



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Kazimiero Simonavičiaus universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TEISĖ (601M90003)*
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *LAW (601M90003)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Kazimiero Simonaviciaus University

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Dr. Robert Lane

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Tanel Kerikmäe

Prof. Mar Campins Eritja

Dr. Raimundas Kalesnykas

Ramūnas Kazlauskas

Birutė Noreikaitė

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2014

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Teisė</i>
Valstybinis kodas	601M90003
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Teisė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Vientisosios
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (5), iššęstinė (6)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	300
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Teisės magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2009 m. rugpjūčio 17 d. įsakymo nr. 1-73

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Law</i>
State code	601M90003
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Law
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Integrated
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (5), part-time (6)
Volume of the study programme in credits	300
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Law
Date of registration of the study programme	2009-08-17, order no. 1-73

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	5
1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	5
2. Curriculum design	6
3. Staff	8
4. Facilities and learning resources	10
5. Study process and student assessment.....	11
6. Programme management	14
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	16
IV. SUMMARY	17
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	19

I. INTRODUCTION

Kazimieras Simonavičius University (hereinafter – KSU) is a private university, founded in 2003. During its first period (2003-2011) the KSU operated as a Public Enterprise (under the name of Vilnius Business Law Academy) authorised to offer integrated university level studies in law. In January 2012, following a large-scale reorganisation process, the KSU received permission from the Ministry of Education and Science to implement university studies and to engage in other academic activities. Since then, it has offered BA and MA degrees in eight main fields of study: law, communication, sociology, business and management, informatics, economics, political science and public administration. In September 2013, 624 students (full-time and part-time) were enrolled on these study programmes. The KSU holds its study programmes in Vilnius and Klaipėda. It has two Faculties (the Faculty of Law in Vilnius and the Faculty of Klaipėda), one Institute (Institute of Creative Society and Economy in Vilnius) and one Business School (since 2012).

The Law study programme is the only integrated study programme implemented at the KSU and is one of the four integrated law degree programmes taught in Lithuanian universities. It was the only study programme at the KSU until 2012. In 2013, there were 351 students at the Faculty of Law (including Law and International Business Law students) and 41 professors to the Law study programme. Teaching remains spread out in the two Faculties (Vilnius and Klaipėda), and full-time and part-time students attend the programme. For the first time, the programme was accredited in 2009 for the period until 31st of December 2014 by Order No. 1-73 of 14th of August 2009.

According to Lithuanian law, the KSU is required to follow the accreditation procedure, which is based on results of the university's Self-Evaluation Report (hereinafter – SER) and on the examination of an external evaluation team, including an on-site assessment. The SER of the KSU was produced by a group of six senior academics and one student: Prof. Rysardas Burda (Dean), Jolita Malinauskaitė, Assoc. Prof. Virginija Kondratienė, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gintautas Sulija, Agnė Bružaitė, Prof. Virginijus Leonas Papirtis, Maksimas Kozlineris.

The external evaluation team was appointed by the Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania in 2013 and is chaired by Prof. Robert Lane. Prof. Tanel Kerikmäe, Prof. Mar Campins Eritja, Dr. Raimundas Kalesnykas, Ramūnas Kazlauskas and Birutė Noreikaitė are the other members of the group.

The SER, together with its annexes, was made available to the external evaluation team in January 2014. The visit of the external evaluation team took place the 27th February 2014.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The training profile of the integrated law study programme, with regard to both its degree of definition and its suitability with respect to academic and professional demands, is assessed favourably. The impression of the KSU's institutional plans for academic development and continuous updating of the curriculum competences is also positive.

The aim of the programme is clear and it provides the educational purpose of the study: “to train highly qualified specialists in law, able to work at any legal institution” (...) “complying with the high quality professional qualifications and ethical standards”. Successful students will receive a Master's degree and will be qualified to work in public and private law institutions, as judges, attorneys, notaries, bailiffs, and in any other legal or related services, civil service, higher education, and so on. In particular the Law study programme is designed “to provide systemic knowledge” for students, to teach the students “to professionally apply the fundamental and specialist legal knowledge”, “to form an analytical and critical approach to legal issues”, and to develop the ability to analyse practical situations and information, form hypotheses, and carry out legal research.

After the completion of the study programme, students are expected to be able to work independently – both within a team, and individually – with a sound understanding of the principles of public and private law. Each of these learning outcomes are further detailed in Table 3 of the SER: Acquisition of theoretical and practical legal knowledge (principles, institutions and tools of private and public law, and fundamental rights and freedoms), application of legal norms in standard and non-standard situations, creation and application of law while understanding the external factors, communication and independent and collaborative work. Learning outcomes of the study programme are defined in a general but sufficient way, and they are consistent with the relevant professional requirements..

Annex 1 of the SER gives adequate information on the specific educational aims and purpose of the detailed courses, the specific learning outcomes, benchmarks for student learning and achievements, and clear guidelines on methods of assessment and marking. According to the SER and from what experts found in the meetings with administrative staff and the students, all

this information is fully available and is publicly accessible at the KSU website, the KSU Information System and the AIKOS system, and explained in depth at several meetings and in the annual information leaflet.

The study programme seems to be well structured with regard to its aims and learning outcomes. The programme covers different areas of competence and learning outcomes, both cognitive and practical. They are focused on academic and professional needs, and are also well defined and clearly explained. The way how this is done allows the students to see more clearly what the objectives and the expected outcomes of the learning process are.

The study programme's aims and learning outcomes complies with Order No. V-2212 of 21 November 2011 *On the approval of the specification of study cycles* is presented in Annex 6. The qualification acquired by graduates is consistent with the Ruling of 20 February 2008 of the Constitutional Court *On the approval of the qualification requirements of the higher legal education in respect of persons willing to take the position of judges in the manner prescribed by laws*).

2. Curriculum design

The structure of the study programme meets the substantive requirements of the Lithuanian law concerning semesters and total study period, the total number of ECTS credits, student workload and the volume of subjects. Subjects and modules as described in the SER are consistent with the level of studies and are appropriate for the achievement of learning outcomes. The study programme complies with *Order No V-501 of 9 April 2010 and Order No. V-1385 of 19 August 2010, of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania*

The programme consists of 300 ECTS credits. Students must obtain an average of 30 ECTS credits each semester. They usually study a maximum of seven subjects during semesters 1 to 8 (the so called first cycle: 240 ECTS) and five subjects during semesters 9 and 10 (the so called second cycle: 60 ECTS). The study programme is divided into subjects and, as noted in annex 1 of the SER, their description comprises several areas: name, number of credits, teacher, level, type, purpose, content of the subject, learning outcomes, implementation and evaluation criteria, language of instruction, requirements for the student, sources of study and references. In the first cycle, the subjects that are not law-related must bear at least three ECTS credits each, and law-related subjects must bear at least four ECTS credits each; in the second cycle, subjects must bear at least five ECTS credits each.

Annex 8 of the SER contains the detailed structure of the study programme for full-time and part-time students. Study subjects are sufficiently specific, and they are not repetitive. The content of subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies in the area of Law. Annex 1 of the SER gives adequate information on the specific content and teaching methods of the individual subjects. The information provided in such Annex indicates that subjects and methods are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The programme starts with general education subjects (23 ECTS) and a significant group of mandatory courses related to general law study fields, including subjects providing fundamental knowledge (34 ECTS), subjects providing legal knowledge (158 ECTS) and subjects providing knowledge in other social sciences (19 ECTS). This structure allows students in the early stages to familiarise themselves with law as a phenomenon, with more general and mandatory courses; and to investigate the main branches of law in more depth in the following years, with elective courses and alternative modules. After completing the general part of the programme, students may choose between two alternative specialisations to be taught during the 9th and 10th semesters (for part-time students, semesters 10th, 11th and 12th): the area of Business Law and the area of Finance Law and Tax Administration (26 ECTS).

18 ECTS are devoted to placements in firms (Professional Practice and Final Professional Practice). These internships are carried out in two consecutive stages in the 7th and 9th semesters, and in the 8th and 11th semesters in the part-time study programme. The study programme for full-time students is completed in the 9th and 10th semesters with the preparation and defence of the master's thesis (15 ECTS) and the final exam (7 ECTS). In the part-time study programme, the presentation of the thesis and the final exam take place in the 11th and 12th semesters. A list of master's theses since 2011, most of them in the area of civil law, contract law and commercial law, is provided in annex 4 of the SER. The choice of the topics and its development seems adequate to the privatistic approach of the Law study programme, and are also appropriate from the point of view of legal debates taking place in national and international areas. The external evaluators' team could check some of these theses and highly appreciated the students' performance.

While there seem to be enough courses providing fundamental knowledge as well as courses providing specific legal knowledge, there is a lack of methodological courses that can provide the students with practical or research skills. Likewise and in spite of the expanding international orientation of the KSU – given its small size, one of its most interesting trends –, the international aspects of the curriculum are rather poorly described. With regard to the content of

the modules, experts' group suggests that the number of elective courses should be increased, paying special attention to the courses with an international or European dimension (i.e. EU policies' related courses, WTO related courses, courses on transnational business, courses on international litigation, etc.). On the other hand, the university could greatly benefit from strengthening the international and inter-cultural dimension through the incorporation of more internationally oriented courses in the main study programme. This includes from courses taught in foreign languages to more specific international and European oriented courses' contents.

3. Staff

The number and quality of academic staff seems to be appropriate and to meet all the legal requirements, as mentioned in Table 7 of the SER. Annex 2 of the SER provides an overview of the study programme's academic staff. In total, 41 teachers deliver courses: seven professors, 18 associate professors, two lecturers with Ph.D. and 14 lecturers without a Ph.D. Roughly two-thirds (65%) hold doctorates.

No new teachers seem to have been appointed recently, and others are approaching retirement. In fact, Table 6 of the SER shows a significant reduction in the academic staff in 2012-2013 (around 40% in one academic year) as a result of the human resources policy implemented by the new university management. As shown in annex 2 of the SER, only two of the academic staff are full-time employees. Besides that, and according to what experts were told in the meetings with administration and academic staff, contracts to teach are extremely short, often no more than one semester, although they can usually be extended at their completion. This aspect should be carefully reviewed, and ways of increasing the number of full-time academic staff as well as the regular extension of teaching contracts should be studied. If not, even if no legal requirements are being breached, the staff's commitment and loyalty to the university and the study program's aims may be jeopardised.

In particular it would be advisable to improve the legal certainty and transparency of the recruitment policy. It is not clear how the academic staff is appointed or how are the candidates evaluated, beyond the excessively general reference to the assessment of their academic background, teaching and research experience directly by the Dean (under the very general assumption that he/she is a "good teacher" and "good scientist"). Neither the SER nor the meetings with the administration and academic staff have clarified in what way nor by what formal procedures the KSU guarantees the appointment of qualified professors.

According to the SER and to the meetings with administration and academic staff, a significant contribution is made by part-time academic staff who come from outside the university and who are directly involved in legal practice. This is an important asset for the university and the institution should draw maximum benefit from it. However, it seems that about 40% of them may lack enough experience in specific teaching (only 2 full professors over 41; from those 41, 21 academic staff has less than 6 year of scientific experience and 15 academic staff has less than 6 years of pedagogical experience). In order to overcome this problem, the focus on continuous training should be reinforced and approached in a more systematic manner. Training in teaching and new methodologies has to be regularly organized and should be made available to all the academic staff, especially to the younger or newer members.

The fact that most of the academic staff is employed part-time may also explain why there is little evidence of teaching achievement at international level, even though several members of the academic staff participate in international conferences or other academic programmes. In fact, international staff mobility is very low and only eight out of the 41 academic staff have any international experience extending beyond participation in international conferences. Experts suggest that the university should considerate ways to improving the culture of international mobility among the academic staff and to allocate specific resources to that aim; this would enrich their academic experience and is likely to have a favourable effect on their students' learning.

Concerning the involvement of academic staff on research activities, the evidence of individual or collective research is very limited. The general impression is that very few of them are regularly engaged in research or are involved in scientific research networks. The lists of academic staff publications presented in annex 3 of the SER are illustrative – there are very few indexed publications or publications in leading journals. The number of scientific publications has also decreased dramatically, from 25 in 2008 to only three in 2013 (Table 8 of the SER). From the meetings with administration and academic staff experts' group also learned two more things: on one hand, some professors do not feel the need nor seem they interested in the development of competitive research, mainly because of the bureaucracy and paper burden involved. On the other hand, some evidences of research activities might exist but they are not related to the university; this seems to be linked to the fact that professors who are actually involved on research activities might be publishing under the name and affiliation of other universities with whom they also collaborate.

However, the SER says little about the ways in which the academic staff is incentivised to undertake research activity under the university's affiliation; the impression from the meetings with administration and academic staff is that there is no general structure for research coordination and planning and when research activity exists, is on personal and individual basis. Establishment of a research structure and preparation of a thoroughgoing research strategy (including research priorities, research indicators and allocation of research resources) is strongly recommended.

The SER demonstrates that the KSU is aware of some of these weaknesses, and that it is investing energy into building its research capacity. A possible starting-point to be welcomed is the research programme "Legal Effectiveness in the Environment of Global Challenges" already approved by the university. On the other hand, it is necessary to point here the appreciation shown by students towards their professors, explicitly valuing their practical professional experience in various legal areas, and the sense of "community" that they bring to the students.

4. Facilities and learning resources

According to SER, the KSU has premises in two buildings in Vilnius (at Basanaviciaus St., with eight classrooms: a library and reading room with 34 seats, a computer room with 30 seats, four large lecture halls with a total of 239 seats, three small lecture halls with a total of 84 seats; and at Kauno St., with five rooms and a research area: a laboratory with 150 seats and four small lecture halls with a total of 156 seats) and in Klaipėda (the KSU rents the use of 40 rooms, two computer rooms and 15 specialised technical laboratories from the Marine Technology Faculty of Klaipėda).

The visit of the external evaluation team was limited to the premises in Basanaviciaus St. in Vilnius. The teaching facilities seem to be appropriate in terms of number and size. In this building, however, Internet and wireless connections were available only with big limitations. Some learning resources are available and up-to-date in the classrooms and lecture rooms (blackboards, PowerPoint projectors and computers). Although it is supposed to be accessible from anywhere, Moodle is mainly available at the library due to difficulties to access Internet throughout the building. No facilities for students with disabilities have been adapted and room for professors to prepare classes or to receive students is very limited.

The main concern is the library. The impression given by the SER and that the site visit confirmed that the library resources, both in traditional and electronic format, are very limited.

The traditional resources “on paper” are very poor, and electronic databases need to be put on place urgently. Most of the textbooks and other lecture materials mentioned in the syllabi are not available on place, this being one of the very few complaints we heard from the students. Another issue is the library’s capacity because it cannot accommodate more than a few people at a time, a situation that is likely exacerbated during examination periods, when it may become overcrowded. Moreover, an area that looks like a rest area for students is located right next to the library. The presence in this area of vending machine as well as a table football game may cause enough noise to disturb the students who want to study in the library.

The KSU seems to have adequate arrangements for student learning and practical placements. According to SER, most part-time students are already involved in some work of a legal nature. Professional placement periods are a challenge for full-time students. The placements, termed Professional Practice and Final Professional Practice, are carried out in two consecutive stages in the 7th and 9th semesters in the full-time study programme or in the 8th and 11th semesters in the part-time programme. The list of institutions where students receive their legal practical training and the list of cooperation agreements between the Faculty and social partners can be seen in annex 11 and in Table 14 of the SER respectively. The placements are published on the Faculty’s web site and on Facebook, and they seem to be sufficient. Students favourably highlighted the availability and smooth running of placements while stakeholders who host them emphasized their good training. The stakeholders also highlighted the development of innovative projects such as the “Academy of Possibilities”, the practice programme “Investigate – Experience Labour Law”, and the Pro Bono activities organised by the Faculty.

5. Study process and student assessment

The admissions procedure to the integrated study programme for both full-time and part-time students is organised in compliance with Lithuanian law, and established by the university. The main criterion is that students must have completed at least secondary education with an acceptable score. Candidates may apply for either non-state-funded or state-funded study places. There are two different admission procedures: joint admission for state-funded and non-state-funded places (through the Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions Association for Organising Joint Admission, LAMA BPO) and direct admission for non-state-funded places. The applicants’ requirements are the same. Students must carry out a series of pre-enrolment activities.

Table 16 of the SER shows the dramatic fall in applications submitted and admissions during the period 2008-2012. Student numbers in Vilnius (both full-time and part-time) have fallen

substantially over the last five years (six full-time and eight part-time admissions in 2012-2013) while part-time student admissions have remained more stable in Klaipėda (with 22 students in the 2012-2013 year). The part-time study programme includes weekend teaching, which may be a helpful mode of study for those with professional or family commitments. The most important concern is to what extent these figures raise doubts about the sustainability of this programme in the coming years; it is not clear how effective changes in tuition fee policy and increases in scholarships would be in raising the number of student applications and admission figures. The administration and the SER committee were well aware of the difficulties to attract new students, but the institution does not seem to have developed a specific marketing strategy for students' enrolment.

The course descriptions have a clear structure and the requirements for students are described in a transparent manner. The syllabi, learning outcomes and evaluation methods and criteria for the assessment of the study programme as well as study materials are explained in detail. According to what experts learned in the meetings with administration, academic staff and students, teaching methods (lectures, case law, interactive lessons, moots, discussions, workshops, and project work) and organisation of study processes seems to be appropriate and enable the students to achieve their learning outcomes. The Dean supervises teaching methods and students favourably highlighted the use of these methods by their professors. Of particular relevance is the final Master thesis, which is aimed at developing the ability of the students to correlate the acquired knowledge with the resolution of legal problems. The external evaluation team was favourably impressed by the high standard of these final theses.

Assessment is mainly based on examinations at the end of the semester. All courses assign considerable weight to the exams at the end of the semester (between 50% and 70% of the overall score). The remaining 30% to 50% is usually assessed from the activities performed by the student in class throughout the semester, which may also include other occasional exams or tests. Only one subject (Theory of Law) and the practical courses (Specialisation Course Paper, Professional Practice and Professional Final Practice) replace the exam with a report.

Dropout rates are considerable, and most are recorded in the first years of the study programme. According to the SER, dropout is due to financial reasons, lack of motivation, academic failure or family and work circumstances. According to the figures in Table 16 of the SER, dropout rates are of 58 students in 2008-2009, 51 students in 2009-2010, 48 students in 2010-2011, 70 students in 2011-2012 and 40 students in 2011-2012.

As annex 1 of the SER shows, the programme courses are all taught in Lithuanian, and there is no courses taught in English or other foreign languages. The contents of the curriculum are also lacking an international dimension. The KSU started to implement mobility programmes only in 2012, when it was granted the Erasmus Charter. According to annex 10 of the SER, the Faculty of Law has Erasmus agreements for academic cooperation with over forty universities in Europe, as well as bilateral agreements with several institutions in Taiwan and the United Kingdom. However, the real mobility of students and academic staff is still very limited (as showed in Table 11 and 17 and in Annex 9 and 12 of the SER). As for the incoming academic staff, there were 28 visitors in 2012-2013 (25 according Annex 9 of the SER) and 13 in 2013-2014; however; as for the outgoing staff, figures shows only 1 mobility in 2012-2013 and 2 in 2013-2014 (with 9 planned). Student's participation in mobility programmes is also very small: 3 outgoing students and 12 incoming students in 2013-2014.

The active participation of administrative, academic staff and students in exchange programmes must be strongly encouraged in order to accelerate the internationalisation process of the KSU. Furthermore, very little has been done in the area of "Internationalisation at Home". Implementing some courses taught in English and broadening the international and European dimension of some course contents would prepare KSU students for study abroad and would increase the number of incoming students, and in general would probably make the KSU a more attractive option for students for international institutional partners. Experts' group strongly recommends that the efforts currently underway should be pursued further and that an international strategy and operating plan should be developed.

Academic support seems to be adequate, with several activities organised by the students unions, the Student Scientific Society of the Faculty of Law (hereinafter SSS FL), the Faculty of Law, the Library, the Competence Development Centre or the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Centre. The SER gives information on cultural, social or other extra-curricular activities promoted by SSS FL. Academic services and support for students seems to be adequate but budget reductions and cutbacks due to the economic crisis and the resulting fall in student numbers represent a serious threat. The funding of the university currently relies on obtaining the highest possible student enrolment rates: therefore due to the dramatic fall in admissions, new funding approaches should be pursued.

The percentage of unemployed graduates registered with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange in 2012 was only 6.1%. In terms of graduate employment, the KSU comes third among Lithuania's, 19 universities. According to the evidence in annex 11 of SER and from what experts found in

the meetings with students and social partners, graduates of the KSU's Law study programme are successful in the labour market and their employment rates indicate a positive outcome.

6. Programme management

It is difficult to establish how the responsibilities for decision-making and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are allocated due to the low level of formalization of the relationship between the Dean of the Law Faculty, the Vice-deans and the Director of the Department of Law. So, it is not very clear how they interact on the approval of the Faculty's decisions, or how to assess the communication flows between them, and between them and the student, an issue that did not receive a clear answer during the site visits. As for student participation in this process, it seems that it is limited to their participation through the university's Senate. As for alumni and social partners, according to SER, they are invited to Faculty meetings and participate in the management of the Law study programme, an issue which was confirmed and favourably commented by social partners.

The SER indicates a strong focus on quality assurance of the study programme. The KSU has an internal system of ensuring the quality of study programmes (ISO 9001:2008), which comes under the responsibility of the Study Programme Committee of the university, the body in charge of overseeing the management of the study programme. However, the functioning of this Committee appears to be rather confusing. On the one hand, there are too many internal regulations concerning its composition and functions (the SER mentions the regulations of the University's Study Programme Committee, the Description of the Procedure of Study Programme Preparation, Approval and Improvement, the Description of the Procedure of Internal Study Programme Quality Monitoring and Evaluation, the Description of the Process of External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes and by the Quality Manual of the University), but not clear and concise information is offered in the SER. On the other hand, its features are explained in such a general way in the SER that it is difficult to assess the actual role it plays in the daily practice of the institution. Unfortunately, that question did not come out in the site visit.

The SER also mentions a quality improvement strategy, but does not describe it further; nor did the external evaluation team have a detailed explanation of how and to what extent the institution responds positively to the provisions and guidelines for internal quality assurance and who exactly is responsible for its implementation at each stage.

According to the SER, the academic staff makes themselves fully available to students, and professors and students confirmed a fluid communication between them – at least by electronic means –, mainly on the basis of individual consultations. It is also stated that members of the KSU and the Faculty of Law hold meetings with students in the beginning of each semester. However, these practices are not institutionalised or formalised in any way and, from the organisational point of view, there seems to be some room for improvement.

In general terms, the KSU should adopt a more systematic approach to its quality assurance strategy, and should procure a greater consistency in the use of different assessment methods. The KSU has implemented a series of evaluation procedures, which are carried out according to the university's regulations. The SER mentions several surveys on major issues: students answer a practical training evaluation questionnaire and take part in study quality surveys in order to update the study programme and evaluate the quality of the teaching and organisation of study subjects. The academic staff's teaching and research activity is assessed and other "teacher surveys" are also administered. Graduates complete a survey after the presentation of their final theses in which they evaluate the overall quality of the study programme as well as their career expectations. Employers and social stakeholders give feedback on practical training undertaken by students, and finally, the Faculty administration (together with the SSS LF) assesses the students' involvement in extracurricular activities. However, there is no documentary evidence of these surveys, their results, or what the feedback was, and the way the opinions are compiled and managed is not very clear. Furthermore, it is not clear how the academic staff knows the procedures and to what extent the quality of their teaching activity is assessed, beyond a too general reference the Dean's role on the revision of teaching programmes and teaching methods. During the site visit, these topics just come out indirectly, when referring to the oversight and coordination functions performed by the dean regarding the academic activities.

There is no a systematic and objective assessment of the activities (academic – teaching and research – or organisational) and a clear follow-up procedure. The processes of assessment, revision and improvement should be more standardised and better documented, as should the description of the follow-up procedures and the feedback between students and academic staff. Experts also suggest a closer alignment with mainstream European quality assurance practice, as set down in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. In particular it would be advisable to improve the legal certainty and transparency of the quality assurance policy.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As for the programme aims and curriculum design, the programme should increase the presence of methodological courses that would provide the students with some practical or research skills. It would also be advisable to increase the number of courses that can offer contents with an international or European dimension, in order to strengthen the international and inter-cultural dimension of the programme.
2. As for the academic staff, there are several elements that should be seriously considered: a) Formulate and establish clear and transparent policies for the recruitment, selection and appointment of academic staff; b) Increase full time academic staff as far as possible; c) Reinforce and formalise the continuous training of academic staff; d) Design a thorough-going research strategy in order to promote research activity among the academic staff; e) Allocate resources to promote international mobility among the academic staff.
3. As for the material resources, there is a great need of improving the library's resources and capacity, with the enlargement of room for students and the availability of larger traditional and electronic bibliographic resources. In particular, electronic databases need to be put on place urgently. Internet access and wi-fi should also be ensured all around the facilities. Moodle resources must be fully available to all students by improving Internet access throughout the building. Facilities should also be adapted for disabled students.
4. As for the study process, it is strongly recommended to increase and improve student enrolment rates with a clear enrolment strategy and campaign. Simultaneously, other sources of funding other than student enrolment fees should be sought and pursue. An international strategy and an internationalisation plan should also be gradually developed, that encourages participation of students in international exchange programmes, broaden the international and European dimension of the study programme.
5. As for the programme management it is recommended to clarify the role of the Dean of the Faculty, the Vice-deans and the Director of the Department of Law, and how they interact in approving the Faculty's decisions and managing the study programme. Even if there are no apparent conflicts, communication flows and practices between students and academic staff should be institutionalised and standardised in order to abide and ensure the principles, of transparency, fairness and equity. This is very much linked with the need to standardise and better document quality assurance processes and procure greater consistency in the use of data and methods.

IV. SUMMARY

The training profile of the integrated law study programme, with regard to content, level of definition, structure and suitability with respect to academic and professional demands, is assessed favourably, as well as the KSU's institutional plans for academic development and updating of the curriculum competences. Subjects and modules are clearly described, consistent with the level of studies, and appropriate for the achievement of learning outcomes.

Students showed in a great number and were impressively motivated. They very favourably valued the practical profile of their academic staff, the specialization opportunities offered by the programme (Business Law and the area of Finance Law and Tax Administration) and the availability and running of placements. They also highlighted the ease of contact and interaction with their professors and administration and expressed general satisfaction with them. Stakeholders too were very committed with the programme and emphasized students' good training and the development of innovative projects.

Main concerns relates to academic staff, materials resources and programme management.

The recruitment policy is not clear and transparent enough. In addition, the lack of full-time academic staff, the extremely short duration of teaching contracts, and the fact that almost all academic staff are highly involved in legal practice outside the university, together with the absence of clear leadership, might jeopardize the staff's commitment and loyalty to the institution as well as the existence of a strong academic community.

It is also clear that the most valued asset of the academic staff is their practical professional experience in various legal areas and the institution should draw maximum benefit from it. However, this also has certain risks. Thus, although most of the academic staff may lack enough teaching experience, training in teaching methodologies are not organized regularly or in a systematic way. Also, the evidence of individual or collective research is very limited and the general impression is that very few of them are regularly engaged in research or are involved in scientific research networks. Very few of them have any international experience. Finally, balancing the academic staff's time between professional practice, teaching activity and research activity appears to be a problem.

Although the teaching facilities seem to be appropriate in terms of number and size, teaching resources, especially e-resources are quite poor. In particular, the library resources, both in traditional and electronic format, are very limited.

It is difficult to establish how the responsibilities for decision-making and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are allocated. It is not clear who and through what procedures the core academic issues are discussed. It is not clear how and to what extent the institution

responds positively to the provisions and guidelines for internal quality assurance and who exactly is responsible for its implementation at each stage.

Main recommendations are to establish formal and transparent procedures and criteria for selection and appointment; and to design and establish a thorough-going strategy continuous teaching training, on legal research's promotion, and on international mobility's promotion for the academic staff; to improve the library's traditional and electronic bibliographic resources and capacity; and to adopt a more systematic approach to quality assurance strategy and to standardise and better document quality assurance processes.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme Law (state code – 601M90003) at Kazimiero Simonaviciaus University is given **positive/negative** 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	2
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)	2
	Total:	15

*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.

Grupēs vadovas:
Team leader:

Dr. Robert Lane

Grupēs nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Tanel Kerikmäe

Prof. Mar Campins Eritja

Dr. Raimundas Kalesnykas

Ramūnas Kazlauskas

Birutė Noreikaitė

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Kazimiero Simonavičiaus universiteto studijų programa *Teisė* (valstybinis kodas – 601M90003) vertinama teigiamai.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	2
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	2
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	15

* 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

Šios vientisosios *Teisės* studijų programos profilis, turint omenyje turinį, apibrėžimo lygį, sandarą ir atitikimą akademiniam bei profesiniam reikalavimams, vertinamas palankiai, kaip ir KSU akademinės plėtros planai bei studijų programos sandaroje numatytų kompetencijų atnaujinimas. Dalykai ir moduliai yra aiškiai apibūdinti, atitinka studijų pakopą ir yra tinkami numatomiems studijų rezultatams pasiekti.

Studentų, gausiai susirinkusių į susitikimus su ekspertų grupe, motyvacija įspūdinga. Jie palankiai vertino tai, kad jų dėstytojai turi praktinės patirties. Palankiai studentai vertino ir šios programos teikiamas specializacijas (Verslo teisė, Finansų teisė ir Mokesčių administravimas),

praktikos galimybes bei organizavimą. Jie dar akcentavo, kad laisvai bendrauja su dėstytojais ir administracija; akcentavo kokybišką studentų mokymą ir inovacinių projektų kūrimą.

Didžiausią susirūpinimą kelia akademinis personalas, materialieji ištekliai ir programos vadyba. Įdarbinimo politika nepakankamai aiški ir skaidri. Be to, trūksta visu etatu dirbančių dėstytojų, darbo sutarčių trukmė labai trumpa, o tai, kad beveik visi dėstytojai labai užsiėmę teisine veikla už universiteto ribų ir kad nėra aiškaus vadovavimo, gali turėti neigiamo poveikio dėstytojų įsipareigojimams ir lojalumui šiam universitetui bei trukdyti susiformuoti stipriai akademiniai bendruomenei.

Akivaizdu ir tai, kad vertingiausias akademinio personalo turtas yra jų praktinė profesinė patirtis įvairiose teisės srityse, taigi universitetas turėtų maksimaliai tuo pasinaudoti. Tačiau tame slypi ir tam tikras pavojus. Daugelis dėstytojų neturi pakankamos dėstyto patirties, tačiau pedagogikos metodikos mokymas nėra reguliariai ar sistemingai organizuojamas. Be to, pateikta labai mažai informacijos apie individualiai ar bendrai atliekamus mokslinius tyrimus, taigi bendras įspūdis yra toks, kad labai mažai dėstytojų nuolat dalyvauja moksliniuose tyrimuose arba mokslinių tyrimų tinkluose. Tik nedaugelis turi tarptautinės patirties šioje srityje. Galiausiai, problema yra ta, kad akademiniam personalui sunku suderinti profesinę, pedagoginę ir mokslinę veiklą.

Nors studijoms skirtų patalpų dydis ir plotas, atrodo, yra pakankamas, metodiniai ištekliai, ypač elektroniniai, gana skurdūs. Ypač nedaug bibliotekos išteklių, tiek tradicinių, tiek elektroninių.

Sunku nustatyti, kaip paskirstoma atsakomybė už sprendimų priėmimą ir programos įgyvendinimo stebėseną. Neaišku, kas ir pagal kokias procedūras svarsto pagrindinius akademinis klausimus, kaip ir kiek universitetas teigiamai reaguoja į vidinio kokybės užtikrinimo nuostatas ir gaires, ir kas konkrečiai yra atsakingas už kiekvieną įgyvendinimo etapą.

Pagrindinės rekomendacijos yra šios: nustatyti oficialias ir skaidrias akademinio personalo atrankos ir paskyrimo procedūras bei kriterijus, parengti išsamią nuolatinio dėstytojų mokymo mokyti strategiją, skatinti teisės srities mokslinius tyrimus ir tarptautinį akademinio personalo judumą, gerinti tradicinius ir elektroninius bibliotekos bibliografinius išteklius bei bibliotekos erdvę, taikyti sistemingesnę požiūrį į kokybės užtikrinimo strategiją ir standartizuoti bei geriau dokumentais įforminti kokybės užtikrinimo procedūras.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Kalbant apie šios programos tikslus ir sandarą, reikėtų padidinti metodologijos dalykų skaičių, nes tai užtikrintų studentams kai kuriuos praktinius įgūdžius ir gebėjimą atlikti tyrimus. Dar patartina įtraukti daugiau dalykų, kurių turinys apimtų tarptautinę arba europinę erdvę, siekiant sustiprinti tarptautinį ir tarpkultūrinį šios programos aspektą.

2. Dėl akademinio personalo reikėtų rimtai apsvarstyti keletą dalykų: a) nustatyti ir suformuluoti aiškia ir skaidrią dėstytojų įdarbinimo, atrankos ir paskyrimo politiką; b) padidinti, kiek įmanoma, visu etatu dirbančių dėstytojų skaičių; c) sustiprinti ir formalizuoti nuolatinį akademinio personalo mokymą; d) parengti radikalią mokslinių tyrimų strategiją, siekiant užtikrinti akademinio personalo mokslo tiriamąją veiklą; e) skirti išteklių dėstytojų tarptautiniam judumui remti.

3. Kalbant apie metodinius išteklius, būtina skubiai didinti bibliotekos išteklius bei pajėgumus, plėsti studijoms reikalingą erdvę ir suteikti studentams didesnes galimybes naudotis tradiciniais bei elektroniniais bibliografiniais ištekliais. Ypač svarbu skubiai įdiegti elektronines duomenų bases. Be to, reikėtų užtikrinti galimybę visose patalpose naudotis internetu ir belaidžiu internetu. Visiems studentams turi būti prieinama *Moodle* aplinka – tam tikslui visame pastate turi būti pagerinta interneto prieiga. Dar reikėtų pritaikyti įrangą neįgaliems studentams.

4. Dėl studijų eigos primygtinai rekomenduojama didinti ir gerinti studentų priėmimo lygį, tam tikslui taikant aiškia priėmimo strategiją ir kampaniją. Reikėtų neapsiriboti studentų mokesčiu už mokslą, bet ieškoti ir kitų finansavimo šaltinių. Reikėtų pamažu kurti tarptautinę strategiją ir parengti tarptautiškumo didinimo planą, siekiant paskatinti studentus dalyvauti tarptautinių mainų programose, didinti tarptautinę ir europinę šios studijų programos erdvę.

5. Dėl programos vadybos rekomenduojama aiškiau nurodyti Teisės fakulteto dekanı, prodekanų ir Teisės katedros vedėjo funkcijas ir jų sąveiką tvirtinant fakulteto sprendimus ir vadovaujant studijų programai. Jei ir nėra akivaizdžių konfliktų, siekiant užtikrinti, kad būtų laikomasi skaidrumo, sąžiningumo ir nešališkumo principų, reikėtų oficialiai įtvirtinti ir standartizuoti studentų ir akademinio personalo komunikavimo tvarką. Tai labai susiję su būtinybe

standartizuoti ir geriau įforminti dokumentais kokybės užtikrinimo procedūras ir nuosekliau naudotis duomenimis ir metodais.

<...>

