



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *APLINKOSAUGOS*
*ORGANIZAVIMAS (621F70002) VERTINIMO IŠVADOS***

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (621F70002)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY**

Grupės vadovas: Prof. dr. David Eastwood
Team leader:

Grupės nariai: Prof. dr. Judit Padisak
Team members:
Prof. dr. Kalev Sepp
Lina Šleinotaitė-Budrienė
Armandas Pisarskis

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2014

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Aplinkosaugos organizavimas
Valstybinis kodas	621F70002
Studijų sritis	Fiziniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Aplinkotyra
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Aplinkotyros magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2010

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Environmental management
State code	621F70002
Study area	Physical sciences
Study field	Environmental Sciences
Kind of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (2)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Environmental Sciences
Date of registration of the study programme	2010

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The procedures of the evaluation of Vytautas Magnus University (hereafter the University; VMU) Master's Study Programme Environmental Management (hereafter the Programme) were initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania nominating the external evaluation peer group formed by the head, professor David Eastwood (University of Ulster, N.Ireland), professor Judit Padisak (University of Pannonia, Hungary), professor Kalev Sepp (Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonia), Lina Šleinotaitė-Budrienė, employer representative (Lithuania) and Armandas Pisarskis, student representative (Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania).

For the evaluation of the study programme, the documents regulating evaluation were used (Procedure of the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes, Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes, General Requirements of Master's Degree Study Programmes, Description of VMU Examination Sessions and Final Work Education and Defence Organisation, Study Programme Committee Regulations).

The basis for the evaluation of the study programme is the Self Evaluation Report (SER), written in November 2013, its 5 Annexes, and the site visit of the expert group to VMU on 6 May 2014. The SER was evaluated as comprehensive and useful, including the self-evaluatory analysis of the programme's current strengths and weaknesses.

The visit incorporated all required meetings with different groups including the Dean and Vice Deans of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, the Head of the Department of Environmental Sciences, staff responsible for the preparation of the SER documents, teaching staff, students of both years of study, graduates and employers. The expert team evaluated various support services (laboratories, library, IT facilities), examined students' final works and various other materials. Any additional documentation requested was also provided.

After the expert team discussions and additional preparations of conclusions and remarks, preliminary general conclusions of the visit were presented. After the visit, experts met to discuss the contents of this report, which represents the expert team's consensual views.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of the Programme are defined taking into account corresponding international and local directives and documents. The Programme aims and learning outcomes are adequately and clearly defined, and are publicly accessible, both on the VMU website (<http://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/101>) and in other VMU publicity materials.

The main aims of the study Programme are *'to acquire interdisciplinary knowledge and skills necessary for a qualified environmental professional to carry out modern scientific research on anthropogenic environmental and climate changes and their impact on the wildlife and human health, analyse and summarise results about the state and changes in the natural environment, and make decisions, solving complex environmental problems according to the sustainability principles and Lithuanian and the EU legal acts.'* As such, the Programme is intended to achieve the ambitious but very laudatory dual aim of simultaneously preparing both researchers and university teachers and highly qualified environmental managers. However, current enrolment does not extend beyond available scholarships, indicating limited market attractiveness, and there appear to be no plans to renew part-time provisions through enhance distance learning technologies.

The study Programme meets the requirements of the relevant legislative demands. The Programme is interdisciplinary with adequate links between subjects, their sequencing, and the infrastructure available for the running of the study Programme. The range and complexity of the learning outcomes are appropriate for the study field and level of the Programme. However, the learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are only partly compatible with each other and several areas, such as climate change, wildlife and environmental management in EU, are not fully covered by the expected learning outcomes. Additionally, the Programme lacks a suitable measure of internationality in the study outcomes.

The list of learning outcomes and the study Programme itself are periodically upgraded in accordance with the changes in the environmental situation, related national and EU regulations, and with changing employer and student demands. Important tools in the appropriate regular updating of the Programme content and learning outcomes are the successful functioning of the Programme Committee, the strategic planning of its development and regular consultations with social partners. Although there is currently some interaction with external stakeholders and

social partners in the study Programme renewal process, their involvement remains too limited and should be further enhanced.

2. Curriculum design

The Programme is a full-time master study programme. The duration of the Programme is 4 semesters during which a total of 120 credits are covered. The first 3 semesters are devoted to graduate study courses covering 84 credits. The last (4th) semester is devoted to Scientific-Professional Practice (6 credits) and the preparation of the Master Thesis (30 credits).

The curriculum design meets the general legal requirements: the number of subjects per semester is adequate; the number of deepening subjects covers the main part of the Programme; the volume of self-study is sufficient and regulated and project work is included in the Programme as a significant element of subjects taught.

The Programme consists of compulsory and optional subjects, with 11 compulsory subjects, totalling 66 credits, and 2 optional subjects of 6 credits each. Of the compulsory subjects, 5 are primarily research-oriented courses, and 6 are primarily management-oriented courses. Unfortunately the two optional courses (Radioecology and Molecular Ecology) are very specific and a range of potential alternative optional courses on environmental management issues is missing.

Study forms and methods (lectures, laboratory classes, project works, brainstorming, independent studies etc.) are appropriate to the subject material being presented and to enabling students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Traditional teaching techniques (lectures and exercises) provide the core of the work. Problem-based learning has also been developed in some courses and new teaching methods using the computer network are being introduced. Small study groups allow for a personalised communication between students and teachers, which is much appreciated by the students. Students were clearly satisfied with the teaching in general, but indicated need for more field courses and more training in laboratories and companies. Students, who did their bachelor studies at the VMU, also pointed out that the content of some courses are too similar to those what they have studied at bachelor level.

With respect to the Programme curriculum of a masters degree in environmental management, rather than a programme in purely environmental science, emphasis appears to be too limited in a number of areas, e. g. EU environmental legislation and policy, especially considering the growing significance of legislation issues in the development and application of environmental management. The Programme is currently too structured around individual researcher-interest, basic science courses and lacks sufficient issues-based, integrating environmental themes

Topics such as climate change (mitigation policies), wildlife (species, habitats, ecosystems etc), and environmental management in EU are not sufficiently covered at course level in order to meet the expected learning outcomes.

Additionally, there is a notable absence of any ‘principles of management’ courses in the curriculum within which the interweaving social, political and economic principles of management and their respective roles in the formulation of policy are analysed at both theoretical and applied environmental practice levels.

A further direction for the improvement in the study curricula is for the inclusion of a study course in research methodology. Several displayed master theses, even those with the mark of 9 and 10, lacked traditional academic structure, layout etc, and, above all, lacked adequate comparative bibliographically supported contextual analysis.

The content of the Programme primarily reflects demands of the employment market in Lithuania. The requirement to reflect the latest achievements in science, art and technologies is documented. Whether or not this objective is achieved cannot be evaluated based only on the description of the study modules.

3. Staff

The number of teachers delivering the Programme is 10, of which 7 are staff in the Department of Environmental Sciences, 2 from other VMU Faculties and 1 from an external institution. In compliance with the Lithuanian and VMU regulations for Masters’ study programmes, the majority of the staff who deliver the Programme are professors or associate professors (professors -50%; associate professors – 30%). In addition, 2 technical staff members provide laboratory support; a number which does seem to be barely adequate.

The qualifications of the Programme teaching staff are clearly adequate to implement the Programme’s current aims and intended outcomes. All teaching staff have doctoral degrees and

all are active researchers with their current research interests fully congruent with the individual courses they teach. Evaluated in terms of publications, grant income and conference participation, Programme staff research activity, mirroring that of the Department of Environmental Sciences as a whole, is currently on a significantly upward curve.

The gender structure of the Programme staff is balanced, but the age structure is skewed towards older staff and, despite some usage of young research associates for example in practical classes, the relative absence of young Programme staff must be a cause for growing concern. Despite the skewed age structure however, the current relationship between staff and students is undoubtedly good and was a source of positive comment from the students interviewed during the review visit.

VMU policies and regulations on teaching and research quality assessment ensures an annual individual staff appraisal based on a combination of research, teaching and professional development criteria and which is reflected in salary bonuses. In recent years, attempts have been made to reduce teaching hours for younger staff in order to facilitate increased research activity. Although this does not appear to be a significant problem for this particular Programme, the Programme SER nonetheless states that it would be “helpful” to further reduce current teaching loads for younger staff.

Continued professional development operates at a number of levels. In terms of teaching quality, at Departmental level there has been good staff participation in recent VMU training programmes, although the impacts this university-wide training has had on this specific Programme remain impossible to ascertain. However, in terms of research quality, the research profiles of the staff directly involved in the Programme are good in terms of the quantity and quality of publications, successful research grants outcomes and conference participations at both national and EU levels and this research agenda clearly permeates into the contemporary nature of the current Programme content.

The Programme SER notes that staff mobility via established mobility programmes such as the Erasmus programme remains limited. However, this is to some extent clearly offset by increased international research contacts and by international conference participations. Nonetheless, during the review visit it was apparent that limited ability in English remains an obstacle to mobility, particularly amongst older Programme staff. Additionally, inward mobility, for example through the invited use of visiting international teaching staff, appears to be similarly linguistically restricted. The fact that currently none of the Programme’s courses are now being taught in English is self evidently a further limiting factor. The absence of international visiting

teaching staff was a negative issue strongly raised by students interviewed during the review visit.

Programme graduates interviewed during the review identified a need for additional staff input versed in the modern practical, as opposed to theoretical, skills required in professional employment – both technical and managerial skills.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises for studies are adequate both in their size and quality. The material sources available for the study Programme can be considered as good, both with respect to research resources and facilities for student work. There exist an appropriate number of study rooms, of inventory and equipment. Significant numbers of facilities are available for student and academic staff research work. There are eleven specialised, well equipped laboratories (eight of which are directly managed by the Department's technical staff) and two auditoriums. The infrastructure for the Environmental Management Programme has been significantly improved in the 2007-2013 period. Considerable recent improvements have taken place through the efficient use of European Union financial aid programmes, as well as fundraising activities of the Department administration and staff members who deserve praise for their efforts.

Library facilities and the availability of books and periodical publications can support successful study and research process; students have access to approximately 30 scientific data bases such as EBSCO, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Oxford Journals Online and others. Databases important for the study field are readily accessible; they are continuously subject to review, renewal and addition.

Despite minor limitations in terms of multiple copies of textbooks, in terms of environmental science, the suitability and accessibility of the learning materials is adequate. However, in terms of environmental management texts the number of books in English should be higher.

Several virtual learning environment and collaboration systems like Moodle and VMU First Class system as well as other IT technologies are used by the students and Faculty academic staff.

5. Study process and student assessment

The admission requirements are well-founded and meet both legal requirements and VMU admission regulations. Applicant qualifications are assessed on a competitive formula driven

basis which takes into account previous examination results, including bachelor thesis marks. The Programme is well advertised with public information available through the VMU website, study fairs and open days. Quota limited funding is state funded, but VMU is not currently providing additional scholarship funding.

The study process meets legal requirements and ensures an adequate provision of the Programme for the achievement of the learning outcomes. Scheduled details of the Programme are provided on the VMU intranet and the Faculty bulletin board. There is adequate inherent schedule flexibility with module change opportunities available within the first semester month. Examination sessions are organised on a semester basis and distributed evenly over the examination period. Student progress is monitored at Decanal and Head of Department levels; re-sits are permitted and drop-out rates are low.

Students have a free choice of final research thesis topics and supervisors, and initiation of thesis research begins early in the Programme. However, inevitably this freedom of choice imposes strains on adequate resourcing in terms of both staff and material resources. As a potential consequence of this, deficiencies were found in both the structuring and production of several theses examined during the review visit, (e.g. absence of adequate discussion of results and incorrectly formatted referencing).

Opportunities exist for participation in student mobility programmes, but take up is modest. The Programme SER notes that student mobility “should be increased“, both in terms of outgoing and incoming students. Clearly the current absence of programme courses in English provides a significant restriction to the admission of foreign students, but student interviews during the review visit suggest that financial limitations currently provide a bigger barrier to mobility than any linguistic difficulties.

Social student support is very good. There are internet websites of student clubs and organisations and administration support for example the Finance Office and the Career Planning Office. However, academic support is rather more patchy. Support is readily available from teaching staff at course level, but is less formalised at programme or pastoral levels. There is no students’ Advisor of Studies system.

Teaching staff widely utilise the Moodle VLE for publishing study subject material and for information distribution. However, the range of learning opportunities afforded by the Moodle system for both interactive teaching and distance learning have not yet been fully realised.

Programme assessment criteria are clear, transparent and readily available on the Moodle VLE. Assessment requirements are scheduled evenly and students interviewed during the review visit expressed satisfaction with their overall work and assessment loads. The assessment of the final

thesis component is in two stages; first, pre-defence procedures are organised inside the Department where major drawbacks are identified; second, an official defence which involves a supervisor's report and a qualification panel including external examiner and social partner representation.

Academic staff interviewed during the review appeared hazy on the issue of plagiarism, but believed that it does not yet appear to constitute a major issue. However, although digital plagiarism software is readily available to staff, its use often appears to be either absent or inconsistent.

Programme graduate employment is difficult to establish due to lack of definitive data. However data from the most recent on-line graduate surveys shows 25% of the graduates choosing doctoral studies and 70% employment, of which 40% are employed in programme specialities in both the public and private sectors. Given these figures it does appear that the Programme is largely fulfilling its dual research and management aims. Employers and graduates met by the review team were positive about the need for such a programme, but also suggested areas for improvement, notably additional practical contacts such as placements with potential employers.

6. Programme management

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the Programme are largely clear and are wholly congruent with VMU Study Regulations and Study Programme Update Policy. Currently, quality assessment and upgrading of the Programme is the responsibility of the Study Programme Committee (SPC) and implementation of the Programme is the responsibility of the Head of the Department of Environmental Sciences and the Board of the Faculty of Natural Sciences. However, the SER notes that VMU is currently in the process of reorganising the administration of Programmes, and it appears as if the role of the SPC is being enhanced and the numbers of students and social partners are to be increased. Nonetheless, at the time of the review visit this enhancement process appeared to be still at an early stage of development, with restricted student and social partner inputs. Students interviewed were unaware of any SPC representation, as were all of the social partners interviewed.

At an institutional level, the VMU Centre for Quality and Innovations (CQI) currently monitors the internal quality assurance of programmes on a two year basis but, with respect to this specific masters Programme, the basis and outcomes of such a monitoring process remain unclear, and no detailed (CQI) Programme analysis was presented to the review team.

The chairmanship role on the SPC has recently been devolved from Head of Department level to teaching staff level, and the SPC is responsible for Programme evaluation processes on at least

an annual basis. However SPC meetings appear to be on a relatively informal basis and the review team were presented with neither detailed annual Programme review data, nor with SPC minutes.

On-line anonymous student questionnaires are organised on a course, rather than on a Programme, basis. Course teachers and the Head of Department are presented with the outcomes of these questionnaires, which focus on teaching quality at individual teacher/course level. However, according to the students interviewed during the review visit, any current processes of formal feedback of questionnaire results to students, or of ensuing outcomes should be better communicated to them.

There is no doubt that, at individual course teacher level, feedback from students is used to inform teachers; similarly that this feedback does offer the SPC some information on which to evaluate and improve the Programme. Additionally however, some form of SPC organised annual Programme review is clearly necessary where student views are collected and regularly collated at the whole Programme level, as well as at individual course level, and that a formal system of feedback outcomes to students introduced.

The role of graduates and social partners in informing and enhancing Programme development is similarly informal and also similarly unclear. The SER quotes as one of the strengths of the Programme management “the suggestions and proposals how to ensure quality of studies emanating from social partners“, but in interviewing social partners the review team could find no evidence of this input. Similarly, the team could find no input from interviewed graduates. Both the employers and the graduates interviewed confirmed that they would willingly provide such input if requested, and that some form of annual employer/graduate/SPS panel meeting might form a useful forum for such a process to take place.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To establish a distinct and unique VMU identity to the Programme, not only by substantially increasing the current component of management within the Programme through the introduction of a specific management skills course, but also by the greater extension and integration of VMU’s current reputation within the fields of policy and legislative studies more directly into the Programme.
2. To increase the level of integration between and within Programme courses, notably through the addition of enhanced issues-based debate arising from the political and economic challenges of contemporary environmental management.
3. To introduce specific courses in (i) research methods and (ii) EU environmental legislation/ policy. The research methods course will be especially valuable in raising the final thesis quality in terms of both analytical quality and presentational quality.
4. To extend the current level of placement and practical work
5. To systematically extend Programme and course feedback from and to students

6. To increase the involvement of graduates and social partners in the Programme's development, for example through an employers'/graduates' panel.
7. To formalise the output of the Study Programme Committee.

IV. SUMMARY

Main positive quality aspects

Programme aims and learning outcomes:

The dual aim of simultaneously training both academic researchers/university teachers and highly qualified environmental managers is both laudatory and ambitious.

Curriculum design:

Despite the pressures it places on teaching staff and material resources, the maintenance of a free student choice of final thesis topics is commendable, as is the fact that topic selection comes so relatively early in the curriculum design.

Staff:

The Programme teaching staff are well qualified, active researchers whose staff research profiles are clearly trending upwards. In spite of the increasing pressures of research on teaching staff, the availability of teachers and the current staff-student relationships on the Programme remain commendable.

Facilities and learning resources:

An important corollary of increasing staff research activities is that the resultant research grant income has been used to provide a high level of available programme equipment.

Study process and student assessment:

The range of the Programme's teaching and assessment methods is commendably broadly based and varied, paying good attention to the inclusion of generic transferable skills, such as oral and group work.

Opportunities for student mobility are good, with an adequate provision of relevant information and language training.

Programme management:

At the individual teacher level, course based feedback from student questionnaires informs both teaching course evaluation and annual staff appraisal.

Main negative quality aspects

Programme aims and learning outcomes:

Current enrolment does not extend beyond available scholarships, indicating an absence of market attractiveness, and there appear to be no plans to renew part-time provisions through enhance distance learning technologies.

Curriculum design:

While the environmental science component of the Programme is essentially sound, the environmental management component is lacking. The Programme needs to develop the environmental management component in tandem with a greater VMU individual identity, in turn leading to an enhanced reputation and greater attractiveness to the employment market, (see recommendations above with respect to increasing the management component).

The Programme is currently too structured around individual researcher-interest, basic science courses and lacks sufficient issues-based, integrating environmental themes.

Staff:

The absence of international visiting teaching staff.

Facilities and learning resources:

Current available input from social partners and graduates is very limited leading, amongst other things, to restrictions in opportunities for practical placements and to the additional availability of external equipment and resources in both the public and the private sectors.

Study process and student assessment:

Reviewers' examination of final theses revealed a number of common concerns, (e.g. inadequate discussion and incorrect referencing). This strongly suggests the need for an overarching research methods course to be included within the Programme.

Programme management:

Formal Study Programme Committee documentation appears to be virtually absent (e.g. minutes of meetings, annual evaluation reports, strategic development plans etc.).

The current system for any systematic involvement of the student voice in Programme management, either in terms of collecting information *from* students (Programme committee activity or in Programme-wide evaluation) or in disseminating action feedback *back to* students is currently inadequate.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Environmental management* (state code – 621F70002) at Vytautas Magnus University is given positive evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation Area in Points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Staff	3
4.	Material resources	3
5.	Study process and assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
	Total:	17

*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. David Eastwood

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. dr. Judit Padisak

Prof. dr. Kalev Sepp

Dr. Lina Šleinotaitė-Budrienė

Armandas Pisarskis

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Aplinkosaugos organizavimas* (valstybinis kodas – 621F70002) vertinama teigiamai.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	3
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	17

* 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

Svarbiausi teigiami kokybės aspektai

Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai:

Dvigubas tikslas tuo pačiu metu rengti akademinis mokslo tyrėjus/universiteto dėstytojus ir aukštos kvalifikacijos aplinkosaugos vadybininkus yra vienodai girtinas ir ambicingas.

Programos sandara:

Nepaisant sunkumų, tenkančių akademiniam personalui ir dėl materialijų išteklių, tai, kad studentai gali laisvai rinktis baigiamojo darbo temas, yra pagirtina, kaip ir tas faktas, kad temų pasirinkimas vyksta palyginti gana anksti.

Personalas:

Programą įgyvendinantys dėstytojai yra iš esmės tinkamos kvalifikacijos, aktyviai dalyvauja mokslinėje veikloje, o jų mokslinės veiklos profilis aiškiai gerėja.

Nepaisant didėjančio skatinimo personalui vykdyti mokslinius tyrimus, dėstytojų prieinamumas ir dabartinis personalo-studentų santykis Programoje išlieka pagirtinas.

Materialieji ištekliai:

Svarbus nuolat didėjančios dėstytojų mokslinės veiklos rezultatas yra tai, kad atitinkamos mokslinių tyrimų rėmimo pajamos buvo panaudotos aukšto lygio moderniai Programos įrangai įsigyti.

Studijų eiga ir studentų vertinimas:

Programos dėstymo ir vertinimo metodų diapazonas yra pagirtinai išplėstas ir įvairus, skiriant didelį dėmesį bendriesiems perkeliamesiems gebėjimams, tokiems kaip žodinis ir grupinis darbas, ugdyti.

Sudarytos geros studentų judumo galimybės, pateikiant tinkamą informaciją ir kalbų mokymosi galimybes.

Programos vadyba:

Atskirų dėstytojų lygmeniu grįžtamasis ryšys apie studijų dalykus, gautas remiantis studentų apklausomis, pasitelkiamas tiek vertinant studijų kursą, tiek ir atliekant metinį dėstytojų vertinimą.

Svarbiausi neigiami kokybės aspektai

Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai:

Dabartinis studentų priėmimas neviršija galimų finansuojamų vietų skaičiaus. Tai rodo, kad rinka nepatraukli, ir, atrodo, nėra planų atnaujinti išžėstines studijas pasitelkiant sustiprintas nuotolinių studijų technologijas.

Programos sandara

Aplinkosaugos mokslo komponentas Programoje yra pakankamai stiprus, tačiau trūksta aplinkosaugos vadybos komponento. Programą reikia tobulinti ir įvesti aplinkos vadybos komponentą kartu su ryškesniu VDU identitetu, leidžiančiu stiprinti reputaciją ir didinti patrauklumą darbo rinkai (žr. rekomendacijas, skirtas vadybos komponentui stiprinti).

Šiuo metu Programa yra pernelyg nukreipta į atskirų mokslininkų interesus, mokslo pagrindų kursus ir jai trūksta problemomis pagrįstų integruotų aplinkosaugos temų.

Personalas:

Trūksta tarptautinio lygio vizituojančių dėstytojų.

Materialieji ištekliai:

Šiuo metu esamas socialinių partnerių ir absolventų indėlis yra gana ribotas ir, be kita ko, riboja praktines įdarbinimo galimybes bei galimybes papildomai naudotis išorės įranga ir ištekliais tiek viešajame, tiek ir privačiame sektoriuje.

Studijų eiga ir studentų vertinimas:

Ekspertų peržiūrėti baigiamieji darbai atskleidė nemažai bendrų susirūpinimą keliančių dalykų (pvz., nepakankamas rezultatų aptarimas ir neteisingas nuorodų pateikimas). Tai reiškia, kad Programą reikia papildyti studijomis apie pamatinius mokslinių tyrimų metodus.

Programos vadyba:

Nustatyta, kad oficialios studijų Programos komiteto dokumentacijos faktiškai nėra (pvz., susirinkimų protokolų, metinių vertinimo ataskaitų, strateginių plėtros planų ir kt.).

Esama sistema, skirta bet kokiam sistemingam studentų įtraukimui į Programos valdymą, ar tai būtų informacijos rinkimas iš studentų (Programos komiteto veikloje ar visos Programos vertinime), ar grįžtamojo ryšio apie įgyvendintus veiksmus skleidimas *studentams*, šiuo metu nepakankama.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Atskleisti išskirtinį ir unikalų VDU identitetą Programoje, ne tik žymiai padidinant esamą vadybinį komponentą Programoje įvedant specialų vadybos gebėjimų kursą, bet taip pat išplečiant ir tiesiogiai į Programą integruojant VDU reputaciją politikos ir teisės studijų srityse.
2. Sustiprinti integracijos lygį tarp atskirų Programos kursų ir kursų struktūroje, ypač įtraukiant papildomus debatus apie svarbias problemas, kylančias dėl politinių ir ekonominių iššūkių šiuolaikinio aplinkosaugos valdymo srityje.
3. Įvesti specialius kursus (i) mokslinių tyrimų metodų ir (ii) ES aplinkosaugos teisės, politikos. Mokslinių tyrimų metodų kursas būtų itin vertingas gerinant diplominių darbų kokybę tiek analitiniu, tiek ir pristatymo aspektu.
4. Išplėsti esamą įdarbinimo ir praktinio darbo lygį.
5. Sistemingai plėsti ir gerinti studentų grįžtamojo ryšio apie Programą ir studijų dalykus struktūrą bei atitinkamą studentų informavimą.
6. Didinti absolventų ir socialinių partnerių dalyvavimą tobulinant Programą, pavyzdžiui, organizuojant darbdavių ir absolventų diskusijas.
7. Formalizuoti studijų Programos komiteto veiklos rezultatus.

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