



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Šiaulių valstybinės kolegijos
BURNOS HIGIENOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
(65308B112, 653A51003)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *DENTAL HYGIENE* (65308B112, 653A51003)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Šiauliai State College

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Burnos higiena</i>
Valstybiniai kodai	65308B112, 653A51003
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	higienistas, burnos higienistas, odontologijos profesinis bakalauras, burnos higienos profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2008-10-28

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Dental Hygiene</i>
State code	65308B112, 653A51003
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 Dental Hygiene, Hygienist, Dental Hygienist, Professional Bachelor of Dentistry
Date of registration of the study programme	2008-10-28

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I. INTRODUCTION

The study programme of Dental Hygiene (DH) is implemented by the Faculty of Health Care, Department of Biomedical Sciences, Šiauliai State College (SSC). After the reorganisation of two Šiauliai higher schools the College was founded in 2002. The College with two faculties - Business and Technologies and Health Care - provides 27 study programmes. The study DH programme was approved in 2008; it lies within the professional oral hygiene study field. There are some 80-90 students on this DH programme; the annual intake is about 33 students. There are some 2,700 students overall in the College.

The following report is based on the structured self-evaluation report (SER) provided to the expert team well in advance by SSC for analysis and on the experts' experiences and observations gathered during the site visit of 3rd October, 2012. The guidelines for the review have been on the template and methodology document 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 feels that the provided documentation was sufficient and as thorough as could be expected. The SER in particular was a well-written document containing honest self-appraisal and usefully detailed information and tabulations.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The DH programme aims are clearly defined and they have been formulated based on state and regional perspectives, professional requirements, regulatory documents, national science and study mission, SSC strategic aims and mission. Its basic aim is to produce qualified dental hygienists with appropriate skills for working in the oral care services. The expert team emphasizes the potential and significance of this programme within the oral health care system of the country to meet the needs of the population and those in institutions in particular. The SSC DH programme per se seems able to provide DH graduates able to meet the future challenges and to enhance the oral health of Lithuanians.

The learning outcomes of this DH programme include all skills traditionally related to the activities of a dental hygienist who is able to provide certain dental treatments and services. The learning outcomes are in line with those traditionally found in the countries with similar training programmes. The team considers that they can be achieved within the planned three-year study period.

The learning outcomes are defined on three levels corresponding generally to the stated competences: be competent at and have knowledge of and be familiar with dental hygienist practices. The outcomes also match well with common conceptions regarding the degree of the professional bachelors and the Bologna Declaration. The outcomes are presented in relation to professional requirements and the needs for the labour market, which is highly appreciated by the expert team. Significant and detailed tabulations and SWOT analyses are provided in all self-evaluation areas of the SER.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets legal requirements and the programme is structured according to laws and acts of the Republic of Lithuania. The structure of the programme meets the general requirements for college study programmes, first cycle. The duration of the studies is 3 years full-time studies whose scope is 180 ECTS credits (4800 hours) over the 3 years and this is 60 study credits annually. Studies are based on the studying general study subjects (15 credits compulsory and 6 credits optional), study field subjects (135 credits), the subjects for deepening in the field (15 credits optional) and students can choose 9 credits from the general list.

The study methods allow for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, which are clearly shown. The description of the studies is based on the coherence between learning outcomes of the programme and each study subject. There are five programme practices between the second and sixth semesters. The studies are completed by the professional bachelor's graduation paper and the requirements of the graduation paper or theses are clearly worked out. Coherence between the outcomes of the intended graduate theses and the outcomes of this first cycle of the studies is clear and this is recognised by the expert team.

However, it is recommended by the experts that some revision must be undertaken in the curriculum design by looking on particular titles (e.g., Oral Odontology, Professional Language Culture, etc.) and the content of some subjects, also the order they are following during the study years (Urgent Help/First Aid on the fourth semester already parallel to the practical work). In the subject descriptions' recommended literature, more foreign authors should be used. This would help internationalise this programme and help ensure it is in the 21st century. The scope of practical training increases during the three-year study process, but it should be earlier in the DH programme and expose the students to the practical aspects of their professional duties much sooner and more attention to dental focus across the programme should be paid.

3. Staff

The qualification of the teachers working in the DH study programme seems sufficient for its successful implementation. It also corresponds to the requirements identified in legal acts. The programme is being executed by 25 teachers, 15 of them teaching study field subjects. Most teachers

have more than three years working experience; some practical study area teachers have more than 30 years of practical experience. Pedagogical experience is also demonstrated by their prepared and published textbooks, methodical materials, etc. The recent new staff employment is welcomed by the expert team. However, more specific DH dental staff should be involved in the teaching process. How and where the actual clinical training remained unclear in the SER. During the experts' visit it was found that the real clinical work with the patients was organized at the different dental clinics and practices under supervision of the local professional staff. The individual workload of the teaching staff in terms of clinical supervision seemed high and training in big groups of students may compromise effective learning.

The changes in the academic staff have been minor, supporting the continuity of the programme without any major negative impact on it. The team acknowledges the recruitment activities to bring to the programme young, qualified dentists and dental hygienists and this helps ensure a good range of teaching and learning methods and also teaching continuity. The programme employs teachers of different experience and age. The fairly even age distribution of them speaks positively for the natural turn-over and good continuity of expertise needed for the execution of this DH programme, and also in the future.

There are several activities by the staff members to improve their clinical as well as pedagogical skills with strong support of the College. But the expert team recommends more active international cooperation and research output by the teachers, as also indicated in the SER, involving more international exchanges between the teaching staff and the comparable colleges abroad, gaining valuable details about other programmes and possibly benchmarking these. The skills of foreign languages (particularly English) should be improved. This would assist the future exchanges. There should be more research activities by the teachers of this programme to keep the programme current for the 21st century and also enhance their teaching and student learning. It is appropriate for the students to support their teachers in research activities and this provides an improved programme with more respect and kudos.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The infrastructure within the Faculty facility includes lecture rooms and specialized classrooms. The development of the base for the practical training is constantly pursued to improve the quality of the practical training. There are actively working dental units and oral care/pre-clinical units with phantom heads etc. There is a variety of instruments and dental equipment. In 2011 the locker room was renovated for students to change their clothes and keep personal items. There are 18 workplaces with internet access in the computer class. As stated in the SER, there is a need to purchase extra equipment for the pre-clinical phantom room.

Overall, there are adequate premises both in size and quality at the College's training clinic, but there is a need for more new equipment (also for X-ray examination) and its use in a modern way - for example, to provide further preventive dental services for the local people. More opportunity is

needed to work with the patients at the College training clinic, if possible, with the greater range of patients in different age groups to provide more effective training and experience for those dental hygienist students. All rooms at the department have internet/wifi free access.

During the period 2009-2011 academic years the students did their practices in 47 institutions, 13 of which have signed cooperation agreements. The biggest number (8 contracts) of cooperation agreements was signed with the public companies where more than half of the students are doing their practices. The details of the practice management system were not clearly described and were vague. The expert team recommends that the clinical practice with the patients should be introduced earlier and the practices organization in different dental clinics outside the College requires more clarity in their organization process.

With the SSC library (hours: 8.00-19.00 Monday-Friday) and the centre for self-studies the advantages of an integral academic library system are used. Students and teachers are given the opportunity to order publications: verbally, directly with the help of the librarian, in the reading room, or from home via an electronic library catalogue: <http://aleph.library.lt> and with this address SSC students have access to the scientific publications database. SSC library and the center for self-studies contain various databases: SAGE Research Methods Online, New England Journal of Medicine, ISPG (Independent Scholarly Publishers Group), where there is access to the journals of biomedical sciences topic. Library opening hours are extended with regard to the examination period and the timetable of the studies (based on the readers' need, the library can be open on Saturdays as well).

Each calendar year the publishing plan of necessary methodical publications that are needed to pursue the programme is made. After an evaluation of the provision of teaching and learning materials for the separate teaching subjects, funding to make new publications is given. In the College's library there are key textbooks to implement the programme, the number of some textbooks and teaching aids is limited in the library, but students can find all the textbooks that are necessary for implementation of the studies in the reading rooms. Students can also use the methodological publications that have been collected in the oral care methodical room: about 80 books and 120 periodicals of oral care and dental topics in Lithuanian, and some in English and Russian languages. There is still a lack of DH textbooks and journals in English and methodical tools in Lithuanian. More are needed to support DH student studies and research activities. The library's ambience is dated and requires an update to encourage learning.

5. Study process and student assessment

The admission requirements are well-founded and thorough. The admission is organized according to the rules for general admission to undergraduate and integrated studies at Lithuanian higher education schools (LAMA BPO) that are annually approved by SSC Academic Council resolutions. Requirements of the admission are clearly formulated and accessible on the internet webpage of SSC (<http://www.svako.lt>). Candidates having at least secondary or equivalent

education can participate in the entry competition. The main admission criterion is a competitive score entry. There are no large gaps between contact hours according to the timetables available on the website (<http://www.svako.lt>). Lunch break is always included. There is no overlapping of the lectures. There is an option to study according to an individual study programme, which seems to be popular among the DH students.

Implementation of academic and social support ensures proper process of the DH study programme and achievement of the learning outcomes. Students can attend a variety of sports (e.g., basketball, athletics) and cultural activities (e.g., students' music band). They are encouraged to participate in annual traditional events that are advertised on the website of SSC (e.g., the International Students' Day celebration). Students actively present their researches in conferences, some of which are organized by the Healthcare Faculty Students' Scientific Association (e.g., Student Health. Science). They develop articles for publishing (the list is available on the website of SSC), which is very commendable. It is stated in SER, that students have a possibility to publicly present their papers and test their communication abilities by giving interviews to the representatives of Šiauliai Television which is very encouraging.

The programme includes requirements for scientific research and Final Thesis, which has to be presented and defended by the students. Students integration into faculties scientific activities remains low and should be encouraged and also internationally. The expert team's communication with the students was satisfactory, but only with the help of the translator, so skills in the foreign languages (particularly English) should be improved. Overall, the expert team recommends that it will help in the future to participate much more in different research activities by the DH students of this programme and also the teachers.

Specialists of SSC Academic Mobility and Project Management Department inform students about mobility possibilities during the meetings with outgoing and incoming students. Students have a possibility to participate in the Erasmus programme, however, they can go abroad only to do practice as the College has not signed any bilateral agreements on student exchange for DH studies. It is a serious drawback which is strongly encouraged to be eliminated as a limiting factor of student mobility. On the other hand, it is stated that SSC cooperates with Lithuanian and foreign institutions of higher education to help promote student and teachers' mobility. However, the expert team strongly recommends more DH students' mobility for international exchange (Erasmus, Nordplus) in future.

Information to students is provided via various means (e.g., SSC website, monthly paper 'Mano kolegija'). First-year students are introduced to study objectives, organization procedures, etc., 'Social adaptation programme for first-year students' is pursued for first year students of the DH study programme. Introductory lectures of each subject aim to familiarize students with objectives and learning outcomes. Group curators are assigned to students, whose responsibility is to discuss academic news and help dealing with problems. Essential information is provided by teachers and administration. Students' counseling on career issues is developed systematically. Social, promotional and one-time scholarships are granted to students. There is also a possibility to receive

state loans or state-funded loans. All students of this DH study programme are provided with accommodation in dormitories if needed.

Students' achievements are assessed on the basis of the Description of the Assessment of the Study Results approved by Academic Council and confirmed by the Director's Order. The assessment is based on the ten-point criteria-based system, which is clear and adequate according to what is stated in the SER. All relevant documents are password-protected on the website and available only to the academic community. Students are provided with individual login information to the network by the teacher of each subject. Various methods, depending on the didactic aims, are used for assessing the achievements (case studies, project tasks etc.) Assessment of the learning outcomes of the subject and practice is pursued in a written form, verbally or in both ways depending upon the form of the assessment, purpose, aims, study field and group of the subject. The requirements for the final thesis are clear to the students. The distribution of lectures and professional practices is adequate. The workload per week seems to be distributed evenly. The admission indices and low rate of wastage of students show that motivated students choose this study programme of DH.

6. Programme management

The responsibilities for the decisions and monitoring of the programme are clearly allocated. The programme is implemented and administered by the Faculty of Health Care and the Department of Biomedical Sciences, led by the head of the department. Monitoring and quality assurance of the programme are pursued by the Committee of Biomedical and Social Sciences field study programmes and study quality, and Faculty and Academic Councils. All the documents that regulate it, are published in the computerized documented management system 'Kontora' and on the SSC intranet.

The information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly analysed. The Council of the Faculty is a governing body of the Academic Affairs, which considers and presents study programmes and changes them. Partial self-evaluation and update of the study programme is done annually by the working group (head of the department, teachers, students and external social partners) and then discussed within the Committee. The Department of Biomedical Sciences undertakes the assessment of the methodical material of the programme study subjects and the consideration of the self-evaluation report of each subject during the semester. Students' expectations are noted and opinions are provided by the feedback when at the end of the semester the students fill in a questionnaire (electronic version). The 'Report of the research on SSC organization culture (2011)' reveals that teachers and other employees are highly satisfied with their workload and the teachers have motivation. About 50 per cent of their full time working day is made of contact with the students and about 50 per cent other activities, i.e. scientific work, qualification improvement and organizational activities. This is appropriate.

Under the regulations of the SKVC, outcomes of the self-evaluation analyses allow for evaluating strengths and weaknesses of the programme and to properly plan quality improvement of the programme for the future. As indicated before, cooperation with other institutions of higher education for DH study programmes can benefit the quality improvement by benchmarking this programme against the best elsewhere. The expert team believes that there is lack of dental focus across this DH programme and recommends as a part of programme management that more specific DH dental staff should be involved in the teaching process.

Participation of external social stakeholders on the quality of the studies is ensured by social stakeholders participation in the research of labour market needs and in building the programme. Their main fields of cooperation are: participating in the group of updating the programme, organization and evaluation of students practices, participation in joint projects and surveys, review of graduation papers. But further structuring and clarity is needed across the programme to, as noted before, build in a more specific dental focus. The benefit of the graduates in terms of quality development remains minimal. It is recommended therefore that an Alumni Association is formed for the graduates of this programme to advise the Department on future programme developments and the quality of future graduates.

To achieve a systematic improvement of the quality of the studies and their administration processes, an innovative internal study quality management system that meets standard requirements ISO 9001:2008 will be introduced and certified in SSC. This will help the internal quality assurance measures make a more effective and efficient DH programme at SSC. The expert team supports this move.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Some revision as part of an updating process must be undertaken of the overall curriculum design by looking on the titles and content of some subjects, and also the order that they are following during the three study years of this DH programme. More focus is needed on specific DH areas, rather than general areas. More international book and journal titles are also needed to ensure this programme compares with others internationally.

3.2. There should be more international exchanges between the teaching staff and the comparable colleges abroad, thereby gaining valuable details about other programmes and possibly benchmarking them as best examples. The skills of foreign languages (particularly English) should be improved and this would support any future international exchanges.

3.3. There should be more research activities by the teachers of this programme to keep the programme current for the 21st century and also enhance their teaching and student learning. It should be remembered that when a teacher undertakes research activities they are often assisted in this by their students and this is an encouragement and two-way process for both teachers and students alike. It also brings more prestige for this programme.

3.4. There are adequate premises both in size and quality at the College training clinic, but there is a need for more new equipment (also X-ray examination) and its use in a modern way – for example, providing preventive dental services for the local people. More opportunity is needed to work with the patients at the College’s training clinic, if possible, with the greater range of patients in different age groups to provide more effective training and experience for the DH students.

3.5. The clinical practice with the patients should be introduced earlier into the curriculum and the practice management and organization in different dental clinics outside the College requires more clarity of their processes.

3.6. The expert team recommends more students mobility for international exchange with comparable institutions in Europe and possibly America. This would significantly raise the profile and prestige of this DH bachelor programme. Improved abilities in foreign languages (particularly English) would help this process significantly.

3.7. The research of the students needs to be much increased; additional student research activities in addition to their final theses should be undertaken on this bachelor programme. More joint research activity with the teachers would encourage the development of an enhanced research environment, again increasing the prestige of this programme and also SSC.

3.8. The expert team recommends as part of programme management that more specific DH dental staff should be involved in the teaching process to build in more of a dental focus. It is also recommended that an Alumni Association is formed for the graduates of this programme. This will enhance the publicity for the programme and bring greater prestige and public awareness. The Alumni will be able to advise the Department on appropriate future developments for this DH programme.

IV. SUMMARY

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aims and objectives of the programme correspond to the regulations of the higher education in Lithuania and approved professional standard. They also are following the recommendations of the international dental hygienists organizations in Europe. The learning outcomes are clearly defined and structured, showing relationship to the study subjects; they correspond to the professional competences defined by the local norms of Medicine. The learning outcomes are harmonized and obtain specific competences that correspond to programme study results. The outcomes are presented in relation to professional requirements and needs for the labour market, which is highly appreciated by the expert team. Significant and detailed tabulations and SWOT analyses are provided in all self-evaluation areas of the SER.

2. Curriculum design

Overall, the curriculum design meets the legal requirements and regulations of the higher education in Lithuania. The programme consists of general subjects, subjects of study area and optional subjects. The content of the subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies. Some revision must be done on the curriculum design to ensure that subject titles and content are appropriate for the 21st century and that the subjects are provided in the most appropriate order. More focus is needed on specific DH areas, rather than general areas. More international books and journal references need to be provided in subject descriptions and reference materials to also ensure a 21st century DH programme is being provided at SSC. Benchmarking against the best international examples of DH programmes would assist this.

3. Staff

The programme is run by dedicated and enthusiastic staff, the number of which is adequate to ensure the learning outcomes. Teachers' qualification correspond to their subjects, especially in practical training. However, more dental professionals could be involved in the teaching process in the future. The SSC administration provides conditions for staff qualification improvement by introducing several projects. Lecturers go to scientific, practical internships, participate in some exchanges with European schools, but these activities are very limited indeed. Much more international exchange between the teaching staff and comparable colleges in Europe should be undertaken. The skills in foreign languages (particularly English) should be improved for the teachers; it will also encourage and influence international research activities (which needs to be increased) directly related to the study programme and the overall quality of the teaching. The programme will be more comparable with the best of other 21st century DH programmes including some international ones.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Students have good access to theoretical and practical working places not only at the SSC, but also at the public institutions, private practices and also at the odontological care training centre. There are adequate premises both in size and quality at the College's training clinic, but there is a need for more new equipment (also X-ray examination) and its use in a modern way – for example, providing preventive dental services for the local people. More opportunity is needed to work with the patients at the College's training clinic, if possible, with the greater range of patients in different age groups to provide more effective training and experience for the DH students. The clinical practice with the patients should be introduced earlier into the curriculum and the practices organization in different dental clinics outside the College requires much more clarity in the organization and management processes.

Learning materials are of sufficient quality and periodically renewed; some are placed in the virtual environment and students have access to them. Teachers have prepared and published methodological publications used in theoretical and practical classes. Students have a good access to the materials in paper and online. The library's ambience is dated and needs an update to encourage learning. More international books and journals would be beneficial to support DH studies and research activities.

5. Study process and students` performance assessment

Admission of the students is organized in accordance with the regulations and are clearly defined. The organization of the study process ensures the appropriate implementation of the programme and achievements of the learning outcomes. During the final practical and theoretical examination the student demonstrates the competences acquired from the areas compulsory to the dental hygienist activity. But the students need much more participation in research activities and this is advised by the expert team. A research environment needs to be developed to foster more research activities. Student's mobility is not sufficient because of different systems of education and training of dental hygienists in Europe thus more advice and help is needed. More international exchanges would raise the profile and prestige of this DH programme at SSC. Improved abilities by the DH students in foreign languages (particularly English) would help considerably. Students are counseled regularly by the programme administration on various matters like assessment, schedule, career opportunities etc. There are good relationships, and the sharing of experiences between the staff and the students. Information concerning the studies and also changes in the programme are clearly published on the website of the SSC.

6. Programme management

Responsibilities for the decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. The programme is implemented and administered by the Faculty of Health Care and the Department of Biomedical Sciences. Monitoring and quality assurance of the programme

are pursued by the Committee of Study Quality and Faculty and Academic Councils. All the documents that regulate it are published in the computerized document management system on intranet. The information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed. Partial self-evaluation and update of the study programme is done annually by the working group involving also social partners. Students expectations are noted and student feedback is maintained. Annually under the regulations of the SKVC, outcomes of the self-evaluation analyses allow for evaluating strengths and weaknesses of the programme and to properly plan quality improvement of the programme for the future. Cooperation with other institutions of higher education for DH study programmes is of benefit for program quality improvement. Benchmarking against the best elsewhere should be undertaken. As there is lack of dental focus across this programme, the expert team recommends as a part of programme management that more specific DH dental staff should be involved in the teaching process to provide a more dental/DH learning environment. Participation of external social stakeholders on the quality of the studies is ensured by social stakeholders participation in the research of labour market needs and in building the programme. But further structuring and clarity is needed. The benefit of the graduates in terms of quality development remains minimal. It is recommended that an Alumni Association is formed for the graduates of this programme to regularly advise the Department on appropriate future developments of this DH programme. The outcomes of internal and external evaluation of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme but, as indicated, much more is required.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Dental Hygiene* (state codes – 65308B112, 653A51003) at Šiauliai 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	4
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Staff	2
4.	Material resources	2
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process, student support, achievement assessment)	2
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	16

*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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