



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS DAILĖS AKADEMIJOS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS ANIMACIJA
(*valstybinis kodas - 612W60002*)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT OF ANIMATION
(*state code - 612W60002*)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS

Experts' team:

1. **Prof. dr. Annie Doona** (team leader) *academic,*
2. **Mr. Mika Ritalahti,** *academic,*
3. **Dr. Peter Purg,** *academic,*
4. **Mr. David Quin,** *academic,*
5. **Ms. Vilma Samulionytė,** *representative of social partners'*
6. **Ms. Julija Paulauskaitė,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator -

Ms Natalja Bogdanova

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Animacija</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612W60002
Studijų sritis	Meno studijos
Studijų kryptis	Fotografija ir medijos
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė – 4 metai
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Fotografijos ir medijų bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2002-04-14

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Animation</i>
State code	612W60002
Study area	Arts
Study field	Photography and Media
Type of the study programme	University
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time – 4 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Photography and Media
Date of registration of the study programme	2002-04-14

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Background of the evaluation process	4
1.2. General	4
1.3. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information	5
1.4. The Review Team	5
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS.....	6
2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes	6
2.2. Curriculum design.....	8
2.3. Teaching staff.....	11
2.4. Facilities and learning resources	12
2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment	13
2.6. Programme management	16
III. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	18
IV. SUMMARY	19
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT.....	21

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.	1 page printed handout ‘Changes made after the SER was delivered to the CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION (SKVC) May 30, 2015 (the handout is signed by Prof. Alvydas Lukys and is dated November 25, 2015)
2.	1 page printed diagram from Egle Ganda Bogdaniene (Vice Rector for Studies) ‘INTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION PHASES OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS’
3.	A selection of other documents was presented at the management meeting – mostly VAA publicity material, brochures about the Nida Artists’ Colony and the VAA Student Handbook.

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

According to page 6 of the SER, the procedures of study process at the Photography and Media Art Department are aligned with the valid legal acts, VAA documents (Statute, Study Regulation, The Mission and Development Strategy of VAA, the Code of Ethics of the Academy, etc.), the general principles of Bologna declarations, topicalities of Tuning Project, and the aims of the postgraduate study programmes.

A Studio of Image for requirements of Fine Art studies on the media technique was established in 1994 and the Photography and Media Art programme was started in 1996. The VAA Animation programme was created in 2002 and the first students were admitted.

International external evaluation of Photography and Media Art BA and MA programmes has been completed twice, in 2010 and 2014.

According to page 7 of the SER the VAA Animation programme was first created in 2002 and was first submitted for evaluation in 2014. ‘BA degree study programme Animation was part of the project The Development of Study Programmes within National Complex Programmes, and the Enhancement of 1st Cycle Study Programmes of Vilnius Architecture and Design Faculty of VAA (project code VP1-2.2.-ŠMM-07-K-01-121), and as a result, the degree has been partially – up to 12.2% – of its scope – revised affecting 11(ECTS) credits and such subject courses as Animation 1 (5 credits), Animation 2 (3 credits), Animation 3 (3 credits)‘.

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 27th November, 2015.

- 1. Dr. Annie Doona (team leader)**, *President of Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland.*
- 2. Mika Ritalahti**, *Silva Mysterium Oy producer and managing director, Finland.*
- 3. Dr. Peter Purg**, *professor of University of Nova Gorica, SQAA evaluator, Slovenia.*
- 4. David Quin**, *lector of Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Ireland.*
- 5. Vilma Samulionytė**, *photographer, curator- project manager and secretary of board of Lithuanian Photographers Association, Lithuania.*
- 6. Julija Paulauskaitė**, *student of Kaunas University of Technology study programme Philosophy of Media, Lithuania.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims are broad and ambitious, aiming graduates towards possible activity in the fields of animation art, commerce and industry. According to SER p. 8, the programme aim is *„to educate artists animators with a broad intellectual background and capable of informed judgment about current world artistic processes and ready to take part in them“*. This includes equipping graduates with *„adequate general and subject competences sufficient for autonomous work in different techniques and media, in the fields of animation art, of commerce and industry“*. On completion of the programme, graduates should be *„able to creatively exploit a range of opportunities of present day application of animation“*. As it stands, graduates complained of not graduating as animators and patently lacked many of the studio skills, technical competencies, group-working abilities and business soft skills necessary to enter the competitive creative industry field. The programme aims and learning outcomes (LOs) are based on a somewhat outdated Academy view of humanist art education, are not strongly mapped to professional requirements, public needs or the needs of any labour market. Key skills such as modern critical and cultural studies, academic research and writing skills are also conspicuously absent from this programme.

The programme team demonstrated little comprehension of (or respect for) the potentials of the Lithuanian animation marketplace. It is also questionable whether much of the final (award year) work presented to the review team evidenced artistic confidence or competency, artistic judgement, risk-taking, experimentation, conceptualisation, argument or expression.

In order to confidently and sustainably offer learning opportunities to create modern 21st Century ‘artist animators’, the programme aims would benefit from an immediate complete revision and refocus.

The Review Team note that programme LOs are in place; however these are too numerous (30 LOs), some are far too complex and many may not be intelligible to an applicant. For example the second LO (A2) *„Graduates will have philosophy knowledge, knowledge of world fine arts heritage, fine arts of different epochs, contemporary art and culture processes, animation, cinema, video and media arts“* is ambitious and extremely ambiguous, more a description of an entire media studies programme than a discrete programme learning outcome. Any applicant might question ‘why’ such subjects are to be learned and how such subjects will relate to their practice (on graduation) as an Artist Animator. Another LO B2 *„Graduates will be able to analyse and generalize, adequately evaluate processes going on in the field of art, critically think and make responsible decisions in professional field; creatively perceive and evaluate environment opportunities seeking to form individual creation style; analyse and understand the latest attainments of animation art and apply them in creation;*

articulate professional quality parameters; analyse and reasonably evaluate their creation field“ is again too long, too broad and conflates too many complex competencies (analysis, evaluation, critical thinking, professionalisation, creative perception, environmental evaluation, the formation of an individual creative style, the analysis of the latest attainments in animation art etc).

The Review Team would suggest that the current LOs should be rationalised, simplified, reduced in number and focused on the rounded development (as stated in the programme aims) of ‘Artist Animators’.

The SER (p. 49) rightly identifies a weakness with regard to „social publicity about the programme and its outcomes“. The Review Team support this serious concern. The Review Team note that a new Academy website is in place but would still wish to see a more concise and focused approach to the programme descriptors and learning outcomes. The apparent confusion and lack of focus about these outcomes may, in part, be contributing to the lack of effective communication about the programme. Unclear and unfocused programme aims and learning outcomes are difficult to communicate and hard for applicants to comprehend.

From an international perspective, the name of this programme *Animation* is misleadingly broad. The Bachelor Award for this programme is Bachelor in Photography and Media. The programme aims to create Artist Animators and the programme is based in the Vilnius Academy of Arts. The attitude of senior programme lecturing staff to conventional, mainstream animation could be viewed as somewhat contemptuous describing such professional practitioners are ‘amateurs’ – in the meeting with the Review Team, one senior lecturer said: „*Many colleges in Lithuania prepare these ‘amateur animators’ who can work in studios. We are Academy.*“ At best, a young lecturer articulated „*There is no rivalry, no competition. There is interesting dialogue between market orientation and animation as means of expression*“. However, on p. 13 of the SER (aspects that need improvement) it is stated: „*In training artists animators, their future career professional field should be perceived as much wider, that of creative industries.*“ At worst, such unresolved ‘tension and dialogue’ verges on complete confusion. Such confusion in relation to this programme was evident in the Academy Management, the SER group, teachers, students, alumni and stakeholders and is almost certainly affecting applicants perceptions of the programme and of graduate potentials. In the meeting with the Review Team, one graduate said „*We came here expecting one thing and we got something else.*“ Any such confusion needs to be urgently resolved. A change in name to *Animation Art* might begin to clarify the identity of the programme immediately but this is not a cosmetic problem, to be solved by a name change alone. The confusion in this programme is systemic, relating to the name, the aims, the structure of the programme, pedagogy, the attitude of the teaching staff and (perhaps most problematic of all) to the attitude of VAA Management.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design of this programme meets Lithuanian and VAA legal requirements. According to p. 15 of the SER „*the overall volume of BA study programme, the volume and proportions of individual study subjects/modules, classroom work and self-study, and the forms of assessment are in complete compliance with requirements stipulated by the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal study regulating documents: Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania No. XI-242, of 30 April 2009; General Requirements for the First Degree and Integrated Study Programmes 9 April 2010, No. V-501; VAA Study Regulation (16.01.2013 / Protocol No. 2).*“

However, the Review Team would argue that curriculum design on this programme needs some serious and urgent revision. The breadth of the programme aims may be an issue along with the lack of clear and sufficient animation pathways. In the meeting with the Review Team, one student said „*I would like one more animation teacher, a specialist.*“ It was clear from much of the work presented to the Review Team (progression year work and final work) that technical animation skill levels varied from extremely weak to moderate. The Review Team would agree with the statement on p. 26 of the SER (in aspects that need improvement) „*additional teachers for animation discipline would be desirable*“.

The Review Team would also like to see greater clarity around the balance between theoretical and practical aspects of this programme. In the context of this animation programme, the theory and history of animation and of film should be learned in a carefully sequenced, iterative and assessable manner, building the students‘ theoretical, contextual and critical knowledge, in line with international best practice. Alumni stated that their expectations of this programme prior to attending were not always met, although they did acknowledge the good support they received from teaching staff. One graduate asked „*How can you teach all of these things? You can spend some time experimenting, find what you like to do, figuring out what you want.*“ Another graduate described her time on the programme as „*These years were random.*“ This strongly suggests that student learning is often self-directed, and that the students are not receiving adequate preparation for such self-directed learning styles.

Because the programme LOs are too numerous, too complex and too broad, it is impossible to assess or assert that the content and modules are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Similarly, assessment procedures (based on modules with no learning outcomes and no criteria for assessment) appear seriously opaque and are not clearly fair, valid, reliable, transparent and pragmatic.

At module or course unit level (Study Subject Module Programme (SSMP) in VAA parlance), learning outcomes in a conventional international sense are sometimes completely absent, sometimes generic and sometimes too numerous and too complicated. Some of the generic Academy modules framed as „*Elective general and study field subjects*“ (SER Table

Number 1 on p. 14) have no module learning outcomes (examples are HB0019 The History of Western Art. HB0024 Russian Avant-Garde). When no module learning outcomes are present, assessment seems to relate to module (course unit) aims, sometimes without any criteria for assessment.

Some misunderstanding of terminology may be involved here – where module and study subject (not ‘course unit’) have been used as synonyms throughout the programme’s SER, but in academic practice ‘module’ apparently has a different meaning. The size of each module, according to legislation, has to be no less than 10 credits. In annex 2 the programme clearly describe study subjects but call those study subjects ‘modules’. Table 1 on p. 14 of the SER details up to twenty programme ‘modules’ worth 3 ECTS credits, five modules with 5 ECTS credits, six modules with 6 ECTS credits, two modules with 8 ECTS credits assigned and one module with 9 ECTS credits assigned. So, the course doesn’t have ‘modules’ as they would be understood in international terms. Rather, the SSMP (Study Subject Module Programme) descriptors are ‘course unit’ descriptors.

Other *Elective general and study field subjects* have the following generic learning outcomes: 1. To demonstrate a contextual understanding of cultural phenomena and processes as well as relevant debates. 2. To carry out independent research by following the principles of (professional) ethics and understanding moral responsibility (HB0025 Aesthetics and philosophy of art and HB0022 The History of Philosophy – are examples of the use of generic module learning outcomes). Occasionally, a further, apparently course specific module LO (described as „Learning outcomes for Bachelor's degree programme Photography and Media Arts“) is included with the two generic outcomes, a programme LO called E1 „*Graduates will be able to individually learn their professional activity and study area and plan learning process. They will demonstrate learning and creative work planning skills.*“ Even the final semester, 24 credit „Final Work Project (Animation)“ module has no learning outcomes in the SSMP module descriptor. Assessment methods for that final module are described on the document as „Graduation show, Mid-term show“, but the actual method of assessment (which is apparently through a VAA Exam Board panel) and the assessment criteria used by such an Exam Board panel are not described anywhere and were not clearly and transparently understood, even by the Animation programme senior lecturers.

One module HB0023 The History of Western Art has four, fairly recognisable (in international terms) functioning module LOs: 1. To evaluate and interpret processes of contemporary art in their historical, cultural and social context. 2. To find a relevant object of research independently, formulate a research question relevant to the discipline, apply a suitable research method, analyse primary and secondary sources and summarise results. 3. To use libraries, data bases, bibliographic materials and research results. 4. To analyse and interpret works of art by applying theories and methods studied in the programme.

None of the Drawing modules on the programme (MB0175 Drawing 2. MB0176 Drawing 4. MB0177 Drawing 5. MB0178 Drawing 6) appear to have module LOs.

Crucial, core modules such as the 12 credit MB0513 Animation 2 have too many module LOs (11 on this module) and many of the learning outcomes are far too long, too complex and conflate too many disparate competencies. LO Number 6 is a case in point, „*Will be able to analyse live physical movements and apply this knowledge in animation film. Will be able to create individual and unique animation movements. Will use the acquired knowledge for alternative forms of animation, and apply it for transformations of their characters using a range of techniques. Will look for an original artistic solution.*“ Such a LO is, in effect, four discrete learning outcomes in one. A module LOs such as this must be clarified, simplified and focused or, if that’s not possible, it should be broken down into discrete LOs components. In this case clarification, simplification and focus are required.

A final confusing conflation occurs in other modules MB0417 Workshop 1 is an example, where two module LOs are ‘supplemented’ by no fewer than eight programme learning outcomes. On MB0420 Multimedia, five already complex module LOs are ‘supplemented’ by five programme learning outcomes.

The result is that the programme structure and descriptors are unclear and confusing. Modules or course units or courses (no matter what descriptive term is used) without clear module (course unit or course) LOs are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to map (and check) against programme LOs. The assessment of modules without module LOs and clear criteria for assessment is rarely fair, valid, reliable, pragmatic and transparent. The use of ‘generic’ module learning outcomes borders on the pointless and the use of programme LOs on module descriptors is rarely appropriate and confuses teachers and students, even if the programme LOs are simplified, rational and focused. The current LOs on this programme are over complex, over long and unfocused.

The scope and sufficiency of the programme is difficult or impossible to clearly calibrate or assess. Animation technique seems deficient in many of the Final Project works presented. The absence of sufficient final project academic written work (a thesis) would also be classed (in international terms) as insufficient to meet most Bachelor level award standards. Professional soft skills, such as animation principles, animation studio craft, group working, pitching and presentation, business skills – even a comprehension of the Lithuania creative industry market was not evident in the programme, or in the teachers, students and alumni.

This programme does not reflect many of the latest achievements in science, art and technologies. When asked against which international programmes the VAA animation programme was benchmarked, the programme team was completely unclear. The only other animation programme mentioned was Gobelins (L’Ecole de l’image) in Paris – an advanced postgraduate college which produces “the multi-function generalists companies are looking for”

. In contrast to the Gobelins mission statement, VAA Animation graduates, when asked if they would describe themselves as Freelance artists responded *“It’s like you have to do everything. Storyboarder, scriptwriter. We are not prepared for that.”* Another VAA Animation graduate said *“In the diploma it is written, photography animator, but it’s not. I graduated from this programme, but I’m not an animator.”*

2.3. Teaching staff

The study programme is provided by staff meeting legal requirements of Lithuania and of the VAA. Page 19 of the SER states *„In line with applicable legal acts, all the study subjects of the BA degree study programme of Photography and Media Art are delivered by artists specialists of a respective field, art critics and historians, philosophers, as well as experts in humanities and social sciences (detailed in Annex 3 and Annex 4). There are 12 full-time teachers. Speciality subjects are delivered by 8 PhD teachers. In accordance with the Statute of the Academy, teachers are selected in an open competition held in compliance to the regulations set forth by the Law on Science and Studies and have to meet the qualification requirements established therein and defined in the documents of the Academy. Main selection criteria are professional competence, practical experience, intense creative agency, communicability, and tolerance for difference in opinion.“* The number of staff is adequate to achieve the current LOs and programme aims, but the Review Team would argue that the programme aims and programme LOs need urgent, drastic revision and the programme team needs refreshing and development (especially pedagogical development).

Staff are very enthusiastic and supportive of the programme. Staff are well qualified and highly regarded as artists in their field. The Review Team did feel however that there needs to be a more systematic approach to pedagogical development of, and training for staff. In the meeting with the Review Team, teachers complained *“We are practicing artists and have no time for that, courses and artistic work takes all our time. There are optional courses, time to time we get invited to courses. These opportunities are not too numerous. We seek professional training at our own expense.“* In the meeting with Management the Review Team, were informed that the Academy had participated in a big programme about new teaching methods, but the senior member of VAA management could not recall how long ago that big programme had taken place. It was clearly evident to the Review Team that modern practices in relation to programme design, module design, blended learning, technology enhanced learning and reliable and valid assessment were not understood by many or all of the experienced lecturing team. When asked about group working within the programme, one graduate said *“I remember a situation when we asked why can’t we work together? ‘But how would we assess your work?’ was the answer from the teachers.“*

There are extremely limited opportunities for international teacher mobility. Only one lecturer met by the Review Team travelled regularly and extensively (at least once a month, sometimes for one month at a time, he told the Review Team). Most other lecturers had no opportunities to travel. A senior lecturer expressed his frustration „*it's a problem with money and time, we cannot go to other schools and study the programme.*“ A professor member of the SER group expressed this isolation as ‘animators are in their own world, kind of ‘oldtimers‘. The SER noted this need for greater international mobility and opportunities for travel.

There is limited staff turnover on this programme. On p. 22 and 23 of the SER, staff turnover was described as ‘stable‘ and ‘insignificant‘. This somewhat contradictory SER description reflects the need for an urgent development and refreshing of the programme team, which would allow older and experienced lecturers the mobility to broaden their pedagogical and artistic scope through international contacts and mobility, which would bring younger lecturers into the programme team on a more sustained and permanent basis and which would afford planned and structured professional pedagogical development to all programme staff, young and old.

Programme staff are active as artists and professionals (SER p. 23), but the Review Team saw little or no evidence that Vilnius Art Academy is creating adequate conditions for the professional pedagogical development of the animation programme staff.

The research activity of two of the programme’s staff is detailed in a short paragraph (SER p. 24) and mainly consists of publications and monographs (the most recent published in 2011), as well as a 2009 translation of Lev Manovich’s *The Language of New Media*. No other programme staff are involved in research (art or science). The mention of science here is appropriate because many animators internationally are conducting research with scientists, psychologists etc. Most of these VAA *Animation* programme lecturers are not.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

VAA buildings and location are excellent with good gallery and exhibition spaces and adequate arrangements for student practice and learning. The newer computer provision, hardware and software are good and the software selection is modern and adequate for the production of Bachelor student animations. There are facilities for practical work but the practical animation spaces may need to be reviewed – they appeared very modest in terms of space and some of the computer equipment, linetesters etc. seemed very limited or antiquated. Page 28 of the SER details lots of photographic equipment, not specific (or really relevant) to the programme. The Review Team were also shown extensive, well-equipped wood and printing workshops in the basement which it was claimed „*could be used for animation-related construction work*“. The Review Team was shown photographic studios which (it was suggested) „*could be used for stopmotion animation work*“. This is absolutely true, except for

the fact that stopmotion shoots usually take several days, weeks or months, require quiet, privacy and security (the sets, characters and props are often in place for a long time and cannot be disturbed by passing visitors). Such stopmotion studio conditions are not usual conditions in a photographic studio.

The audio visual editing room shown to the Review Team had relatively modest editing and sound facilities, adequate for early stage student productions but in no way approaching a professionalised learning environment. Great stock was also placed on various shared facilities, such as the Audio Visual Arts Industry Incubator and the AV facilities contained therein (1 hour from the Academy, see p. 26 of SER) and in Nida Art Colony (5 hours from the Academy).

The SER (p. 30) identified the need for financial resources to ensure regular updating and sustainability of resources *„the equipment used by students tends to wear fast, and substantial financing is needed to maintain it.“* The Review Team strongly support this and note the need for a plan to ensure continued adequate resourcing of this programme and to ensure its future growth.

The VAA library is a very good space, the general collection is admirable and the modern reading room, complete with computer provision is to be commended. However, the Review Team did believe that the animation-specific titles available of the shelves were very limited in number. Very few modern or recent animation-related titles were on the shelves or in the stacks.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The admission requirements for this animation programme comply with and are well-founded according to Lithuanian laws and regulations, wherein higher education schools offering degree programmes in the area of arts must conduct joint entrance examinations as established by the Regulation for Higher Education Schools. The procedure for entrance organization and assessment is approved by the Lithuanian Minister of Education and Science. The general admission into first cycle and integrated study programmes by higher education schools is organized and carried out by the General Admission Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Schools, as the Minister's authorized body. The 31 graduates' national examination grades and their yearly grades in study subjects are recalculated upon enter competition as laid down in the General Regulation on Admission Rules into First Level and Integrated Studies at Lithuanian Higher Education Schools. Unfortunately, this VAA programme has serious difficulties with the established Lithuanian admissions procedures. Page 33 of the SER states *„the unified and anonymous admissions system introduced in Lithuanian by the 2009 Higher Education Reform malfunctions for the studies in the area of Arts. This system is damaging to talented in arts secondary level graduates, who were not so high achieving in secondary level as to be competitive with higher achieving yet not necessarily more talented in studies of art. This*

problem is exceptionally acute for the Animation study programme. Relatively small number of entrants into this rather specialized study programme, are not able, due to the listed reasons, to compete successfully in the general stream of candidates into the study programmes in the area of Arts.“ In weaknesses on p. 42 of the SER, the team state *„due to the unified and anonymous admission system not necessary the best candidates enroll in the programme. The admission system also drastically limits the amount of candidates who wish to enter the programme.*“

Study processes are in place but the Review Team would wish to see a review of these to include a more modern based blending learning approach and a more consistent approach to assessment. Assessment for learning, self assessment, group and peer assessment and technology enhanced learning are all conspicuously absent from the programme and the programme team evidenced little understanding of modern teaching, learning and assessment practices. Students did appear content with assessment and feedback practices, but the Review Team would argue that the actual learning, teaching and assessment approaches now need urgent and drastic revision, modernisation and refreshment. The Review Team note the limited uptake in opportunities for student mobility and would wish to see this developed. Table 9 and 10 on SER p. 36 detail 2 students outgoing since 2010 and 4 students incoming since 2010 (plus 13 students incoming from ‘other programme fields’). Page 36 of the SER bemoans the fact that *„a highly limited selection of foreign schools*“ offer study programmes in the same field. In the year 2015, such an opinion represents a problematically limited reading of the opportunities presented across the European and global art and animation education fields.

Greater connectivity is needed between the LO’s and the final project work. From an international point of view, the almost complete absence of academic thesis work, adequately researched, written, argued and referenced was a deep concern to the Review Team, wholly unfamiliar (in international terms) in a full Bachelor level programme. Several final project ‘Explication Papers’ were indeed presented – none of which would have anything approaching the academic critical mass or academic quality (in research, writing, argument and referencing) required to achieve most international awards at comparable Bachelor Honours level. The reviewed Final Project (animation film) works of students were of very variable quality: one of the films commendably reached the competition of a world-famous festival (Annecy), while a few others barely reached BA level pass quality in the consensual opinion of the Review Team (or in the case of the sword fighting ‘installation piece’ would have been a potential fail). The latter projects also got low final grades of 6, 7 and rarely 8 (out of 10). Much of the Final Project portfolio work presented would not even gain students an entrance place on year one of many international or European 4 year Bachelors programmes in Animation. Thus the Review Team would seriously challenge the claim of the institution on p. 8 of SER that describes the graduates as *„prepared for further university 2nd cycle studies*“ (which is also marketed publically through the website etc.). VAA Animation alumni now studying at Masters level in other

colleges told the Review Team *„It didn't prepare us very well. Didn't prepare us for theoretical thinking.“* When asked about graduates pursuing Masters studies, one senior lecturer said *„These are animators, they don't do Masters, they animate. Masters is more for Photography and Media graduates.“* Despite this attitude, four of the eight alumni met by the Review Team were studying at postgraduate level. As a Bachelor level programme the Review Team was not convinced that, due to the balance between theoretical and practical work, this programme would adequately prepare graduates for study at Masters (2nd cycle) Level.

Connections between students and lecturers are strong; individuals support students learning and development. Communication between students and teachers is conducted through email, or even by phone. In their meeting with the Review Team, teachers on the programme could not understand how a virtual learning environment such as Moodle, or any other technology enhanced learning would fit into a programme like theirs. Once again, opportunities for appropriate professional pedagogical development of the programme team would allow programme lecturers to understand the appropriate use of technology enhanced learning and the student learning potentials afforded through modern teaching and assessment approaches in art education.

There are formal and informal academic and social supports in place. Most students who spoke to the Review Team were unclear about any psychological supports in VAA, though one student did admit that she had experienced some social difficulties in the previous year *„I wrote a letter to admin and I got guidance.“*

Students are encouraged and facilitated to participate in artistic practices, exhibitions and competitions. Assessment schedules are in place although the Review Team would again question the balance between written and practical assessment. The absence and variability of many module learning outcomes and criteria for assessment is a matter of great concern. The assessment of module work (including the Final Project work) may be adequate, but criteria for assessment are often not clear, transparent and publicly available.

The programme has a relevant variety of good social partners although the students on the programme were unclear about creative work-based practice elements or opportunities. There are good opportunities for artistic practice including placement in Nida and good access to competitions. The programme delivers some business skills; however students, alumni and social partners would all like to see greater development of business related skills and professional development.

The professional activities of graduates may well meet the programme providers' expectations, but graduates who met the Review Team were mostly pursuing postgraduate studies or were struggling to find any market for relatively limited and undeveloped animation and creative abilities. Some graduates had achieved success, found employment, or had set up their own creative enterprises and this is to be commended. In their meeting with the Review

Team, one Animation Director graduate said „*You don't get the best knowledge here, but the market is divided. You learn here how to learn.*“

2.6. Programme management

Programme management saw a clear need for this programme and are supportive of it. They had identified a need to support the programme with resources to enable continued growth.

Responsibilities for decision making and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are not clearly allocated. The VAA Quality Assurance system as represented in the 1 page printed diagram presented to the Review Team ‘INTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION PHASES OF STUDY PROGRAMMES IN VILNIUS ACADEMY OF ARTS’ is extremely complicated. Some modernisation of module LOs has already taken place and this is to be commended, but in modern international terms, the VAA *Animation* programme team are ill-equipped to take proper ownership of the ongoing development of their own programme. As a result, the programme team appear to overly defer to (and depend on) the rather limited advice provided by the VAA Quality Division. This is understandable, because the centralised VAA Quality Division must of necessity spread its efforts across many Academy programmes. International lecturer mobility and the systematic professional pedagogical development of the *Animation* programme team members are the solutions to these deficits and ongoing programme development challenges.

The programme team are indeed making decisions and reacting to student concerns, but these student concerns are too often voiced informally and the solutions are too often decided and implemented at programme level. Management appeared rather complacent in relation to the quality and unique identity of the programme and uncertain as to whether it's a good programme or not. In all matters relating to quality, Management continually devolve to the argument “*but this is The Academy*”. Such attitudes present serious threats to a programme like this programme, in an already extremely competitive and rapidly evolving international field.

A more systematic approach to international benchmarking needs to be developed to enable the programme to grow, to ensure it is of the highest quality and to allow the programme to evolve a clear vision of its unique identity and direction. In the meeting with the Review Team a senior member of VAA management asserted „*Nobody knows right now what is good. It is good, but it could always be better.*“ This is not a sustainable position to take. Another senior member of VAA Management said in response to a question on what management were proud of in the programme „*I'm not so proud of the programme – I'm proud of the Academy.*“

Quality systems are in place with feedback collected from students by means of surveys and personal interactions. At programme level the quality cycle needs to be further developed to ensure better pathways and greater clarity of learning outcomes, both at programme level and at module level. Once again, the Review Team recognise that the VAA Quality Division serves a

number of programmes across the Academy, which may impact on the division's ability to adequately advise and support the *Animation* programme team.

The programme evaluation and improvement processes do involve stakeholders, with some involved on advisory boards and evaluation panels. Despite this, stakeholders told the Review Team that their involvement with the programme was „*sporadic and lacking in consistency.*“ Another stakeholder claimed this was again part of the Academy culture „*A school like VAA has less of contacts, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's an Art school.*“

This programme has great potential and the Review Team would encourage the management and programme team to take ownership of the programme and develop it in line with the strong traditions and reputation of Vilnius Art Academy.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Review Team recommends that the programme aims should be clarified, simplified and focused. The programme currently suffers from a problematic relationship or unresolved confusion between technical and artistic aspects.
2. The Review Team recommends that Programme learning outcomes should be simplified, shortened and focused.
3. The Review Team recommends that the revised programme learning outcomes and final project work (both written and practical (film) should be better related to one another.
4. The Review Team recommends a complete review of the programme's written and practical assessment.
5. The Review Team recommends a revision of all programme module documents and a clarification of the terminology used by the Academy and by the programme. Everyone (students, lecturers, management and QA reviewers) should be clear and consistent about descriptive terms such as course, course unit, module, module component. All revised modules (or course units) should contain clear learning outcomes, clear assessment methods and clear criteria for assessment.
6. The Review Team recommends an increase in the effective communication about the revised programme and its revised programme aims and graduate outcomes.
7. The Review Team recommends that clear, sufficient and sustained animation pathways and animation techniques and more professionalised animation practice should be developed through the programme.
8. The Review Team recommends a major rebalance between theoretical and practical work on this programme, including a systematic approach to Bachelor's level academic research, writing, argument and referencing. Such a systematic approach should adequately prepare graduates for study at Masters Level (2nd cycle).
9. The Review Team recommends increased development of business related skills and professional development through the programme.
10. The Review Team recommends that the systematic pedagogical development and training of all programme staff urgently needs to occur.
11. The Review Team recommends that opportunities for international mobility (student and staff) should be provided.
12. The Review Team recommends the development of an internationalisation strategy for the programme.
13. The Review Team recommends that facilities and spaces for practical animation work should be reviewed and enhanced (this would include the proper provision of rostrum cameras, lighting, stopmotion studio spaces, greenscreen setups, cameras, linetesters etc).

The program needs a plan to ensure the continued and sustained resourcing of this programme and to ensure its future growth.

14. The Review Team recommends to have a more systematic approach to international benchmarking. This needs to be developed to enable the programme to establish its unique identity, to decide upon its strategic direction and to ensure the programme is of the highest possible quality.
15. The Review Team recommends that quality cycles at programme level are better developed to ensure enhanced learning pathways and greater clarity of learning outcomes.

IV. SUMMARY

This is a broad based programme that produces graduates who have basic artistic and technical animation skills. The Self-Evaluation Report was strong with good involvement in its production and development from a range of stakeholders. The programme is responding to a very real need and opportunity in Lithuanian art and animation education. The programme is to be commended for its student and graduate successes to date. The VAA has clearly defined and responded to the need for an *Animation* programme in Lithuania and there appears to be strong applicant demand for the programme. The Review Team notes VAA's support for the programme and also notes the growth in applications and student numbers.

The VAA are similarly to be commended on their support for (especially the recent provision of material, building and equipment support for) this programme. The resourcing of this programme is good. The programme lecturing team are experienced and enthusiastic, but would no benefit from refreshment and training, especially in the area of modern pedagogical development.

The current review is timely and the review team would strongly suggest that urgent and drastic revision of the programme, programme aims, programme learning outcomes and programme focus should now take place. The modernisation of the programme teaching, learning and assessment methods, programme structure, QA management and programme lecturing team are now essential.

The Review Team also had some concerns that the breadth of the programme may be problematic in terms of graduate skills.

Although there are some good aspects to this programme the Review Team were unclear about the expectations and outcomes of the programme. There is a sense of lack of direction in terms of the relationship between the technical and the artistic aspects of this programme. The Review Team were not convinced that the programme produces Animators; indeed many of the students and graduates referred to themselves as Visual Artists. This may respond to the need for

broad based multi-skilled graduates but the Review Team was concerned that a strong and consistent basis in Animation may be lacking across all stages of the programme.

Once again, this is a broad based programme, already achieving some success. VAA management and the programme team are to be encouraged to take this timely opportunity to build this programme to become a truly distinctive offering, in Lithuanian and international terms, allowing successful students to confidently become ‘Artist Animators’.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Animation* (state code – 612W60002) at Vilnius Academy of Arts 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	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	2
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	2
6.	Programme management	2
	Total:	13

*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:

Annie Doona

Grupės nariai:

Team members:

Mika Ritalahti

Peter Purg

David Quin

Vilma Samulionytė

Julija Paulauskaitė

**VILNIAUS DAILĖS AKADEMIJOS PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
ANIMACIJA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 612W60002)
2016-02-03 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-54 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos studijų programa *Animacija* (valstybinis kodas – 612W60002) vertinama **teigiamai**.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	2
2.	Programos sandara	2
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	2
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	2
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	Iš viso:	13

* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Studijų programa *Animacija* yra plataus profilio, ją baigusieji absolventai turi pagrindinių meninių ir techninių animacijos įgūdžių. Savianalizės suvestinė gera tuo, kad ją rengiant ir tobulinant aktyviai dalyvavo įvairūs socialiniai partneriai. Studijų programa atitinka labai realius poreikius ir sudaro galimybę įgyti meninį ir animatoriaus išsilavinimą Lietuvoje. Iki šiol šią studijų programą patys studentai vertino teigiamai, tą liudija ir ją baigusiųjų pasiekimai. VAA aiškiai įvardijo animacijos studijų programos poreikį Lietuvoje ir į jį atsiliepė; panašu, kad

stojantieji noriai renkasi šią programą. Ekspertų grupė atkreipia dėmesį į VDA šiai studijų programai teikiamą pagalbą ir tai, kad stojančiųjų bei studentų skaičius auga.

Ne mažiau teigiamai vertinama ir VDA šiai studijų programai teikiama pagalba, ypač neseniai suteiktos medžiagos, pastatas ir įranga. Materialinis šios studijų programos aprūpinimas yra geras. Studijų programos dėstytojų komanda – prityrusi ir entuziastinga, tačiau jai reikėtų atsinaujinimo ir mokymų, ypač šiuolaikinės pedagoginės kvalifikacijos kėlimo srityje.

Dabartinė analizė – atlikta laiku, todėl vertinimo grupė primygtinai siūlo iškart ir neatidėliojant iš pagrindų peržiūrėti studijų programą, jos tikslus ir rezultatus. Šiuo metu svarbiausia atnaujinti studijų programos dėstymo, studijų ir vertinimo metodus, studijų programos sandarą, kokybės užtikrinimo vadybą ir dėstytojų komandą.

Be to, vertinimo grupei kelia nerimą šios studijų programos apimtis, dėl to gali kilti problemų turint omenyje absolventų įgūdžius.

Nors ši studijų programa turi ir kelis gerus aspektus, vertinimo grupei liko neaišku, ko iš šios studijų programos tikimasi ir kokie jos studijų rezultatai. Kalbant apie sąsajas tarp techninių ir meninių jos aspektų, susidaro įspūdis, kad stokojama aiškios krypties. Vertinimo grupė neįsitikinusi, kad studijų programos vykdytojai ruošia animatorius, nes daugelis studentų ir absolventų save apibūdina kaip vizualinių menų atstovus. Galbūt tai ir patenkina plataus profilio absolventų, turinčių įvairių įgūdžių, poreikį, tačiau vertinimo grupei kelia susirūpinimą tai, jog visi studijų programos etapai veikiausiai stokoja stipraus ir nuoseklaus animacijos studijų programos pagrindo.

Dar kartą grįžtant prie to, kas jau pasakyta, pabrėžiama, kad ši studijų programa – plataus profilio ir pamažu sulaukia sėkmės. VDA vadyba ir studijų programos komitetas raginami pasinaudoti tinkamu laiku ir patobulinti šią programą taip, kad ji taptų ištis išskirtinė tiek Lietuvoje, tiek užsienyje, o studentai tikrai galėtų vadintis „meniniais animatoriais“.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja aiškiau įvardyti, supaprastinti ir sukonkretinti studijų programos tikslus. Šiuo metu studijų programa kenčia dėl problemiško santykio arba neišspręstos painiavos tarp techninių ir meninių aspektų.
2. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja supaprastinti, sutrumpinti ir sukonkretinti programos studijų rezultatus.
3. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja peržiūrėtuosius studijų programos rezultatus labiau susieti su baigiamuoju projektiniu darbu (rašto dalimi ir praktine (filmuota) dalimi).
4. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja iš pagrindų persvarstyti studijų programos rašto ir praktinių darbų vertinimo sistemą.

5. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja persvarstyti visų studijų programos modulių dokumentus, pačios Akademijos bei šios studijų programos tekstuose vartojamą terminologiją ir ją išgryninti. Visi (studentai, dėstytojai, vadyba ir atsakingi už kokybės užtikrinimą) turi aiškiai ir nuosekliai suprasti aprašomuosius terminus: pavyzdžiui, *studijų dalykas*, *studijų dalyko skyrius*, *modulis*, *modulio komponentas*. Visiems persvarstytiems moduliams (arba studijų dalykams) reikia nustatyti aiškius studijų rezultatus, aiškius vertinimo metodus ir aiškius vertinimo kriterijus.
6. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja aktyviau ir veiksmingiau skleisti žinią apie persvarstytą programą, jos tikslus ir absolventų studijų rezultatus.
7. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja įgyvendinant šią programą taikyti aiškias, veiksmingas ir tvarias tikslines animacijos technikas, animacijos metodus ir labiau į animacijos profesionalus orientuotą praktiką.
8. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja išlyginti didžiulius netolygumus, pastebimus kalbant apie studijų programos teorinę ir praktinę dalį, įskaitant sisteminių požiūrį į bakalauro lygio akademinis tyrimus, rašymą, argumentavimą ir mokslinę literatūrą. Esant tokiam sisteminiam požiūriui, absolventai turėtų būti tinkamai paruošti studijuoti magistrantūroje (II studijų pakopoje).
9. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja studijų programoje padidinti verslo įgūdžiams ugdyti ir kvalifikacijai kelti skirtų dalykų skaičių.
10. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja kuo skubiau pradėti sistemingai kelti pedagoginę kvalifikaciją ir organizuoti mokymus visiems studijų programos darbuotojams.
11. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja tiek studentams, tiek darbuotojams suteikti daugiau tarptautinio judumo galimybių.
12. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja parengti studijų programos tarptautiškumo strategiją.
13. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja įvertinti ir pagerinti praktiniams animacijos darbams skirtus materialiuosius išteklius bei erdves, pavyzdžiui, maketinio filmavimo kameras, apšvietimą, sustabdyto kadro animacijos studijas (*angl. stop-motion*), kombinuotojo filmavimo dekoracijas, filmavimo kameras, pieštų kadruočių tikrinimo aparatūrą (*angl. linetester*) ir kt. Studijų programai reikalingas planas, kaip užtikrinti nuolatinį ir tvarų jos aprūpinimą materialiaisiais ištekliais bei tolesnį augimą.
14. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja išsiugdyti sistemiškesnį požiūrį į tarptautinį kokybės palyginimą. Jis būtinas tam, kad būtų galima sukurti unikalią studijų programos tapatybę, apsispręsti dėl jos strateginės krypties ir užtikrinti pačią aukščiausią įmanomą kokybę.
15. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja patobulinti studijų programos lygiu taikomus kokybės užtikrinimo ciklus, nes tai leistų patobulinti tikslines studijų priemones ir suteiktų daugiau aiškumo dėl studijų rezultatų.

<...>

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)