OC are admitted according to the student admission rules for 2011-2012, approved at the meeting of directors of Lithuanian colleges and in accordance with the Conditions for Student Admission to the College in 2011 and 2012 and indicated in the self-evaluation report. The competitive score is formed from secondary school final examinations (Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics) and grades (Lithuanian language) in disciplines that are adequate to the study programme of OC. Admission requirements are publicly available on the website of KSC (<http://www.kvk.lt>). The average competitive score has increased significantly during the last two years, showing the growing popularity of the study programme. However, the wastage drop-out of students remains concerning.

Students participate in research activities by choosing topics for their term papers and final thesis with regard to research fields developed at the department. The students interviewed by the expert team expressed their concern regarding the execution of their research in terms of lack of references in Lithuanian. However, the expert team considers it important that the students should have sufficient proficiency in English in order to be able to use the international scientific references. Regardless of the opportunities offered to study abroad 2-3 times a year students of OC study programme do not seem to be sufficiently motivated to participate in exchange programmes. This might be due to difficulties in communication in English as found by the expert team.

According to the unique study on quality of life among students carried out by KSC, students of OC express high satisfaction about the general quality of life and environment, which shows their contentment with the studies. The academic and social support is ensured by various means and during the meeting the students expressed extreme satisfaction with the programme and their teachers. Teachers consult students for two hours a week according to the timetable, which is acknowledged by the expert team. Social and promotional scholarships are granted in accordance with the General Rules of Allocation of Grants. Detailed information on psychological student support is provided on KSC and Student Union websites. Group mentors are assigned to monitor student attendance and provide help on study issues during the whole study period. Students can participate in different cultural and sports activities and may apply for accommodation at the KSC dormitory, which has 220 places.

Learning outcomes are assessed according to the criteria-based ten-point system, which is clear and adequate as confirmed by the students. The assessment principles are defined in the Procedure for Evaluating Learning Outcomes in accordance with the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science. All relevant information on study issues (including requirements and evaluation procedure of the Final Thesis and Qualifying Examination) is publicly available on the website of KSC.

Most graduates, although not all, work as dental assistants, thus the study programme meets the expectations of programme providers. The average job placement period of the graduates is relatively short (about 4-5 months after graduation). As the demand of OC specialists is high in the region of Klaipėda (it was confirmed by social partners), all interviewed students were certain about their employment after graduation.

## ***6. Programme management***

Appropriate academic and administrative bodies are in place and their responsibilities are clearly defined as much they can be evaluated upon the information provided in the SER and also executed in due manner as the expert team learned during the site visit at KSC. The OC

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study programme together with the DH programme is managed at department, faculty and college levels. The implementation supervision of the OC study programme lies mainly on the Study Programme Committee (SPC), chaired by the Head of the Department of Oral Health. SPC consists of representatives of administration, one student, three teachers, and one representative of social partners. SPC is responsible for updating the OC study programme, assure and improve its quality. The teachers and administrative staff, despite their young age, show strong commitment and motivation for the programme and work together with SPC in improving study programme. The Study Quality Committee ensures supervision of the study quality system at the college level. Dedicated and enthusiastic staff members have justified visions for future development.

The quality of the OC study programme is regularly assessed by surveys carried out using instruments created at the college (electronic surveys) and the subject content is evaluated by surveying students upon completion of the subject at the end of every semester. External social stakeholders (social partners and employers) are involved in producing recommendations on organisation of studies, establishment of students' evaluation criteria and development of students' competences. The information on the implementation of the programme concentrates on the quality of the running process; it is able to detect irregularities and problems, which are the basis for improvement. The representatives of the social partners are represented at SPC and participate in designing the programme, which is commendable. Every year the Student Union organises meetings with Faculty Administration to discuss study-related issues.

The internal quality assurance measures are efficient enabling monitoring of important aspects of teaching process and study programme. Mechanisms to correct the discrepancies in teaching quality, if discovered, are in place.

Regardless of the future challenges, the integration of the two very similar study programmes is deemed promising. The programme management processes are in place to undertake this task successfully. As noted previously above, the expert team strongly recommends this move.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

After careful considerations the expert team proposes the following recommendations:

1. Combine the two programmes of OC and DH;
2. Benchmark the curriculum against the international standards;
3. Introduce the clinical practice earlier in the curriculum;
4. Arrange more international mobility and exchange for both teaching staff and students;
5. Both staff and students require additional tuition in English in order to increase their skills and confidence;
6. Supply the wider range of patients including those with special needs. The programme would benefit from more activities in the community e.g., geriatric patients.
7. Urgent consideration should be given to immediate completion of unfinished facilities;
8. Currently more rooms are required for practical training;
9. Further consideration should be given to Ergonomics and also to teamwork activities.

### IV. SUMMARY

The significance of the study programme of OC at Klaipėda State College is emphasised as the demand of dental assistants is high in the region of Klaipėda. Both social partners and employers have a very positive opinion about the theoretical and practical skills of the graduates, thus it seems to be easy for the students to find a job placement after graduation.

Programme aims and learning outcomes are properly formulated and reflect both national and international regulations. The assessment system is clear and adequate. Dental assistants with proper training in prevention can play a major role in oral health promotion activities inside and outside the dental clinics. However, close connection and similarities in curriculum with the study programme of DH call for greater cooperation between these programmes. The merging of these two programmes in the near future is on the agenda of the administration and is strongly supported by the staff as well as by the expert team. Furthermore, benchmarking the curriculum against the best international standards is strongly recommended.

It is commendable that external stakeholders are actively involved in updating and improving of the OC programme. There is an adequate number of placements for external practical training, which is ensured by the reasonable number of agreements. It gives good opportunity for competence development but also carries challenges in terms of the assessment students' learning outcomes and quality of teaching. Exceptional enthusiasm and dedication of the staff offers a good momentum for further development of the programme and encourages students. However, the lack of variety of patients is rather concerning, thus the introduction of Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

the clinical practice earlier in the curriculum would be beneficial. Increasing the vertical integration of the study subjects from the very beginning of the studies could increase the students' motivation for basic studies, too.

An increase in activities among the staff for international cooperation should be further encouraged. English skills of the staff should be improved as this could make the arrangements for international mobility of both teachers and students easier and reflect the Bologna protocols. It would also help internationalise the DH programme so appropriate in Klaipeda, Lithuania's international port with significant sea, air and road links.

The programme has just about a sufficient number of premises for its implementation supported by the cooperation agreements with social partners. More practical rooms are required on the site. The facility is under the process of being fully equipped in terms of simulation laboratories as well as the clinical units. Thus, the expert team recommends the administration to have this process completed as soon as possible and eliminate deficiencies in ergonomics noticed during the site visit, too.

The internal quality assurance measures are efficient enabling monitoring of important aspects of the teaching process and programme implementation. Mechanisms to correct any discrepancies in teaching quality, if discovered, are in place.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Odontological Care* (state codes – 65308B105, 653A52005) at Klaipėda State College 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	3
4.	Material resources	2
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process, student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	4
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>18</b>

\*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.

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