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Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS RYTŲ AZIJOS REGIONO STUDIJOS
(valstybinis kodas – 621L20007)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF EAST ASIA REGION STUDIES *(state code – 621L20007)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vytautas Magnus University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

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| Studijų programos pavadinimas | <i>Rytų Azijos regiono studijos</i> |
| Valstybinis kodas | 621L20007 |
| Studijų sritis | Socialiniai mokslai |
| Studijų kryptis | Politikos mokslai |
| Studijų programos rūšis | Universitetinės studijos |
| Studijų pakopa | Antroji |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais) | Nuolatinė (2) |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais | 120 |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Politikos mokslų magistras |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data | 2007 05 09 |

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Title of the study programme | <i>East Asia Region Studies</i> |
| State code | 621L20007 |
| Study area | Social Sciences |
| Study field | Political Science |
| Type of the study programme | University studies |
| Study cycle | Second |
| Study mode (length in years) | Full-time (2) |
| Volume of the study programme in credits | 120 |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Master of Political Science |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 2007 05 09 |

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 1.1. Background of the evaluation process | 4 |
| 1.2. General | 4 |
| 1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information | 4 |
| 1.4. The Review Team | 5 |
| II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS | 5 |
| 2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes | 5 |
| 2.2. Curriculum design | 7 |
| 2.3. Teaching staff | 8 |
| 2.4. Facilities and learning resources | 10 |
| 2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment | 11 |
| 2.6. Programme management | 15 |
| 2.7. Examples of excellence | 16 |
| III. RECOMMENDATIONS | 17 |
| IV. SUMMARY | 17 |
| V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT | 19 |

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI)*; 2) *visit of the review team at the higher education institution*; 3) *production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The programme is **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

| No. | Name of the document |
|-----|--|
| 1 | The number of students admitted to year 1 in autumn 2016 |

1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter VMU) was re-established in 1989 and is a classical university of Liberal Arts based on the common beliefs and values of freedom, openness and dialogue, and orientated towards humanistic culture. The Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy is one of the largest faculties of VMU. It consists of 5 departments and 2 research

centres. The faculty offers 6 bachelor degrees, 10 master degrees and a doctoral programme in the areas of political science, public administration and communication. The Programme of EARS at VMU was implemented by the Department of Regional Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy in 2007 and last evaluated in 2013.

The previous evaluation gave the review team very good background knowledge and a useful track to follow the implementation of the recommendations from 2013.

The evaluation team was very much impressed by the hospitality and the friendly atmosphere at VMU and in particular by the responsiveness and cooperation of the staff.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 15/11/2016.

- 1. Prof. Dr. Jörg Hackmann (team leader)** *Alfred Döblin Professor of East European History at the Institute of History and International Relations, University of Szczecin, Poland.*
- 2. Dr. Martin Hallik**, *Library Director, former Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, former Associate Professor of Contemporary History of Asian Countries at the University of Tartu, Estonia.*
- 3. Prof. Dr. Petra Schleiter**, *Professor of Comparative Politics at the Department of Politics and International Relations, St Hilda's College, University of Oxford, Great Britain.*
- 4. Ms Rūta Avulytė Jelagė**, *Executive Director, National Non-governmental Development Cooperation Organizations' Platform (NGDO PLATFORM), Lithuania.*
- 5. Ms Vitalija Viluckytė**, *student of Vilnius University Centre of Oriental Studies study programme Asian Studies.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined and clear according to the SER, where 4 most important outcomes are defined briefly, but clearly enough to understand the essence of the programme. A successful student will acquire the following knowledge and skills:

1. Ability to critically analyse East Asian and international political and economic processes, to evaluate their changes and development trends;

2. Ability to independently apply research, communication and evaluation methods and tools in different academic and practical activities
3. Fundamental knowledge about history, politics and economy of the countries belonging to East Asian region
4. Understanding of a global political, economic and social importance of East Asian region in the contemporary world.

The role of East-Asian language learning has appeared as a significant issue during last evaluation in 2013. East-Asian language learning was an obligatory part of the programme. One of the strongest objections in the evaluation report of 2013 was the obligation to learn one of these languages as compulsory subject without even a theoretical chance to achieve the effective communication skills at a professional level as was stated in the programme learning outcomes. The programme itself and the learning outcomes have been changed taking into account the recommendation from the evaluation report 2013. Presently, opportunity to learn one oriental language (Chinese, Japanese or Korean) is offered as elective subject to strengthen students' communication skills. The programme outline is accessible publicly through the AIKOS system – open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education. Detailed information is also available on the VMU website and in several publications and there are special advertising events according to the SER. Concerning the presentation on the VMU website, the English version is rather well-developed [http://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/access_requirements/273/]. In the Lithuanian version, for instance, under Study Results heading it is stated that “a graduate of EARS programme has to know “Japanese, Chinese and Korean languages” – it might be understood as acquiring a fluent level in the mentioned languages, while this is hardly achievable in three semesters [<http://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/detailed/162/>]. The Lithuanian version should thus be revised. Another possible issue to consider is that the EARS programme now appears on the VMU website under Faculty of Humanities (due to recent structural changes in the university), while the programme provides a political sciences degree – it might be hard for prospective applicants looking for political sciences MA degree and reviewing the list of programmes at the Faculty of Political Sciences to also notice the EARS programme as one more political sciences options at VMU.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well in line with the type of studies and level of qualifications offered. Several significant changes were introduced into the programme, part of it was influenced from the establishment of a BA level programme in East Asian Languages and Cultures. Still, it has to be mentioned that the changes do not affect requirements for proficiency of Asian languages in admission to the programme. The SER team stressed the

need to give the opportunity in admission process to candidates without previous knowledge in Asian languages to stay open for candidates of interdisciplinary background as well to improve chances to get more candidates.

The Study Programme Committee, consisting of the programme teachers, social partners, students and alumni, is responsible for the assessment and update of the programme learning outcomes, however it was noticed that the input of social partners is rarely taken into the consideration. According to the VMU procedure of teaching quality evaluation, learning outcomes evaluation for the study subjects is being accomplished at the end of each semester as indicated in the SER. The meeting with the stakeholders showed very clearly their positive attitude to the programme. It turned out that stakeholders, who were present, had never proposed any kind of changes to the programme. Stakeholders as representatives of employers considered the knowledge of political situation in Asia and the skills of Asian languages, which are optional in the programme, as very important. Therefore, it can be stated that the programme aims and learning outcomes are based on academic and professional requirements. However, the low prominence of private sector representatives among stakeholders has to be mentioned, as it turned out from SER and meeting with stakeholders.

The name of the programme suits well with defined learning outcomes and qualifications offered according to SER and the meetings with SER team, alumni and students. The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with level of studies and qualification offered according to SER and meeting with students. The academic level and the nature of subjects and the methods of teaching are appropriate for a MA programme.

2.2. Curriculum design

The most significant change in curriculum design was made due to recommendations from 2013 evaluation. East Asian languages were excluded from the obligatory part of the programme and moved under selective courses. The learning outcome for languages was changed, too. Some minor changes have been done also as respond to students' feedback. These observations were made from SER and from meetings with SER team, teaching staff and students. From the meeting with SER staff turned out that actually there has been in previous years already and still exists the opportunity for students with prior knowledge of East Asian languages to learn the language on three advanced levels. It shows that there is an opportunity to choose between different levels which cannot be recognized from the programme materials. This very important difference came out in the meeting with SER group.

The curriculum design meets all legal requirements on state and university level. The existence of a VMU Code of Academic Ethics is especially remarkable. It shows the will of

VMU to make the study process honest and transparent in all programmes. Study subjects are spread evenly and their topics do not repeat each other as it was very convincingly displayed in SER and came out from meetings with students. The logic of offering more general courses in the first and second semester and more focused courses on specific East Asian country studies is fully acceptable. It is important to mention the changes made in 2013, after the launch of undergraduate programme in East Asian studies. Some introductory courses were excluded from the EARS programme and the focus on political aspects of East Asian countries was strengthened. After these changes the content of the subjects and modules are appropriate for the level of the studies.

The content and methods of subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Expected results are to be achieved by applying various study forms, teaching and learning methods, such as: lectures, seminars, problem-based learning, task-based learning, case studies, work in groups, discussion, consultation, reflective learning, practical assignments and individual study. These methods were indicated in SER and corroborate with the results of interviews with students. Still it seems to the review team that the amount of contact hours is more than it should be. Time for individual work and group work should be expanded at the expense of contact hours.

The scope of the programme can be considered good enough to ensure learning outcomes. The combination of broad background knowledge and specific understanding of some East Asian region and problems are well balanced and give theoretical guarantee to fulfil the goals set in the programme learning outcomes. SER and feedback from students provided good evidence to prove the statement.

Taking into account the publications of teaching staff and interviews with students the review team was convinced of the programme's up to date content on good international level. However, the involvement of social partners in curriculum design and adaptability of acquired skills to the market after graduation would be a welcoming development. Students also expressed the interest to have more practitioners of the regions to provide relevant information/ to lecture.

2.3. Teaching staff

The programme teachers' qualification is sufficient to achieve the programme aims and learning outcomes. The percentage of teachers with a scholarly degree is 77 % according to the SER (page 10, table 2) , but should be 80 % or more. The review team considered the issue, taking account the strong practical language learning component and did not see as an obstacle in fulfilment the programme goals. All other criteria are in compliance with legal requirements.

Full-time teaching staff with PhD is responsible for more than half of the general subjects, study field subjects and programme special part subjects. Teaching staff is very well organized and cross-use of teaching staff between different programmes is well advanced in VMU according to review team observations during the site-visit. Still the lack of full-professors on East-Asian field as well as regional practitioners could be mentioned. The total number (25) of teachers involved is adequate to ensure intended learning outcomes. Average age of teaching staff is very well balanced. Majority of the staff is between 31 – 40 years. Therefore, the staff can be considered relatively young and sustainable. At the same time more than 70% of the teachers have more than 5 years of teaching experience.

A number of native speakers are involved in East Asian languages teaching process. Still, it would be useful to have permanent native language speakers as teachers of all three major East-Asian languages. In general, the teaching staff turnover is adequate for provision of the programme. The international composition of the teaching staff must be noted very positively. During the assessment period, there was a significant number (20 %) of non-Lithuanian teachers working in the programme.

Majority of the teaching staff is involved in research, which has clear and sound connections with subjects of the EARS programme. Since 2011 more than a dozen of national, regional, EU funded projects were implemented or coordinated by the programme teachers. Topics of programme teachers' research are in coherence with the programme topics.

A number of teachers have international teaching experience and are actively engaged in ERASMUS+ teaching exchange and other programmes according to SER. Teaching staff is eager to participate in pedagogical training to improve their teaching skills. Some of them have improved their teaching skills internationally, especially language teachers. Teaching staff members did not have teaching portfolios. The pedagogical training programme is still missing in VMU. This understanding came out from the meeting with teaching staff, with SER team and with administrators of the faculty. Teaching skills should be valued much higher than until present day.

The career development system among the teaching staff so far does not make use of supportive mechanisms to prioritize teaching as important part in scholar's academic career. Especially in the situation where average time devoted to the teaching (including 12 – 18 contact hours per week) was 70 % out of the whole working time and budget as it turned out from the interviews with teaching staff. Research is crucial in VMU internal evaluation process in assessing academic staff. But it seems that there are too few resources for research and too little research time rather than incentives are holding researchers back. The university recognizes the problem to a degree and has recently created research clusters, which receive a modest amount

of funding. This is a step in the right direction, but efforts to support research should be strengthened. To deliver research-driven teaching, staff could be enabled to attend the most important international conferences in their field regularly. The university could consider introducing a personal research allowance for each researcher. Similarly, only a minority of researchers hold personal research grants, and as a leading University in Lithuania, VMU could aspire to greater success in this area. The university could consider introducing a fund for pump-priming research funding (i.e., seed funding), which should be made available to VMU researchers on a competitive basis, possibly via the research clusters or some other mechanism. Small pump-priming grants could be used to fund proof-of-concept and pilot research projects that will serve to launch much larger bids for national or international research grants. If it is well managed, pump-priming funding will repay the initial investment in terms of research overheads many times over.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises' size, modernity and quality are excellent, concerning lecture halls (75 in total), Wi-Fi coverage was adequate, computer equipment is available for teachers in complex with multimedia equipment for presentations. The building and furniture is new and functional. There are large auditoriums (150 seats), sufficient number of rooms for small groups (15 – 20 seats) and a branch library. Computer classes are available for the students. Review team experienced all this on site.

The whole building was so new, that at the moment of evaluation was missing a functional language laboratory, but as the review team understood, this equipment was planned to be introduced soon. The information was gathered from meetings with language teachers and administration.

Library statistics (number of visitors per year) offered in SER is most probably not correct due to counter system which is able to count all physical entries, but not users. Therefore, can one user create a number of entries during one visit. Main library, with Asian literature, has a partly separated area for literature dedicated to Asian topics including the biggest manga collection in the Baltic States. The library itself lacks very clearly space for group work rooms, especially taking account the amount of seminars described in the programme. Loud zones were missing at all. These zones can be considered even obligatory in a modern university library.

Students did not reveal any concerns about teaching materials. A lot of materials were delivered by the distance learning system Moodle. At the same time the disproportion of literature concerning Japan on one side and China and Korea on the other was evident. It is very good to have enough literature on Japan, but titles about Korea and China could be more

numerous according to students and Korean language teacher opinions, regardless the SER statement on the biggest collection of literature on Korean studies in the Baltic States. All major databases, useful for this programme, were available in the library and over proxy server for university members.

According to SER all university buildings incl. dormitories are equipped with ramps for wheelchair, widened doors etc. to make space suitable and convenient for disabled students.

Students' practice was arranged out of the university premises by practice places providers. Number of practice places was enough, taking account the small number of students.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The East Asia Region Studies MA programme has been facing a challenge of declining student numbers due to changing demographic situation in the country, combined with increased competition for state funding both country-wide for social sciences and seemingly among MA programmes in the faculty. The last intake of 8 students was in 2015, including one foreign student from Ukraine. There was a two-year gap in admissions in 2013-2014. In 2016 the programme was not started as well (the 5 admitted students were offered a transfer to other MA study programmes). Still the considerations of VMU administration in assigning quotas of state-funded study places in admission process remain unclear. The only consideration, as turned out from the interview with the faculty administration, was the number of candidates to a programme as an indicator to assign state-funded places to a program.

In autumn 2016 the programme was transferred from the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy to the Faculty of Humanities. It is yet unclear what effect on allocation of state-funded student places to the programme this will have. As reasons for transfer were indicated structural changes in the university after a new rector was elected, and the integration of the Asian Studies Centre into the Faculty of Humanities. Some of the teaching staff welcomed the transfer as now East Asia related programmes will be "under one roof". The Asian Studies Centre also runs a BA level programme in East Asian Languages and Cultures. It is a rather new programme with 40-50 students, and its graduates are expected to be one of the sources of candidates for MA programme. Currently the MA programme receives interest from students with different background; for instance, some of the current students have received bachelor degrees in such fields as Political Science (VMU and Kiev), History (VMU), English Philology (Klaipeda university), Theology); some of them have learnt Asian languages before. Some students, VMU graduates, have mentioned that they were choosing between the Asian region MA studies at VMU and Vilnius University, one of the major reasons of remaining in Kaunas for MA appeared to be the good teacher-student communication atmosphere at VMU. Probably one

of the main competitor-programmes, Vilnius University Asian Studies MA programme is rather culture-oriented, it does not include Asian language courses, and is run in Lithuanian; while the VMU EARS MA provides a political sciences degree and offers a selection of East Asian languages and is taught in English.

Admission requirements and procedure are in general well-founded. However, there are three considerations to note:

- (1) There is a mismatch of admission score composition between SER and VMU online (English) descriptions [http://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/access_requirements/273/]. According to the online description it is as follows: “Motivation letter *0.5 + Arithmetic average of the bachelor degree diploma supplement in all subjects *0.3 + Evaluation of bachelor thesis or final examination *0.2“, while SER weight coefficients are, respectively, 0.3, 0.4 and 0.3. In the online description the weight of the motivation letter is higher – while both admission score compositions still appear reasonable, it should be checked if the most recent information is provided online.
- (2) Since the motivation letter is a significant part of admission score, it is suggested to have guidelines on how the motivation letter is assessed by the admissions committee. Also, it should be considered to provide information for the prospective applicants about what aspects they should cover in the motivation letter. Programme representatives informed that currently motivation letters are assessed by looking for proof of a regional motivation.
- (3) EARS programme took the 2013 evaluation suggestions into account and moved the East Asian languages from obligatory to elective courses. This solution is formally good, but it leaves an opportunity to theoretically go through the programme without language learning at all. At the same time, the East Asian languages are the very special feature of the programme; furthermore, the social partners generally have a strong expectation that graduates of the programme would have Asian language skills. It is advised that the candidates with knowledge of East Asian languages would be given priority in admission process.

Student mobility options are available and have been used fairly well. About 40 % of the EARS students have spent one semester or two at foreign universities mainly in East Asia. Student mobility is mainly arranged under agreements between VMU and partner universities (VMU has 156 bilateral exchange agreements with higher education institutions in 40 countries), foreign scholarships or as ERASMUS student exchange. Students from East Asia are generally not interested in this programme, but ERASMUS students from Europe are very eager to attend the programme’s lectures. Therefore, the international integration is well advanced in the

programme. Troublesome for the EARS students is the transfer of credits earned at foreign universities. If an EARS student goes to study abroad for a semester, then EARS programme managers and professors in general support the transfer of study credits. However, practice so far was that students had to take an academic leave for a one year exchange. This creates a higher risk of student dropouts. VMU has a special mobility fund for bilateral exchange agreements (however, the scholarship amount is limited, as a student who considered using it to go to Japan, resigned as living costs in Japan are high and would have required additional own finances). The administration informed that they are in negotiations with 7 universities in China for a one year language/culture programme or double degree (whereas there are Chinese students interested in Japanese studies, as it is harder for them to go to Japan itself due to political situation). It is strongly advised to provide better opportunities for study credits transfer for exchange studies.

The organisation of the study process is reasonable. Concerning study methods, one of the foreign full-time lecturers is developing active learning skills and ability to engage the audience at seminar presentations. Generally, presentation skills are practiced, but group work was present only in language lectures. Teachers feedback practices regarding written assignments was mixed, in some cases the emphasis was on topic choice consultations before the assignment and grade information sent by e-mail along with comments; in some other cases feedback is provided only in informal consultations after the class. As the programme is taught in English, degree seeking foreign students should be an integral part of the programme students. Currently there is one foreign student among 8 students on programme.

One of regrettable aspects in the study process is the lack of consultations between teachers to be acquainted with each other's courses content to create a coherent programme where courses give additional value to each other. Similarly, it should be ensured that transferable skills (such as public speaking, presentation, teamwork, project management, leadership skills, etc.) are integrated into the programme in a comprehensive manner. Teachers are used to inform the programme manager of course content. The programme manager has not suggested any changes until the evaluation team visit. SER team and teachers did not see it as a problem.

Teachers put stress on analytical skills, but there is an unmet but slightly obscure request for more practice oriented work on the part of students. We recommend that the department draft more specific student questionnaires and/or form student focus groups to explore what types of assignments/assessments the students have in mind. These options should then be discussed with the teaching staff to determine how more practice oriented assignments/assessments can be introduced into the teaching. Career counselling could help to integrate students' choices, programme content and employers' wishes, but this kind of counselling is practically missing in

VMU. In general VMU's institutional academic and social support is on adequate level. Also, students valued highly an opportunity to get internship during their studies or later enabled by VMU. It should be considered to integrate internship into the program, as students express such a preference, and graduates felt a lack of work experience and connection to the job market after the graduation (Graduate Opinion Survey 2016).

Students' involvement in research is moderate. "Research project" course inclusion into the programme as obligatory every semester, as well as students' participation in East Asian Studies annual conferences (most recently students made poster presentations) can be considered as a good approach to students' introduction into the world of research. Also, one of the current MA students is preparing his research for publishing in January as he aims to continue with PhD studies. Still, it would be desirable to involve MA students to research and project groups led by their teachers (for instance, into the new VMU research clusters initiative). Concerning related extracurricular activities, there are students' clubs for each of East Asian country covered (Japan, Korea, China) where students organize events and share knowledge about the region. Recently a MA student has won a one week trip to Japan as a prize for participating in student competition.

Thesis process generally appears reasonable; students are better prepared for writing thesis through the above mentioned "Research project" course every semester. However, it was mentioned that it is harder to find a regional specialist than political processes specialist (e.g. elections) for thesis supervisor or consultant. In general, Japan dominates among the three regions, while Korea and China still seem underrepresented (though currently there is a full-time lecturer from Korea teaching non-language courses).

The assessment system of students' performance appears reasonable. Students confirmed that information about the course content and exams/assignments weight and deadlines is provided in the beginning of the course. Cumulative score system is used, where final examination is 50 % of the grade and intermediate assessments are integrated. Exams must be performed in written form. The appeal system, on the exam results, is well organised and the information is publicly available. However, it would be advisable to better involve social partners/practitioners in evaluation or/and presentation of material.

According to Graduate Opinion Survey 2016 (SER, Annex 6) all graduates were employed, a third in a related field, and 3 were pursuing PhD studies in East Asia (Japan, South Korea and China). During the visit, besides the alumni interview, we have met programme graduates working at the university as staff and teachers. Some had opted to stay in VMU for their PhD, which shows that the programme is attracting motivated students and helping to develop new Asian studies field in the country.

2.6. Programme management

Programme management and decision-taking procedures are clearly described in the SER and give good evidence of well-organised decision-making and monitoring process.

Programme Study Committee is responsible for programme evaluation and its further development. The roles are clearly divided among 7 members of the committee according to SER. Information about the implementation of the programme is collected by programme study committee regularly. The SER team mentioned students' feedback throughout the academic year. Taking into account that there have been only 8 students during last 4 years, the informal gathering of feedback is understandable. The Centre of Quality and Innovations at VMU was established in 2011 with a number of tasks described in SER, but the active role of the Centre on this programme did not reveal from the meetings with SER team, faculty administration nor teachers. Still there exists a VMU Internal Study Quality Assurance system, which comprises EARS as well. The system uses and combines quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches, and standardized instruments supplemented by teachers, students and social partners.

An excellent example from the Programme Study Committee activity is taking account students' confidential feedback to drop a course, what seemed useless and boring for students. After consideration the subject was replaced in the programme. Students were very satisfied, seeing the impact of their feedback.

Internal quality assurance measures are well organised. Internal self-evaluation of the Programme is performed every year at the end of the academic year. Programme teachers are regularly consulted by the Study Programme Committee on the programme improvement.

The review team considered the instability in admission process as most remarkable problem for programme management. There has been only one admission during last 4 years.

Stakeholders consider as important political background knowledge as well language skills of students. Stakeholders, with whom the review team met, have never proposed any kind of changes or additions to the programme, however the input of social partners involved in programme design should have an equal say in shaping the programme. But they had the opportunity to share their opinion with programme managers. Stakeholders were satisfied with the programme and programme management.

Alumni have found jobs, 33 % out of them have work that is related to their studies. Alumni receive information about cultural events of Asian origin in Lithuania from VMU, but no information about job offerings.

The outcomes of previous evaluations are taken into account to improve the programme. This was written in the SER and was obvious during meetings with staff. Most remarkable has

been the change in learning outcomes and courses concerning East-Asian languages, which were restructured as elective courses. The opportunity to learn East-Asian languages stayed, but there is no more learning outcome concerning the level of East-Asian languages for all students. This change turned learning outcomes much more realistic, but at the same time enables students to graduate without any obligation to learn East-Asian languages.

2.7. Examples of excellence

The new faculty premises are exceptional. The building is modern and equipped with the latest IT and lecturing facilities. It offers a good number of work spaces for students and academics, seminar rooms and lecture theatres.

Existence of VMU Code of Academic Ethics is especially remarkable. Review team considered excellent the friendly atmosphere between teachers and students. Students have experienced the impact of their feedback.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Programme aims:** It would be useful to give preference to candidates with prior knowledge in East-Asian languages in the admission requirements.
2. **Curriculum:** Student with prior knowledge of East Asian languages should have the opportunity to learn the language on three advanced levels. This should come out from the programme documents. Consultations between teachers are useful to get acquainted with each other's course content to create a coherent programme where courses give additional value to each other. Social partners should be more involved, not only in sharing relevant knowledge and attending meetings/conferences, but also in shaping the programme design and employed as fundraising opportunities for students' studies/internships in relevant countries. A similar questionnaire to measure the feedback of social partners would be a great value added to the programme and Department.
3. **Teaching staff:** The University could consider introducing a personal research allowance for each researcher. The university could consider introducing a fund for pump-priming research funding (i.e., seed funding), which should be made available to VMU researchers on a competitive basis, possibly via the research clusters or some other mechanism. The pedagogical training programme would be very useful.
4. **Facilities and learning resources:** Titles about Korea and China could be more numerous in the library. Loud zones should be introduced in the library.
5. **Study process:** It is advised to provide better opportunities for study credits transfer for exchange studies.
6. **Programme management:** Guarantee the stability in providing state-funded study-places to the programme to prevent gaps in admission. Alumni could be better involved through various networks, including the mentorship programme for the current students.

IV. SUMMARY

Several significant changes were introduced into the programme, part of it was influenced from the establishment of BA level programme in East Asian Languages and Cultures. SER team stressed the need to give the opportunity in admission process to candidates without previous knowledge in Asian languages to stay open for candidates of interdisciplinary background as well to improve chances to get more candidates. Study subjects are spread evenly

and their topics do not repeat each other as it was very convincingly displayed in SER and came out from meetings with students.

Teaching staff is very well organized and cross-use of teaching staff between different programmes is well advanced in VMU according to evaluation team observations during site-visit. Still the lack of full-professors on East-Asian field and meetings/presentations from regional practitioners could be mentioned.

A number of native speakers are involved in East Asian languages teaching process. Still, it would be useful to have permanent native language speakers as teachers of all three major East-Asian languages. In general, the teaching staff turnover is adequate for provision of the programme. It must be noted very positively the international aspect among teaching staff. During the assessment period, there was a significant number (20 %) of non-Lithuanian teachers working in the programme.

Premises size, modernity and quality are excellent, concerning lecture halls (75 in total), Wi-Fi coverage was adequate, computer equipment is available for teachers in complex with multimedia equipment for presentations. The library itself lacks very clearly space for group work rooms, especially taking into account the amount of seminars described in the programme. Loud zones were missing at all. Titles about Korea and China could be more numerous according to students and Korean language teacher opinions.

Since the start of the programme, the number of state-funded study places has fluctuated (SER Table 5). There has been a two-year gap in admission. Admission was not conducted in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.

EARS programme considered the 2013 evaluation suggestions and moved East-Asian Languages from the obligatory part to the elective subjects' sector of the programme. This solution is formally good, but theoretically opens a possibility to go through the programme without language learning at all. International integration is well advanced in the programme. Teachers' feedback to the students is personal.

Programme management and decision-taking procedures are clearly described in SER and give good evidence of well-organised decision-making and monitoring process. However, more active involvement of social partners in curriculum design would improve up-to-date competence development of the students. A mentorship programme by alumni would be a great asset in securing the practical competences for the students.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *East Asia Region Studies* (state code – 621L20007) at Vytautas Magnus University is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation of an area in points* |
|-----|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Programme aims and learning outcomes | 3 |
| 2. | Curriculum design | 3 |
| 3. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 4. | Facilities and learning resources | 3 |
| 5. | Study process and students' performance assessment | 3 |
| 6. | Programme management | 3 |
| | Total: | 18 |

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

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

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

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

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grupės vadovas: Team leader: | Prof. Dr. Jörg Hackmann |
| Grupės nariai: Team members: | Dr. Martin Hallik |
| | Prof. Dr. Petra Schleiter |
| | Ms Rūta Avulytė Jelagė |
| | Ms Vitalija Viluckytė |

**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS RYTŲ AZIJOS REGIONO STUDIJOS (VALSTYBINIS KODAS –
621L20007) 2017-01-10 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-8 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Rytų Azijos regiono studijos* (valstybinis kodas – 621L20007) vertinama **teigiamai**.

| Eil. Nr. | Vertinimo sritis | Srities įvertinimas, balais* |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai | 3 |
| 2. | Programos sandara | 3 |
| 3. | Personalas | 3 |
| 4. | Materialieji ištekliai | 3 |
| 5. | Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas | 3 |
| 6. | Programos vadyba | 3 |
| | Iš viso: | 18 |

* 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

Studijų programoje padaryti keli reikšmingi pokyčiai; dalis jų buvo nulemti pradėtos vykdyti Rytų Azijos kalbų ir kultūrų bakalauro studijų programos. Savianalizės suvestinės rengėjai pabrėžė būtinybę priėmimo procese sudaryti galimybes stojantiems be Azijos kalbų žinių, kad programa liktų atvira ir baigusiems kitų disciplinų studijas ir taip padaugėtų stojančiųjų. Studijų dalykai tolygiai paskirstyti, jų temos nesikartoja, ir tai yra labai įtikinamai pademonstruota savianalizės suvestinėje, be to, tą patvirtino studentai vizito į instituciją metu.

Personalas labai organizuotas, o ekspertų grupė vizito metu pastebėjo, kad VDU puikiai išvystyta sistema, kai tie patys dėstytojai dėsto įvairias studijų programas. Tačiau galima paminėti Rytų Azijos srities profesoriaus vardą turinčių dėstytojų stygių ir susitikimų / pristatymų, kuriuose dalyvautų praktikai iš regionų, trūkumą.

Keletas gimtakalbių padeda mokytis Rytų Azijos kalbų. Tačiau praverstų įdarbinti nuolatinius visų trijų pagrindinių Rytų Azijos kalbų gimtakalbius dėstytojus. Apskritai personalo kaita yra tinkama programai įgyvendinti. Pagirtinas personalo tarptautiškumo aspektas. Ekspertų grupei vertinant studijų programą, joje dirbo nemaža dalis (20 %) ne lietuvių dėstytojų.

Patalpų dydis, šiuolaikiškumas ir kokybė yra puikūs (iš viso yra 75 auditorijos), bevielio interneto ryšys tinkamos kokybės, kompiuterių įranga kartu su multimedijos įranga pristatymams prieinama dėstytojams. Pačioje bibliotekoje akivaizdžiai trūksta vietos dirbti grupėmis, ypač atsižvelgiant į programoje aprašytų seminarų skaičių. Ne tylos zonų visiškai nėra. Remiantis studentų ir korėjiečių kalbos dėstytojų nuomonėmis, galėtų būti daugiau literatūros apie Korėją ir Kiniją.

Nuo studijų programos vykdymo pradžios valstybės finansuojamų vietų skaičius kito (Savianalizės suvestinės 5 lentelė). Taip pat dvejus metus nebuvo skelbiamas priėmimas į šią programą. Tai buvo 2013/2014 m. ir 2014/2015 m.

Rytų Azijos regiono studijų programos vykdytojai atsižvelgė į 2013 m. atlikto vertinimo pastabas ir perkėlė Rytų Azijos kalbų dalykus iš privalomųjų dalykų bloko į pasirenkamųjų dalykų bloką. Šis sprendimas formaliai geras, tačiau teoriškai atsiveria galimybė baigti programą visiškai nesimokius kalbų. Programoje padaryta nemenka pažanga, kalbant apie tarptautinės integracijos aspektą. Dėstytojai asmeniškai pateikia grįžtamąjį ryšį studentams.

Programos vadyba ir sprendimų priėmimo procedūros aiškiai aprašytos savianalizės suvestinėje ir puikiai įrodo, kad sprendimų priėmimo ir stebėsenos procesai yra gerai organizuoti. Tačiau aktyviau įtraukus socialinius partnerius į programos rengimą, būtų dar geriau ugdomi šiuolaikiški studentų gebėjimai. Absolventų mentorystės programa taptų puikia priemone, užtikrinant praktinius studentų gebėjimus.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. **Programos tikslai.** Rekomenduojame priėmimo reikalavimuose nustatyti pirmenybę stojantiems, turintiems Rytų Azijos kalbų žinių.
2. **Programos sandara.** Studentai, turintys Rytų Azijos kalbų žinių, turėtų turėti galimybę mokytis kalbos trimis aukštesniais lygmenimis. Tai turėtų būti nustatyta programos dokumentuose. Dėstytojų pasitarimai naudingi siekiant susipažinti su kolegų dėstomų dalykų turiniu ir parengti nuoseklią programą, kad dalykai vienas kitą papildytų. Reikėtų labiau įtraukti socialinius partnerius, ne vien tik dalytis atitinkamomis žiniomis ir dalyvauti susitikimuose ar konferencijose, bet ir kuriant programos struktūrą, taip pat

pasitelkti socialinius partnerius pritraukiant lėšas studentų studijoms ar stažuotėms atitinkamose šalyse. Panašus klausimynas, siekiant grįžtamojo ryšio iš socialinių partnerių, būtų naudingas programai ir katedrai.

3. **Personalas.** Universitetas galėtų apvarstyti, ar kiekvienam tyrėjui skirti asmeninę mokslinių tyrimų stipendiją. Universitetas galėtų įsteigti mokslinius tyrimus skatinančio finansavimo (t. y. pradinio finansavimo) fondą, kurio lėšos galėtų būti skiriamos VDU tyrėjams konkurso būdu, galbūt pasitelkiant mokslinių tyrimų klasterius ar kitus mechanizmus. Pedagoginio rengimo programa labai praverstų.
4. **Materialieji ištekliai.** Bibliotekoje galėtų būti daugiau išteklių apie Korėją ir Kiniją. Joje taip pat reikėtų numatyti ne tylos zonas.
5. **Studijų eiga.** Rekomenduojame sudaryti geresnes galimybes perkelti mainų programose dalyvaujančių studentų studijų kreditus.
6. **Programos vadyba.** Reikėtų užtikrinti stabilų valstybės finansuojamų vietų šioje studijų programoje skaičių, kad būtų išvengta skelbiamo priėmimo pertrūkių. Būtų galima geriau įtraukti absolventus per įvairius tinklus, įskaitant dabartinių studentų mentorystės programą.

<...>

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

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė,
parašas)