



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS ŠIUOLAIKINĖ EUROPOS POLITIKA
(valstybinis kodas – 621L20005)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN POLITICS (*state code –*
621L20005)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vytautas Magnus University

Experts' team:

1. **Prof. Dr. Jörg Hackmann (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Dr. Martin Hallik,** *academic,*
3. **Prof. Dr. Petra Schleiter,** *academic,*
4. **Ms Rūta Avulytė Jelagė,** *representative of social partners'*
5. **Ms Vitalija Viluckytė,** *students' representative.*

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

Vilnius
2016

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Šiuolaikinė Europos politika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621L20005
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Politikos mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1.5)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Politikos mokslų magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2009 08 17, 1-73

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Contemporary European Politics</i>
State code	621L20005
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 (1.5)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Political Science
Date of registration of the study programme	2009 08 17, 1-73

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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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
2	Examples of previous students questionnaires and survey results
3	CV of Dr. A. Švarplys (teacher of "European integration theories")

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

The MA programme in Contemporary European Politics is taught by the Department of Political Science of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy at Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter VMU or the University). 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 in VMU. It consists of 5 departments and 2 research centres. It offers 6 bachelor degrees, 10 master degrees and a doctoral programme in the areas of political science, public administration and communication. The Contemporary European Politics MA is one of its larger MA programmes.

The Contemporary European Politics MA was launched in 2009 as the successor to an MA in Comparative Politics, which VMU taught from 1996 - 2007. It was designed to cater to increasing student interest in European politics. Currently, the MA in Contemporary European Politics is taught as a three-semester-program. It has been offered every year since 2009.

The review 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 16-17/11/2016.

- 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 and 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

Overall, the aims and learning outcomes of the MA programme in Contemporary European Politics are clearly defined, specifically broken down and appropriate for a Masters Level programme. This was evident from the materials seen by the review team during its visit, student accounts and the self-evaluation report. The course outline is publicly accessible through the system AIKOS – open information, consulting and guidance system - established by the Ministry of Education, on the VMU website, in several publications and at special VMU advertising events.

The programme explicitly aims to work toward public needs and labour market requirements. Its predominant goal is to train students to enter national and European public sector employment, research centres, the media and international institutions. To these goals, the programme description might add the placement of students in private sector employment, which is also a significant destination for graduates. In addition the programme also has the goal of training students for the doctoral programme. The placement record of the programme reflects these aims.

The programme title and course specification are consistent with each other and reflect the programme's stated ambitions. The programme's main academic aims are to convey a good understanding of the national politics of European countries and European Union politics, training critical thinking and analysis skills, and the ability of students to express themselves, and developing the research skills of students. The overall programme and individual courses offered within it promote precisely these skills, as evidenced by the course outlines, course work and theses that the review team inspected. The programme's ultimate goal is to train qualified political science professionals who possess knowledge and professional skills to be competitive in the Lithuanian labour market, to work in national and European public sector institutions, private analytical research centres, media institutions, and international organizations. Placement success among the alumni of the programme is high.

2.2. Curriculum design

The self-evaluation report shows that the curriculum and its delivery meet the requisite legal requirements. The existence of a VMU Code of Academic Ethics is especially remarkable, as it shows the intention of VMU to make the study process honest and transparent in all programmes. The course has a relatively large mandatory component (7 courses), and a smaller optional component (4 courses, out of a choice of 14 options papers). Students also complete a

thesis. With respect to the themes of individual courses, there is a clear logical progression from foundational courses to optional choices. The heavy emphasis on core papers seems eminently sensible given the small student numbers. The long list of options papers, however, is not easy to sustain given the requirement that optional courses can only run if half of the students from the group elect to take them. Many students therefore find that their preferred options, though theoretically available, are not in practice being offered. The self-evaluation report indicates that the department plans to address this problem by offering joint options papers with two of three other related graduate programmes. This is a creative and sustainable way forward.

Courses vary in the extent to which they reflect the latest developments in the discipline. Some reading lists are more up to date than others. Alumni of the programme singled out courses such as „EU Law“ and „Political Communication“ as excellent and up to date, while other modules were more repetitive of material that they had studied at undergraduate level. The department ought to put in place a mechanism to ensure that repetition is minimised and all reading lists are updated regularly to reflect developments in the relevant subject area.

The thesis and the accompanying “Master’s thesis research design and methods” course are central aspects of the programme. The limited space given to research methods training is adequate for an MA that predominantly aims to train policy professionals. However, making available additional methods training modules, in particular quantitative methods, identification strategies and experimental research designs, ideally before the summer, would better prepare the students for the demands of constructing an independent research project. Additional methods training will be particularly valuable for students who aim to progress to doctoral studies. The involvement of social partners in a mentorship programme and curriculum design would place even more emphasis on the employability skills of students and ease their transition into the labour market after graduation.

2.3. Teaching staff

The staffing of the programme as detailed in the self-evaluation report meets the legal requirements and the staff are fully qualified to deliver the courses that they teach. The programme is taught by a good-sized team of 15 academics with an excellent balance of senior and junior members of staff. A majority of 12 members of staff hold full time positions. Most of the staff has exchange teaching and other exchange experience. Usually research interests match the teaching responsibilities. This enables the department to deliver research driven teaching and the students are near unanimous in their assessment that lecturers have a profound knowledge of the material that they teach (Student Opinion Survey Results 2015).

Over the last three years, the department has experienced significant staff turnover. It recruited 7 new members, i.e., nearly half of its staff since 2013. This is a major achievement. However, the self-evaluation report appears to suggest that searches are confined mainly to Lithuania. Announcements are placed on the VMU website and with the Lithuanian Science Council. Over recent years, the department has also recruited some of its own graduates. These trends contrast with the students' request for more foreign lecturers who teach in English. Internationalizing the hiring policy will also have other benefits for the programme. Most notably, it will ensure a regular influx of new ideas and approaches that will help the programme to remain intellectually vibrant, dynamic and competitive. An obvious way forward would be to ensure that positions are always internationally advertised through the relevant professional organisations in addition to national advertisements. The department has excellent international contacts as evidenced by the exchange of staff and students with partner universities, these contacts can be used to conduct active international searches.

The academics engaged with the programme are generally research active. The department has launched its own journal – the “Political Science Almanac”, and collectively, the group of researchers engaged with the MA holds an impressive number of research grants, including some large European grants. Several members of staff also regularly give time to public engagement (via TV and radio broadcasts). These are very welcome developments.

Most researchers have a good level of productivity, some are outstandingly productive, which is an admirable achievement given the heavy teaching loads. At the same time, however, the vast majority of the research outputs produced by the team are not placed in internationally recognized journals. This was also the case at the time of the previous assessment in 2013, which suggests that the policies to address this issue are not effective. Supporting researchers to produce high quality research that can be placed in internationally recognized journals is essential to their professional progression and to the reputation of the programme and it should be an important goal for the department. The department already incentivizes publication in ISI listed journals. This suggests that 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 should be enabled to attend the most important international conferences in their field regularly (i.e., annually). At present major international conferences such as ISA, IPSA, EPSA and ECPR are only attended by a minority of academics in the department and 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 should 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 department is located in a brand new, purpose-built building but activities also take place in several other buildings. According to the self-evaluation report there are 75 classrooms, several large lecture halls with the latest projection equipment, and large seminar rooms. Wi-Fi is available in the main public areas. The buildings also offer spaces for group work. There are IT laboratory spaces, silent and non-silent work areas, a recreational space for table tennis and some vending machines.

In general, library facilities are sufficient for the successful implementation of the study programme. The review team had the impression that space for group work could be enlarged and loud zones set up. The library offers a good range of electronic resources including e-journals and e-books. However, students still complain of a shortage of hardcopies of the key textbooks. This was a concern that the external evaluation team had previously highlighted in 2013. Teaching faculty address this problem by providing folders with the teaching materials and also by using textbooks which are available electronically. The students report that some reading lists are more up to date than others. As noted above, recent graduates noted that courses such as „EU Law“ and „Political Communication“ stood out as excellent and up to date, while other were more repetitive of material that they had studied at undergraduate level. The department should put in place a mechanism to ensure that repetition is minimised and all reading lists are updated regularly to reflect developments in the relevant subject area.

The department makes available key software packages such as SPSS and NVIVO. It might also consider supporting STATA or R, which have overtaken SPSS as the dominant packages for statistical data analysis.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The MA in Contemporary European Politics is a small programme. Declining student numbers are a challenge across the MA programmes, but this programme has withstood this

challenge well as a result of two strategies: the consolidation of MA programmes (i.e., no admission to some programmes in certain years) and the shortening of the course to 1.5 years. These measures have been effective in lifting student numbers to 16 in 2014 and 12 in 2016.

The admissions requirements are reasonable. The vast majority (90 per cent) of the students on the programme have graduated from VMU. The remaining 10 per cent are recruited from other Lithuanian universities. The quality of the students admitted to the programme seems high on average (8.3 competition points), though individual students are significantly weaker (there is one case of a student admitted with just 5.6 competition points). Funding is a major concern for students, and for the department it represents a central constraint in efforts to expand the programme. Two thirds of the students on this programme report that they work at the same time as studying for a full time degree. The Faculty is conscious of that challenge and has been fundraising. A Political Science Alumni scholarship first was introduced in 2014. This is the right path to follow and the Faculty should further expand its efforts to fundraise for graduate studentships from its alumni network, social partners, and other donors.

The MA programme is enriched by incoming exchange students from other universities who join those classes that are taught in English. One course aims to prepare students for public policy discussions, analysis and negotiations in national and European public sector employment, research centres, the media and international institutions. The presence of the international students helps to broaden the range of perspectives represented in the classroom and makes the learning experience more effective.

Student-teacher ratios are excellent. The students benefit from exchange visits by academics from other universities and students generally seem happy with their learning experience. One topic, however, generated recurrent comments in student feedback. There is a persistent demand by students for more practice oriented experience. Upon closer inspection, however, students were satisfied with the transferrable skills that they gained on the course – such as public speaking and presentation skills, analytical skills. Students welcome the use of novel and practice-oriented assignments by many academics but took a less favourable view of conventional tests. The department might wish to consider putting even greater emphasis on practice-oriented assignments as a method to assess student progress and performance and involve social partners more closely in the evaluation of coursework.

Students differed in their views regarding the internship scheme. Currently the scheme is voluntary. The 2015 student questionnaire and the alumni of the programme indicated that they would have valued a mandatory internship scheme as part of the programme. However, the current cohort of students does not agree. Internships increase job placement success, and the option of making the internship scheme mandatory should be kept under review. Students should

be helped by the department to find appropriate internships. This should not be difficult to achieve since the department can draw on its impressive range of contacts to the world of public administration and politics and on its social partners to support student placements on such a scheme.

Student mobility schemes (Erasmus and bilateral agreements) are available. The department also makes limited funds available to support student mobility. However, the uptake is low because many students work while studying. Sending students abroad for part of their degree offers one way to provide different experiences and diverse perspectives. This is an aspect of the programme that could be strengthened even further.

The job placement record of students who have completed the MA in Comparative European Politics is good. With one exception all of those who graduated in 2014 and 2015 have successfully found work. The largest group of alumni goes on to work in the private sector and a sizable group has found public sector employment in Lithuania. Several students also work in think tanks. Notably absent from this list are placements with the EU and international organisations. The integration of a mandatory internship programme into the MA and closer cooperation with social partners in developing and updating the curriculum would almost certainly lift placement success further and would probably also succeed in placing more students in the EU professions which the programme is targeting.

The organisation of the study process is good. Students are well informed about the programme's aims and requirements including the thesis writing process. Students have confirmed that they were provided with studies and course organisation information during introductory week at the beginning of the studies. Detailed information about each programme's course is available in Lithuanian version of VMU website, but for courses, which are offered in English in given semester, the website does not currently indicate the possibility of language switch. It is very useful that program description on the VMU internet includes the evaluation reports, which enable students to have sight of an independent assessment of the programme. The assessment of the students' performance is based on transparent criteria. Students also have opportunities to participate in research, including research term papers, the thesis, and participation in conferences. However, according to Student Opinion Survey of 2015 just two students had participated at any scientific project at the university. Students should be encouraged to join university academic activities more actively.

2.6. Programme management

Responsibilities for programme decisions, monitoring and implementation are clearly allocated. Regular internal and external procedures are in place for the programme's review,

monitoring, quality assurance and implementation. These assessments are effective and efficient and ensure that data is regularly compiled on the implementation of the MA. The self-evaluation document, staff and student feedback made clear that the department uses the conclusions of such reviews to improve the programme.

The management has responded effectively to the challenges faced by the MA in Contemporary European Politics from declining student numbers, which is a general concern across the MA programmes. As noted above, two strategies have proved effective in responding to this challenge: the consolidation of MA programmes (i.e., no admission to some programmes in certain years) and the shortening of the course to 1.5 years. These measures have been effective in lifting student numbers to 16 in 2014 and 12 in 2016.

Social partners regularly contribute to this programme. They examine theses, provide internships, contribute to joint conferences and public lectures, and they serve on the programme committee. All of these activities add significant value to the programme and contribute to improving it.

The programme's alumni are generally very employable. However, recent alumni do not appear to be very involved with the programme or the university after graduation. The department could consider involving even recent alumni closely with the Faculty Alumni association. This would have a range of benefits for students, alumni and for the department. It would help alumni to develop their professional networks. It would also enable the alumni to remain engaged with the department. This may lead to opportunities to develop new internships; it would allow the alumni to become a source of advice and guidance to current students. Ultimately, the alumni could also become part of the donor base of the university.

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.

The relationship between students and teachers is outstanding. Students generally commented that the academic staff is very approachable and responsive.

The programme has strong and productive relationships with high-profile social partners. These links result in internships, visits to EU institutions, involvement in conferences, and exchanges through guest lectures.

The existence of VMU Code of Academic Ethics is especially remarkable.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Programme Aims:** Given the ambition and placement record of the programme, we recommend that the placement of graduates in the private sector be added to the programme aims.
2. **Curriculum:** The department might consider the introduction of additional training modules in areas that are currently not well catered for, such as quantitative methods, identification strategies and experimental research designs. It may also consider giving social partners a more pronounced role in the curriculum design and updating process to enhance student competence and employability.
3. **Teaching staff:** (i) The department is recommended to further internationalize its hiring strategy. (ii) We further recommend that the department strengthens its support for research driven teaching. The research clusters are welcome developments but more needs to be done and the department could consider the introduction of personal research allowance to which academics are contractually entitled. (iii) The department, jointly with the university, may also consider the introduction of seed funding for research projects. If it is well managed, such an investment in a fund for small pump-priming research grants will be repaid many times by the overheads from research grants that are won as a result of proof-of-concept and pilot studies which the research seed grants have enabled.
4. **Facilities and learning resources:** (i) Outdated reading lists and a shortage of textbooks remain abiding problems for this programme. To address this issue we recommend that the department introduce a mechanism to ensure that reading lists are regularly updated and that reading lists make use of up to date journal articles and monographs. (ii) The department may wish to consider making available either STATA or R to its students. These statistical software packages have now replaced SPSS (the package which the department still uses).
5. **Study process:** (i) Given the challenging funding situation facing students, we recommend that the department further expand its fund-raising efforts for graduate scholarships from its alumni, social partners, and donors one of its strategic priorities. (ii) 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 could then be discussed with the teaching staff to determine how more practice oriented

assignments/assessments can be introduced into the teaching. (iii) The department might keep under review the option of making the internship a compulsory part of the course.

6. **Programme management:** We recommend that the department consider involving even its recent graduates closely with the Faculty Alumni association to engage the alumni more with the programme and with the department generally, including via a mentorship programme. This would benefit the department, current students and the alumni.

IV. SUMMARY

Overall this programme is commendable. The learning aims and outcomes are clearly defined; the employability of the programme's graduates is excellent.

The curriculum's balance of core and options papers is well designed. The methods part of the curriculum can be further strengthened with research training modules in quantitative methods, identification strategies and experimental research design. The department may want to involve social partners actively in curriculum design.

The teaching staff is highly motivated experts in their areas. The student-staff ratios are excellent, and students generally see their teachers as very accessible. The relationship between students and teachers is outstanding. These are major strengths of the programme. The department and university value research-driven teaching. This emphasis on cutting-edge research-driven teaching is ultimately a strategic choice that will be essential to the national and international standing of the department and this study programme, and it should be further strengthened through the introduction of personal research allowances for academics, and seed funding for research projects.

The new faculty premises are exceptional. The brand-new building is equipped to the highest standards, which is a major asset for the programme. The department can further complement its competitive advantage in this area by augmenting the textbooks and statistical software packages available to students, and by introducing a process to ensure that all reading lists remain topical and up to date.

The international links of the department hugely benefit the programme, both in the form of a large number of exchange students, and in form of visiting academic staff. The internship is a valuable but underused aspect of the programme, and the department might keep the option of making it mandatory under review.

The programme has excellent links with a range of high-profile social partners who contribute to the programme by examining theses, providing internships, contributing to joint conferences and lectures and serving on the programme committee. This is a very considerable strength of the programme. The department can further strengthen its links with stakeholders by

integrating its alumni more closely with the Faculty Alumni association and engaging them with the department in a manner that is similar to its excellent links with social partners. The department can also further strengthen its position by involving the social partners even more actively in a mentorship programme.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Contemporary European Politics* (state code – 621L20005) 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
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**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS ŠIUOLAIKINĖ EUROPOS POLITIKA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS –
621L20005) 2017-01-03 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-1 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Šiuolaikinė Europos politika* (valstybinis kodas – 621L20005) 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

Apskritai ši studijų programa pagirtina. Studijų programos tikslai ir numatomi rezultatai aiškiai apibrėžti; programos absolventų įsidarbinimo galimybės puikios.

Programos sandaroje pasiekta puiki pagrindinių ir pasirenkamųjų dalykų pusiausvyra. Metodologijos dalį galima labiau stiprinti įdiegiant mokslinių tyrimų mokymo modulius kiekybinių metodų, nustatymo strategijų ir eksperimentinių tyrimų modelių srityje. Katedra galėtų aktyviau įtraukti socialinius partnerius sudarant programą.

Personalą sudaro ypač motyvuoti savo sričių ekspertai. Studentų ir dėstytojų santykis labai geras; studentai paprastai atsiliepia apie dėstytojus kaip apie lengvai pasiekiamus. Studentų ir dėstytojų tarpusavio santykiai puikūs. Tai yra pagrindinės studijų programos stiprybės. Katedra ir universitetas vertina moksliniais tyrimais grindžiamą mokymą. Šiuolaikiško tyrimais

grindžiamo mokymo akcentavimas yra strateginis pasirinkimas, kuris bus svarbus nacionalinei ir tarptautinei katedros ir šios studijų programos reputacijai. Tokį mokymą reikėtų toliau stiprinti ir įsteigti asmeninę mokslinių tyrimų stipendiją bei teikti pradinę finansinę paramą mokslinių tyrimų projektams.

Naujosios fakulteto patalpos išskirtinės. Visiškai naujas pastatas įrengtas pagal aukščiausius standartus ir tai yra didelė studijų programos vertybė. Katedra gali didinti savo konkurencinį pranašumą šioje srityje, papildydama vadovėlių fondą bei studentų naudojamos statistikos programinės įrangos paketus ir įdiegdama procesą, užtikrinantį, kad visi literatūros sąrašai išliktų aktualūs ir būtų atnaujinami.

Tarptautiniai katedros ryšiai ypač naudingi programai ir tą įrodo didelis mainų programos studentų skaičius ir kviestiniai dėstytojai. Praktika yra vertingas studijų programos aspektas, tačiau ji nepakankamai išnaudojama, todėl katedra galėtų apsvarstyti, ar nepadarius jos privalomos.

Studijų programa palaiko puikius ryšius su įvairiais aukšto lygio socialiniais partneriais, kurie prisideda prie programos vertindami baigiamuosius darbus, siūlydami praktikos vietas, prisidėdami prie bendrų konferencijų bei paskaitų ir dalyvaudami studijų programos komiteto veikloje. Tai labai didelė programos stiprybė. Katedra gali toliau stiprinti ryšius su socialiniais dalininkais, labiau įtraukdama absolventus į fakulteto alumnų asociacijos veiklą ir bendraudama su jais panašiai, kaip bendrauja su socialiniais partneriais. Katedra taip pat gali toliau stiprinti savo pozicijas, dar aktyviau įtraukdama socialinius partnerius į mentorystės programą.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. **Programos tikslai.** Kalbant apie studijų programos siekius ir įdarbinimo rodiklius, rekomenduojame į programos tikslus įtraukti absolventų įdarbinimą privačiajame sektoriuje.
2. **Programos sandara.** Katedra galėtų apsvarstyti, ar įtraukti papildomų metodų mokymo modulius tose srityse, kurios šiuo metu ne visiškai aprėpiamos, pvz., kiekybiniai metodai, nustatymo strategijos ir eksperimentinių tyrimų modeliai. Taip pat būtų galima suteikti socialiniams partneriams didesnę vaidmenį rengiant ir atnaujinant studijų programą, siekiant stiprinti studentų gebėjimus ir didinti jų įsidarbinimo galimybes.
3. **Personalas.** (i) Katedrai rekomenduojame toliau didinti personalo tarptautiškumą. (ii) Taip pat rekomenduojame labiau remti moksliniais tyrimais grindžiamą mokymą. Mokslinių tyrimų klasteriai yra sveikintini, tačiau reikia dar padirbėti šiuo klausimu, o

katedra galėtų įsteigti asmeninę mokslinių tyrimų stipendiją, skiriamą akademikams sutartiniu pagrindu. (iii) Katedra kartu su universitetu taip pat galėtų apsvarstyti pradinės finansinės paramos teikimą mokslinių tyrimų projektams. Jei tokia parama bus gerai valdoma, šios pradinės investicijos į koncepcijų pagrindimo ir bandomuosius tyrimus generuos mokslinius tyrimus skatinančių stipendijų fondo pajamas, kurios bus naudojamos tyrimams vystyti.

4. **Materialieji ištekliai.** (i) Pasenę literatūros sąrašai ir vadovėlių stygius išlieka nuolatine šios studijų programos problema. Norint išspręsti šią problemą, rekomenduojame katedrai įdiegti mechanizmą, užtikrinantį, kad literatūros sąrašai būtų reguliariai atnaujinami ir į juos būtų įtraukiami naujausi žurnalų straipsniai ir monografijos. (ii) Katedra galėtų sudaryti studentams galimybę naudotis STATA arba R programine įranga. Šie statistikos programinės įrangos paketai pakeitė SPSS (paketas, kurį šiuo metu katedra naudoja).
5. **Studijų eiga.** (i) Atsižvelgiant į studentų patiriamą studijų finansavimo iššūkį, rekomenduojame, kad katedra toliau stengtųsi pritraukti lėšų iš absolventų, socialinių partnerių ir paramos teikėjų absolventų stipendijoms steigti, ir tai turėtų būti vienas iš strateginių prioritetų. (ii) Vis dar neįvykdytas ne visiškai aiškus studentų pageidavimas daugiau akcentuoti praktinį studijų aspektą. Rekomenduojame katedrai parengti konkretesnius studentų klausimynus ir (arba) suformuoti fokus studentų grupes, siekiant išsiaiškinti, kokias užduotis / atsiskaitymus studentai turi omeny. Vėliau šiuos siūlymus galima aptarti su personalu ir nuspręsti, kokias į praktiką orientuotas užduotis / atsiskaitymus būtų galima įtraukti į mokymo procesą. (iii) Katedra galėtų apsvarstyti galimybę praktiką padaryti privaloma studijų dalimi.
6. **Programos vadyba.** Rekomenduojame katedrai labiau įtraukti net neseniai baigusius studijas absolventus į fakulteto alumnų asociacijos veiklą, kad jie aktyviau dalyvautų studijų programoje ir apskritai palaikytų ryšį su katedra, įskaitant mentorystės programą. Tai būtų naudinga katedrai, dabartiniams studentams ir absolventams.

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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)