



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

*Klaipėdos universiteto*  
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS EUROPOS STUDIJOS**  
*(valstybinis kodas - 621L20002)*  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF EUROPEAN STUDIES**  
*(state code - 621L20002) STUDY PROGRAMME*  
*at Klaipėda University*

**Experts' team:**

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba  
Report language – English

## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Europos studijos</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621L20002
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Politikos mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinės studijos – 2 m.
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Politikos mokslų magistro laipsnis
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2010-01-26 Nr. 1-01-12

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## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>European Studies</i>
State code	621L20002
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 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Political Sciences
Date of registration of the study programme	2010-01-26, No. 1-01-12

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## CONTENTS

<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1. Background of the evaluation process .....	4
1.2. General.....	4
1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information .....	5
1.4. The Review Team.....	5
<b>II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	5
2.2. Curriculum design .....	6
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 .....	14
<b>III. RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>IV. SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>20</b>

## 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 after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	New curriculum as of 1 September 2016.
2	Additional information asked by the evaluation group about student and social partner surveys, international partners for the Erasmus exchange programmes, alumni employment MA European Studies, and Moodle online learning platform and its incorporation to the study process.
3	Data and results of student survey. A template of the form (in English).

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

Klaipėda University (hereafter – KU) was established in 1991. The University implements 99 degree-awarding study programmes in humanities, arts, and social, physical, bio-medical, and technological sciences. In March 2016, the University had 4,126 students, of whom 1,476 studied in state-funded places, and in October 2015, staff of 1,149, including 60% of the academic staff and research fellows (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 4 – hereafter SER).

The Master of European Studies programme is hosted by the Department of Political Sciences in the Faculty of Social Sciences, but also other departments of the Faculty contribute to the programme. The programme has been implemented by the University since 2010. Previous external evaluation led to a three years accreditation by SKVC. This is the second time when the programme is being assessed by an international expert group formed by SKVC.

### ***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 11/10/2016.

- 1. Prof. Dr. Turo Virtanen (team leader)** *University of Helsinki, Professor, Finland.*
- 2. Prof. Dr. Mikael Svensson,** *University of Gothenburg, Professor, Sweden.*
- 3. Prof. Dr. Benedikt Speer,** *Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Professor, Austria.*
- 4. Ms. Marta Čubajevaitė,** *National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations' Platform, Lithuania.*
- 5. Mr. Lukas Kisielius,** *student of Vilnius University, Lithuania.*

## **II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS**

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

The programme aims – altogether five (SER, p.8) – are very wordy and general. They introduce knowledge about “processes taking place in Europe“, research skills, abilities of problem solving, communication skills, and construction of “informative-cognitive structures“. The expressions are partly non-informative, especially the fifth one (as written in English). Their links to so-called Dublin descriptors of the second cycle degrees can be found, but they could be clearer. The learning outcomes are more informative (SER, pp. 8-10) but also some of them would need better formulations (e.g., E3). The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent content-wise, and also the links to study courses show consistency, but linking the learning outcomes to

many subject-specific courses (in Table 2), for example communication skills to course on EU Regional Policy, needs re-examination.

The key learning outcomes can be found on KU website and they are the same as in SER (Table 2), but instead of aims, the website introduces ‘The profile of the programme’ which is partly independent and slightly more informative summary than the formulations of the aims in SER. Aims and learning outcomes reflect sufficiently the ministerial order of the study descriptor of the field of political science as of 2015, also referred to in SER (p. 7). On the whole, the aims and learning outcomes are sufficiently consistent with the type of level of MA studies and level of qualifications offered, but they should be more informative, less wordy and more focused.

The establishment of the programme is justified with professional needs of experts of “Eurointegration”. The interdisciplinary character of the programme is seen to improve the opportunities of the graduates to effectively compete in the labour market. SER (p. 7) indicates examples of institutions where graduates are prepared to work. It points also to the possibility of a career “related to the European character-academic, research, and practical-applied activity” (p. 7). It is obvious that KU has clarified the public and labour market needs before launching the programme.

Master’s theses’ topics are clearly aligned with the aims and learning outcomes of the programme. However, research methodology used could be more sophisticated either in terms of quantitative or qualitative research techniques. Relying more on international research literature would improve the achievement on intended learning outcomes. The programme should ensure that the grading of theses is consistent with learning outcomes, as the grades tend to be rather high (3 out of 12 grades are 7, others 8-10, see Appendix 4 in SER). In general, the name, learning outcomes, content and qualifications of the programme are compatible.

KU has addressed the added value of the programme by comparing it to other European studies MA-programmes in the country (European orientation in programmes of Vilnius University, M. Romeris University and Vytautas Magnus University) and relies on its exclusive character as the only programme emphasising political science (SER, p. 11). SER does not address possible weaknesses of the programme aims and learning outcomes, but KU has a plan to involve social partners (alumni, other stakeholders, and international academic partners) to refine them in the future (SER, p. 11).

## ***2.2. Curriculum design***

The study programme meets legal acts requirements for second cycle programmes. The number of 120 ECTS has been schematically calculated as each study field course with the exception of the “*Research Project (seminar)*”, the “*Research Project*” and the “*Master’s Final*

*Thesis*” (30 credits) offers 60 hours and 6 ECTS. In each semester no more than 5 courses are offered and the study subjects are evenly spread and not repetitive.

The general learning outcomes describe adequately the content and the expectations of this programme. They are sometimes almost literally taken up by the learning outcomes contained in the single course descriptions (e.g. “*Decision Making in European Union*”). In other cases, however, individual outcomes have been defined in the course descriptors, which should perhaps be adapted a little bit more systematically to the general ones (e.g. “*European Studies: Theories and Methods*”). Nevertheless, the course titles and the defined learning outcomes allow for a good overview of the programme as a whole and the specificities of the single courses as well as the methods applied. They are consistent with the type and level of the studies. Even if English literature is cited in most course descriptors, for some courses the references and the additional literature could and should be updated (e.g. “*Trajectories of Political Participation in Europe*”). All in all, a systematic process of checking and revising the course descriptions should be implemented. This is also in accordance with the recommendations during the evaluation in 2012 (Appendix 5 to SER, point 1).

Regarding the study field courses, more general courses like for example “*European Studies: Methods and Theories*” or “*European Integration*” are mixed with more policy related fields like for example “*EU Foreign and Security Policy*” or “*EU Social Policy*”. Some policy fields like trade, agriculture, environment or – especially important given its impact on the EU system – refugees/immigration/migration are either only incorporated as subfields in other study field courses or seem to be missing (e.g. refugees/immigration/migration). Therefore, the programme could discuss if some new policy fields and/or subjects should be included in order to reflect the latest achievements in science. Another shortcoming is the integration and the singularity of the study field course “*EU Law*” (formerly in the 3rd semester and after criticism in the evaluation of 2012 now transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester), as the EU and its policies are fundamentally based on the principle of the rule of law. This course, therefore, is the foundation for many others and should be transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> semester and perhaps be supplemented by more specialized law courses later on in order to spread subjects and subject fields more evenly.

Positive is the well-constructed linkage between the courses of “*Social Science Methodology*” (1st semester), the “*Research Project (seminar)*” and the “*Research Project*” in the 2nd and 3rd semesters and finally the *Master’s Final Thesis* in the 4th semester. Inside these courses, however, a balance between qualitative and quantitative methods should be ensured.

The early choosing of a topic for the Master Thesis gives – amongst others - special importance to the respective academic advisors. Given the wide array of subjects included in the programme, it is positive that professors from other departments also teach in the European Studies Programme. However, from the single course descriptions conscious and explicit approaches to

interdisciplinarity are not really recognizable. A truly interdisciplinary approach and comparison of disciplinary concepts could further enhance the quality of the programme and ensure that the content of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

In addition to the study field courses, the electives should enhance the interdisciplinarity of the study programme and offer the students an opportunity for specialisation (SER, 13). This requirement seems hardly fulfilled, as the electives are rather randomly compiled and not recognizably attached to one/several study field courses (see SER, pp. 12-13) as for example “*Sustainability in Europe*”. In this regard, concrete linkages or thematic clusters might allow for a more systematic approach.

Such a systematic (re-)construction of parts of the curriculum and a closer linkage between study field courses as well as between and with elective courses is even more important given the fact that currently a reduction of the programme to 90 credits and 3 semesters is planned (SER, p. 15). This downsizing by 800 hours will be a great challenge with regards to the content and the homogeneity of the programme.

### ***2.3. Teaching staff***

The study programme is provided by staff meeting the legal requirements. The listed faculty size is 15 and all have a PhD (minimum requirement 80%), and of which 6 are full professors (minimum requirement 20%), 7 associate professors, and 2 lecturers (with a PhD) (SER p.16).

The workload of the lecturers seems reasonable. An average workload of the teachers in the Department of Political Sciences and other SSF Departments, who work full-time, fluctuated between 750 to 820 hours per semester, with contact hours accounting for 30 to 40% of the total workload (SER p.16). The teachers were judged as very approachable by students at the site visit. Several of the teachers come from departments outside the Political Science department, which facilitates an interdisciplinary and multifaceted perspective on the taught issues.

The qualifications of the teaching staff with respect to academic background and training is relevant in order to ensure learning outcomes, most have their PhD training in Political Science or closely related social science fields.

The number of teachers is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Given the large amount of teachers involved in the programme, there is a need for teacher co-ordination to ensure that there is no unnecessary overlap. At the site visit several of the teachers responsible for courses in the programme seemed quite unaware of the content and topic of other courses in the programme and they did not recognize anyone being in charge of interdisciplinary issues of the programme. Thus,

the department should consider introducing a formal programme committee consisting of teachers from the different involved departments or other arrangements to work on course co-ordination.

Teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme. Many of the teachers have been part of the programme for several years and there is no substantial turnover during the evaluation period (SER p.19). In the SER it is stated regarding new recruits that: “in accordance with the routine practice of the SSF (Social Science Faculty), the new staff is mainly prepared in the graduate and post-graduate studies. Promising graduates of the Faculty are encouraged to get involved in the academic and research activities. Due to that, the staff is regularly joined by new members“ (SER p.18). Although this procedure may to some degree be necessary to recruit new staff, the department should attempt to increase the share of external hires in order to achieve mobility and an inflow of new ideas and perspectives.

The higher education institution creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff. There are opportunities to conduct research and to pursue international co-operations, although limited due to scarce funding. The number of outgoing teachers are very low at the faculty (SER p.18). The students have the opportunity to attend lectures with international visiting researchers provided at the faculty level, although the degree of student participation at these lecture was unclear.

The research interests do not seem to be sufficiently aligned with the taught courses. Based on teachers' CVs, there are only very few items of research focusing clearly on European themes. In addition, the research conducted by the faculty is (almost) entirely in non-English outlets and the research output among the staff in international indexed and ranked peer-reviewed journals is low or non-existent. In order to increase the international research output and the visibility in the international academic community the university/faculty administration should consider implementing stronger incentives to motivate publications in indexed and ranked international journals. This is especially important for the younger faculty where a norm needs to be established to regularly contribute to the international research community via publishing in international indexed journals.

In conclusion, also given the limited proficiency in English of some of the academic staff, it is not clear that the general, research-based competencies of the staff coming from various department is always up to the standards of all expected learning outcomes in a study programme with focus on European studies. There have been some minor improvements from the last evaluation, but challenges are still substantial.

#### ***2.4. Facilities and learning resources***

The facilities for the graduate studies of European Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences (Minijos Street, 153) includes 14 classrooms, of which 10 classrooms have stationary multimedia equipment, students can use 2 computer labs with 24 computerized workplaces (SER p. 20). Wireless Internet in most public areas of the university allows students to use their own computer equipment.

As it was mentioned during the meeting with the KU administrative staff, in the near future (though specific date is unknown), the faculty should be moved to the other campus, therefore no further investments into the current premises at Minijos street 153 are planned. The new premises are not part of this evaluation. Nonetheless, SKVC evaluation team concluded that student group work or individual consultation facilities at current premises could be improved as currently available classrooms or rooms of the department are used for those purposes, access to current premises is restrained for students with disabilities. In general, facilities viewed during the evaluation visit are considered adequate both in their size and quality with the recommended improvements expressed above.

The basic literature for European Studies programme is located in the library of the Faculty of Social Sciences. During the visit to the library the evaluation team have also confirmed that following the recommendation of the previous external evaluation, some specialized literature for the study programme was acquired. Students and teachers can also order books from other libraries in Lithuania and abroad (SER p. no 22). The library provides training to students on independent study material search, however, as expressed by the students and librarians consulted during the visit, Google is a preferred study material search engine. At the level of the University there is a subscription service to several relevant full-text international and Lithuanian databases, e.g. *Academic Search Complete, Springer Link; KTU eBooks, eBooks on Science Direct* and *EBSCO*, accessible both in campus and outside. However, as KU library website indicates databases such as *Sage journals, Wiley online library*, relevant for the study programme are no longer subscribed. Moreover, despite the satisfaction with the access to literature expressed by the administration, the teaching staff and the students consulted during the study visit and the improvements made since the previous evaluation, this external evaluation team concluded that the programme should continue increasing the volume of its relevant study literature and especially its integration into curricula as specified in this report, also ensure that plummeting financial allocations for the study resources (SER p. no 22) do not affect the quality of the programme.

During the lectures a number of relevant computer software programmes are used; for individual self-study students can use computer classes with relevant software installed (e.g. SPSS 11.5, Statistica 3.0, Arch-view, GIS- SER p. no 20). Moreover, according to SER p. 21, Moodle

virtual learning environment is used during the study process for provision of teaching materials, individual or group consultations, however, it was used only in 1 course of the Programme (EU Foreign and Security Policy). To conclude, currently accessible teaching materials are considered good yet they could be more voluminous, virtual learning environment could be better exploited and integrated into the teaching process, more systemized data search among the students encouraged.

Within this MA programme, students' practice as a compulsory study element is not organised.

### ***2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment***

The admission requirements are well-founded. The procedure of the admission is approved by the KU Senate and is publicly available on the website of university (SER, p.23). Earlier evaluations showed that tasks of the entrance exams ought to focus not on knowledge testing, but rather on identifying the applicants' ability to analyse, reason, and use the concepts of political sciences. People who graduated from universities other than KU, or graduated from KU earlier than 2011, have to collect all the documents concerning graduation themselves and submit their e-copies (SER, pg. 24).

However, there were several issues concerning the admission. Major problems were related to low competition among students rather than formal requirements and due to that there were hardships in choosing the most motivated students. The programme has decided to implement measures which would raise the popularity of the programme. The number of applicants is said to depend on the number of state funded places (SER, p.24).

The number of applications is quite high in 2013 the number was 20, in 2014 was 60 and 43 in 2015 (SER, pg. 24). However there are very few students who have been admitted. Since the reform related to the evaluation in 2013, the number of applicants has grown a lot (21, 60, 43) in comparison with the numbers before it (5, 11) (SER, p. 24). Despite big numbers of applications, number of admitted people is very small (8, 5, 3 for each year after the reform respectively). However, the highest scores of people admitted were 8,96; 10,03; 9,38, while lowest ones were 6,97; 8,73; 6,81. The programme should consider the sustainability of the programme, given the declining numbers of qualified applicants, also paying attention to measures optimal for increasing the attractiveness of the programme. – In its feedback (21 Dec 2016), the programme clarifies that the high number of applications is related to changes in terms of admission after 2013 giving more options for prospective students and that all state funded places have been filled. The programme reminds also that KU's international conference in 2016 with an ensuing publication and an agreement with Europainstitut Klaus Menhart in 2016 about European studies in German language

will contribute both to internationality and sustainability of the programme. In this sense, it is clear that the programme has already recognized the challenge and has started to take actions.

SER says that drop-out rate is 20% of the students admitted. Main reasons of dropping out included financial, the inability to complete the Master's final thesis on time and other personal reasons. It was also mentioned that so far there weren't any students who expelled due to poor academic record (SER, p. 25). During the visit the majority of students who were interviewed stated that they have chosen studies in KU because of the proximity of the university. Master students also explained their personal reasons – studies in other cities appeared to be too expensive. Another reason was that they did not have the possibilities to leave their city because they have already started working or creating families in there.

On the whole the assessment of students' performance is clear, transparent, and adequate. The assessment is laid out in the KU study regulations. The assessment is carried out through written or oral exams which take no less than 50% of the curriculum grade (SER, p. 26). External evaluation in 2012 showed that organisation of the study process ensured an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. The requirements of study assessment as well as descriptions of the courses are adequate and publicly available in the university's website. Detailed information about requirements for written materials are presented to students at the beginning of studies. Students are informed about their study results in an electronic university system. Academic ethics is understood as an important value – students who bend the rules are graded zero points and removed from exam (SER, p.26). The feedback for evaluation is granted – students who disagree with their grade are able to submit an appeal. Head of the Department analyses the exam organization and implementation. 2011-2015 there were no issues regarding grades in the European Studies programme (SER, p.27). During the visit students stated that the assessment system is fair and transparent. They did not feel the need to submit appeals concerning their grades, because they felt that they were assessed accordingly to their learning results. According to SER (p. 26), the average student's grade from all exams is 8,5.

However, it appears that KU's system of students' feedback is in operation but has some flaws. During the visit the university administration provided evaluation team with some filled in as well as empty feedback forms. During the site visit, some professors were not aware whether the university provides a centralized system of student feedback, but many of them used feedback forms. In addition, they mentioned that it is mostly up to the lecturer to make changes based on student feedback. Students stated that they had replied to many feedback surveys, but they weren't informed about the exact actions which were made towards it. A few students we met were relatively satisfied with the programme and liked the flexible teaching arrangements and listening to students' wishes within the small group of students the programme currently has.

Information and procedures concerning Master`s final thesis are regulated by the Descriptor of General Requirements for KU Student Self-Study Papers and Art Works. Master`s thesis is expected to be an analytical paper which has to demonstrate skills of student`s research about the Europolitical issues. During the visit students stated that they are happy about the academic help towards preparing final thesis.

Students are encouraged to participate in research activities. In the SER it was stated that their research skills are developed by submitting academic papers, research projects and Master`s final theses (SER, p. 25). Topics for the theses are combined from teacher`s and students` academic interests. In the SER it was stated that every year 1-2 graduate students present their research findings in conferences. The information was confirmed during the visit by both - students and academic staff. The best researches are granted a prize. There are possibilities to take part in academic activities, however the students are quite passive. Earlier evaluation indicated that the reason for it is lack of motivation from the students rather than problems with encouragement from administration. The situation seems to be the same today.

KU offers a number of options to participate in student mobility programmes. It has almost 180 partners in 25 different countries, which provide staff as well as student exchange programmes and internships (SER, p.27). However, during the last 3 years till 2015 only 5 students used this possibility, 3 foreign students have chosen this programme for a semester (SER, p.27). During the interview students stated that they get enough information about the exchange possibilities but the decision to enrol in one of the programmes isn`t popular due to personal reasons. One of the students mentioned that he has already been to a foreign country as an exchange student during his bachelor studies. Also students revealed that majority of their course mates feel a lack of time for this kind of activities due to the fact that they try to combine both work and studies. – In its feedback (21 Dec 2016) the programme wants to indicate that 5 students who went abroad for exchange amounts to 22,8% of the all 22 students who have graduated from the programme in 2011-2015.

The level of academic support appears to be quite high. All the required information can be found on the website of the university or department. During first lectures the lecturers present their courses and provide students with the information. Later this information is uploaded in the online academic information system. There is also a possibility to get consultations from the department lecturers. Contact hours take place in the evenings or weekends making possible for the students to study and work at the same time. Some of the lectures are taught in English, and during the period 2012-2015 more than one third (8 out of 22) master`s final theses were in English (SER, p. 25). However, during the visit students spoke out their concerns that level of taught English is too low.

KU also ensures an adequate level of social support. It is stated in the SER that there are number of grants and other means of social support. Students have an opportunity to use the psychological counselling service housed by the Faculty of Pedagogy for free. The KU student grants are of several types: the KU Senate grant; the Faculty Council grant; social grants from the state appropriations; one-time Rector's grants; and one-time Dean's grants. Over the self-evaluation period, 2 best students of the *European Studies* programme were supported with social grants from 38 to 75 euros per month for two semesters. (SER, p.26). However, one of the most popular reasons for dropping out were financial problems (SER, p.25).

KU has a career centre which helps students to find a future job and employers to find new employees. However, it appears that there was not a single student from European studies programme who registered to it (SER, p.27). In addition, the students who were interviewed by the review team stated that they had not used the service. In the SER it is written that a number of graduates are working in various social, political, academic and public media sectors (SER, p.27). It was stated that about 50% of graduates work in their study field. However, the career decisions of these 50% are rather satisfying. The KU provided some additional information about the working places of European Studies programme graduates. They include jobs in business sector as specialists or assistants, public administration of municipalities, assistants of politicians and political parties, jobs in media sector and national defence institutions.

## **2.6. Programme management**

KU has a clear formal organisation for study programme management (SER, pp. 28-29). Study programme committee is led by a programme co-ordinator and other members represent social partners (potential employers), students, and staff. The Committee and the programme are supervised by the Faculty's study programme committee. Faculty Council approves of the changes in study programme, except for the essential changes that can be made only by the Senate. The programme co-ordinator and the staff share the aim of pursuing collegial practice in preparing decisions. Allocation of responsibilities related decisions and monitoring is clear. The Department of Political Sciences has been merged with that of Communication as of the beginning of September 2016 creating needs for integration of activities. The programme management is well aware of the changes in its operating environment (e.g., numbers of students declining) and has started to plan future activities.

The quality of the programme is evaluated internally and externally. The KU has a new quality assurance system being implemented during the interviews and offering new opportunities for assuring the quality on the level of European Studies programme. There is a continuous process where data on the mobility of the staff and students and students' academic record and dropping out

is collected. According to SER (p.30), the programme management has organised annually seminars or meetings with employers (*Ministry of Foreign Affairs* and *municipalities of Klaipeda City* and neighbouring districts) to improve the programme. Moreover, the port authority, political parties, and NGOs are mentioned as actors involved yearly in discussions about the outcomes of the programme, and some aspects are discussed nationally with actors like *the European Information Centre* and the *Union of European Federalists Lithuanian branch* representatives (SER, p. 31). The interviews of social partners (all from Klaipeda) could confirm the interaction taking place. Dean and vice-dean meet students to discuss the study process and teachers' teaching (SER, p. 30). There are also surveys to students, alumni and employers, visits to classes and meetings of Faculty and Department leadership with alumni and business and governmental organisations with the purpose to develop the programme (SER, p. 31). This was also confirmed by the interviews of staff and students, but the responsibilities of staff vs. project management turned out be unclear as for ensuring that student feedback leads to appropriate measures. In this sense, the programme management involves external and internal stakeholders for evaluation, but there is space for improvement.

The programme organises self-evaluation and updating of the programme every three years (SER, p. 31). SER (p. 31) indicates one example that student feedback has led to changes (inclusion of the subject EU Law). The SER (p. 31) specifies that the outcomes of the programme evaluations are made public on Faculty website and that they are introduced to students during the lectures, but, according to interviews students are not aware of the results. Also teachers were not sure how the feedback systems operates. However, the programme management acknowledges the deficiencies of the feedback system (SER, p. 32) and has a plan to improve social partners', teachers' and students' contribution to strengthen the quality of the programme. Information and data on the implementation of the programme are regularly collected and analysed as part of quality assurance system, but there is clearly space for improvement. It is obvious that the programme management pursues systematic procedures. Since the programme is struggling with declining numbers of admitted students, a shared awareness of the need to change the programme has led to a plan to compress the programme from 120 credits and two years to 90 credits and 1,5 years. This is one example of effective measures taken to improve the programme, but the work is still in progress. The internal quality assurance could be more efficient and effective. The transparency of the process from feedback to measures and their effects should be clearly better.

The SER has no separate section of external quality assurance, but there are descriptions of major changes carried out on the basis of the previous evaluation (appendix 5). It seems that the programme managements still has challenges in implementing recommendations related to encouraging staff to have regular international exchange, focusing their research on European issues

and in recruiting staff specialised in the European political, economic and legal issues. Admittedly, these changes need time and also sufficient financial resources, but also effective planning. However, the recommendation of revising the system of admission has led to eliminating entrance exams.

For some reason, the strengths and weaknesses of programme management of MA in European Studies presented in SER are the same as for BA in Political Sciences. On the whole, the sections of programme management are practically the same text in both SERs, apart from the name of the programme and certain key facts about the programmes. It is obvious that the programme management could specify their management approach by the programmes in a more tailor-made way. The challenges of running a MA programme are not the same as those of a BA programme, given their differing aims and learning outcomes.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In general, the definitions of aims and learning outcomes of the programme could be less wordy, more informative and focused, and their links to individual courses of the programme should be more consistent, especially in the area of generative learning outcomes. Therefore, a systematic process of checking and revising the course descriptions should be implemented.
2. The principle of interdisciplinary should be more developed and transparent in the curriculum given its role in the aim of the programme. The programme should discuss if some new policy fields and/or subjects could be included in order to reflect the latest achievements in science. The importance of legal subjects for European integration should be further enhanced. The electives should be clearly linked to one/several study fields or thematic clusters.
3. The programme should assure that there is sufficient teacher co-ordination across courses in order to ensure a relevant progression of the programme and more systematic implementation of interdisciplinarity.
4. The university/faculty administration should consider implementing stronger incentives to pursue international research co-operation, ensure better proficiency of English for those who need it, take part in international staff exchange and motivate publications in indexed and ranked international journals in order to increase the international research output and the visibility in the international academic community.
5. The research profile of the staff should be more aligned with the aims and learning outcomes of the programme and the department should strive to increase the number of external recruitments.
6. The programme should continue increasing the volume of its relevant study literature and especially its integration into curricula and also ensure that plummeting financial allocations for the study resources do not affect the quality of the programme.
7. The programme should consider the sustainability of the programme, given the declining numbers of qualified applicants and that a critical mass of students is necessary to sustain quality in the longer run, also continuing to pay attention to measures optimal for increasing the attractiveness of the programme.
8. The feedback from students and stakeholders, its analysis, actions taken and their consequences as well as the documentation of different phases need more systematic and transparent approach as part of the implementation of the new quality assurance system.

9. The programme management should ensure that each study programme is managed with sufficiently tailor-made approach in order to assure programme-specific analysis of the strengths and weakness and relevant measures for improvement.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

*The programme aims and learning outcomes* are consistent content-wise. They are sufficiently aligned with the type of MA studies and qualifications offered. Master's theses' topics are clearly associated with the aims and learning outcomes of the programme. The course-level learning outcomes allow for a good overview of the programme as a whole and the specificities of the single courses. The aims and learning outcomes could be more informative, less wordy and more focused. The research methodology of Master's theses could be more sophisticated and they could rely more on international research literature.

As for *curriculum design*, positive is the well-constructed linkage between the courses of "Social Science Methodology", the "Research Project (seminar)" and the "Research Project" and finally the Master's Final Thesis. However, the content of the programme could be updated and better aligned with the latest achievements of research. The balance between qualitative and quantitative methods should be ensured in teaching methodology. A truly interdisciplinary approach could further enhance the quality of the programme. The department should consider arrangements to coordinate the content of courses given by teachers from the different departments.

*The teaching staff* were judged as very approachable by the students. Several of the teachers come from departments of other disciplines, which facilitates an interdisciplinary and multifaceted perspective on the taught issues. The number of teachers is adequate to ensure learning outcomes, but the staff should be more active in international exchange. In recruiting new staff, an increase of the share of external hires would add to the mobility and inflow of new ideas and perspectives. The research interests of the staff could be better aligned with the taught courses. The research output of the staff should be stronger in international indexed and ranked peer-reviewed journals.

The faculty will move to another campus in near future, which will probably improve the *facilities and learning resources*. Student group work or individual consultation facilities at current premises could be improved. Currently accessible teaching materials could be more voluminous and virtual learning environment could be better exploited in teaching.

As *the study process and students' performance assessment*, the admission requirements of new students are well-founded and the requirements of study assessment and for written assignments as well as descriptions of the courses are adequate and publicly available and presented to students. The programme should consider the sustainability of the programme, given the

declining numbers of qualified applicants. Student exchange programmes should be used more widely.

KU has a clear formal organisation for study *programme management*, which is pursuing systematic procedures in quality assurance. The programme management is well aware of the changes in its operating environment and has started to plan future activities. Social partners situating in Klaipeda are actively involved in supporting the programme. The programme management should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of quality assurance system and contribute much more effectively to implementation of the recommendations of previous external evaluation.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *European studies* (state code – 621L20002) at Klaipėda 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	2
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	2
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>16</b>

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

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

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

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

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Turo Virtanen
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Mikael Svensson
	Benedikt Speer
	Marta Čubajevaitė
	Lukas Kisielius

**KLAIPĖDOS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS  
EUROPOS STUDIJOS (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621L20002)  
2016-12-16 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-235 IŠRAŠAS**

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**V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS**

Klaipėdos universiteto studijų programa *Europos studijos* (valstybinis kodas – 621L20002) vertinama teigiamai.

<b>Eil. Nr.</b>	<b>Vertinimo sritis</b>	<b>Srities įvertinimas, balais*</b>
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	2
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	<b>Iš viso:</b>	<b>16</b>

\* 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)

&lt;...&gt;

**IV. SANTRAUKA**

*Studijų programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai* atitinka programos turinį. Jie pakankamai suderinti su magistrantūros studijų programos tipu ir teikiama kvalifikacija. Magistro darbų temos aiškiai susietos su programos tikslais ir studijų rezultatais. Dalykų studijų rezultatai leidžia susidaryti bendrą vaizdą apie studijų programą ir atskirų dalykų specifiką. Tikslai ir studijų rezultatai galėtų būti informatyvesni, trumpesni ir labiau akcentuoti esmę. Magistro darbų tyrimų metodologija galėtų būti sudėtingesnė ir labiau remtis tarptautine tyrimų literatūra.

Kalbant apie *programos sandarą*, pagirtinas puikus sąryšis tarp „Socialinių mokslų metodologijos“, „Tiriamąojo projekto (seminaro)“ ir „Tiriamąojo projekto“ dalykų ir baigiamojo magistro darbo. Vis dėlto programos turinys galėtų būti atnaujintas ir geriau suderintas su naujausiais pasiekimais tyrimų srityje. Dėstymo metodologija turėtų užtikrinti kokybinių ir kiekybinių metodų pusiausvyrą. Išties tarpdalykinis požiūris galėtų pagerinti programos kokybę.

Katedrai reikėtų apsvarstyti priemones, kaip koordinuoti dėstytojų iš skirtingų katedrų dėstomų dalykų turinį.

Pasak studentų, *personalas* labai draugiškas ir pasiekiamas. Keletas dėstytojų ateina iš kitų disciplinų katedrų; tai prisideda prie dėstomų temų tarpdalykiškumo ir daugiaaspektiškumo. Dėstytojų skaičius tinkamas studijų rezultatams užtikrinti, tačiau personalas galėtų aktyviau dalyvauti tarptautinių mainų programose. Samdant naujus dėstytojus ir didinant darbuotojų iš išorės skaičių, pagerėtų judumo aspektas, taip pat studijų programa pasipildytų naujomis idėjomis ir požiūriais. Personalo vykdomų mokslinių tyrimų interesai galėtų būti geriau suderinti su dėstomais dalykais. Personalo tiriamosios veiklos rezultatai turėtų būti daugiau skelbiami tarptautiniuose indeksuojamuose ir reitinguojamuose recenzuojamuose žurnaluose.

Netolimoje ateityje fakultetas persikels į kitą vietą, todėl greičiausiai pagerės *materialieji ir mokymosi ištekliai*. Esamose patalpose galima gerinti studentų grupinio darbo ar individualių konsultacijų infrastruktūrą. Šiuo metu prieinama dėstymo medžiaga galėtų būti gausesnė, o virtualiąją mokymosi aplinką būtų galima geriau išnaudoti dėstant.

Kalbant apie *studijų eigą ir jos vertinimą*, naujų studentų priėmimo reikalavimai pagrįsti, o studijų vertinimo ir užduočių raštu reikalavimai bei dalykų aprašai yra tinkami ir viešai prieinami bei pristatomi studentams. Reikėtų apsvarstyti programos tvarumo klausimą, atsižvelgiant į mažėjantį tinkamų stojančiųjų skaičių. Studentų mainų programos turėtų būti naudojamos plačiau.

KU turi aiškią formalią studijų *programos vadybos* organizaciją, kurios tikslas yra sistemingos kokybės užtikrinimo procedūros. Programos vadovybė puikiai žino apie veiklos aplinkos pokyčius ir jau pradėjo planuoti būsimus veiksmus. Klaipėdoje esantys socialiniai partneriai aktyviai palaiko programą. Programos vadovybei reikėtų pagerinti kokybės užtikrinimo sistemos veiksmingumą bei efektyvumą ir dar veiksmingiau prisidėti prie ankstesnio išorinio vertinimo rekomendacijų įgyvendinimo.

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### **III. REKOMENDACIJOS**

1. Apskritai, studijų programos tikslų ir numatomų studijų rezultatų formuluotės galėtų būti trumpesnės, bet informatyvesnės ir akcentuoti esmę, o jų sąsajos su atskirais studijų programos dalykais turėtų būti nuoseklesnės, ypač bendrųjų numatomų studijų rezultatų atžvilgiu. Todėl reikėtų sistemingai tikrinti ir peržiūrėti dalykų aprašus.
2. Programos turinio tarpdalykiškumo aspektą reikėtų labiau išplėtoti ir padaryti suprantamesnį, atsižvelgiant į jo vaidmenį programos tiksluose. Reikėtų aptarti, ar įtraukti naujas politikos kryptis ir (arba) dalykus, siekiant atspindėti naujausius mokslo pasiekimus. Reikėtų toliau

- pabrėžti teisės dalykų svarbą Europos integracijai. Pasirenkamieji dalykai turėtų būti aiškiai susieti su viena ar keliomis studijų kryptimis ar teminėmis grupėmis.
3. Programa turėtų užtikrinti pakankamą skirtingų dalykų dėstytojų darbo koordinavimą, siekiant užtikrinti tinkamą programos vystymą ir sistemingiau įgyvendinti tarpdalykiškumo principą.
  4. Universiteto ar fakulteto administracija turėtų apsvarstyti, ar nustatyti didesnes paskatas siekiant tarptautinio bendradarbiavimo tiriamojoje veikloje, užtikrinti geresnę anglų kalbos mokėjimą tiems, kuriems to reikia, dalyvauti tarptautiniuose personalo mainuose ir skatinti skelbti publikacijas indeksuojamuose ir reitinguojamuose tarptautiniuose žurnaluose, siekiant didinti tarptautinės tiriamosios veiklos rezultatus ir matomumą tarptautinėje akademinėje bendruomenėje.
  5. Personalo tiriamosios veiklos profilis turėtų būti labiau suderintas su programos tikslais ir numatomais studijų rezultatais, o katedra turėtų stengtis didinti iš išorės samdomų darbuotojų skaičių.
  6. Reikėtų ir toliau didinti aktualios studijų literatūros apimtį, o ypač integruoti literatūrą į programos turinį bei užtikrinti, kad staigiai sumažėjęs materialijų išteklių finansavimas neturėtų įtakos programos kokybei.
  7. Reikėtų apsvarstyti programos tvarumo klausimą, atsižvelgiant į mažėjantį tinkamų stojančiųjų skaičių ir tai, kad reikalinga kritinė studentų masė norint išlaikyti kokybę ilgalaikėje perspektyvoje, taip pat toliau taikyti optimalias priemones, didinančias programos patrauklumą.
  8. Studentų ir socialinių dalininkų grįžtamasis ryšys, jo analizė, paskesni veiksmai ir jų pasekmės, taip pat įvairių etapų dokumentavimas reikalauja sistemingesnio ir skaidresnio požiūrio, diegiant naują kokybės užtikrinimo sistemą.
  9. Programos vadovybė turėtų užtikrinti, kad kiekviena studijų programa būtų valdoma pakankamai individualizuotai, siekiant garantuoti kiekvienos programos stiprybių ir silpnybių analizę bei atitinkamas tobulinimo priemones.

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