



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Šiaulių valstybinės kolegijos
VERSLO EKONOMIKOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
(653L17004)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *BUSINESS ECONOMICS* (653L17004)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Šiauliai State College

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Verslo ekonomika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	653L17004
Studijų sritis	socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Ekonomika
Studijų programos rūšis	koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3), Išžęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Ekonomikos profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2011-06-01 Nr. 1-01-72

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Business Economics</i>
State code	653L17004
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Economics
Kind of the study programme	College Studies
Study Cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3); Part-time (4)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor in Economics
Date of registration of the study programme	2011-06-01 Nr. 1-01-72

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	5
1. Programme aims and learning outcomes.....	5
2. Curriculum design	6
3. Staff	7
4. Facilities and learning resources	8
5. Study process and student assessment.....	9
6. Programme management	11
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	13
IV. SUMMARY	14
V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	15

I. INTRODUCTION

Business Economics Study Programme (hereinafter Programme) is carried out at Šiauliai State College (hereinafter the College), in the Faculty of Business and Technology (hereinafter the Faculty). College represents a major regional seat of learning for first cycle (Professional Bachelor) studies. There are two faculties and eleven departments. The Programme is carried out by the Accounting and Finance Department (hereinafter the Department). Divisions that help to implement the Programme are as follows: Library and Self-study Centre, Student Admission and Career Centre, Information Technology Centre, Academic Mobility and Project Management Department, and Study Record Department. The Programme is designed to prepare the economists for companies operating in local and global markets, who will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of economic phenomena, be able to innovatively organize and manage entity' economic, financial and investment activities in accordance with the nature of business in a constantly changing global environment; professionally apply advanced economic, financial, business management and forecasting models, be able to integrate into the labour market, and improve his/her qualification independently or in further studies. Programme is the only programme of the economics field, implemented at College.

On 5th October, 2012 working group responsible for carrying out the self-evaluation and the development of the self-evaluation report of Business Economics Study Programme was organized under the Director' Order No. V-196. Activity phases and periods of the self-assessment were discussed during the Department' meeting. The developed parts of the self-assessment and obtained results were discussed at Department' meetings. Having regard to the remarks, the self- evaluation report has been drawn up. Its results were discussed at the Department' meeting, Committee of Social Sciences Study Programme Supervision, Committee of Study Quality Assurance and Faculty Council.

Assessment of the Programme has not been done yet. Programme was launched in 2011. College will receive feedback on integration into the labour market of the first graduates of Programme in October 2014.

The procedures of the external evaluation the College undergraduate degree Programme were initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania nominating the external evaluation peer group formed by the head Prof. Dr. Tiiu Paas (Estonia), Prof. Dr. Zoltán Sipos (Hungary), Dr. Heinz-Ulrich Schmidt (Germany), Giedrius Romeika (Lithuania), Aldona Savičienė, employer representative (Lithuania) and Dalia Miklaševičiūtė, student representative (Lithuania).

The Self Evaluation Report (hereinafter – SER) of the Programme was made available to the expert team in September 2013. All the members of the expert team examined the SER individually, preparing problem questions or discussion points. The experts obtained further information during the site visit in Šiauliai on November 18th through interviews with Programme co-ordinators, Department heads, senior and junior members of the teaching staff, students and employers. After the visit, on November 23rd the expert group held a meeting, discussed the contents of the evaluation report and agreed upon the numerical evaluation of every area of the evaluation.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

Aims and intended learning outcomes of the Programme are formulated on the basis of Description of Study Cycles, Description of Degree Granting First Study Cycle and Integrated Study Programmes and the requirements of Regulation of Management and Business Administration study area, Economist Training Standard, Economist Job Description in the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08. When performing self-assessment of the Programme, study objectives and intended learning outcomes were reviewed in order to be consistent with the Description of Study Cycles which entered into force on 27 November 2011. They are clearly formulated and define what the graduate shall know, understand and be capable of as well as what special, social and personal abilities he/she shall gain (SER p. 6).

Information about the Programme, its aims and intended learning outcomes is available online at: College website, Ministry of Education and Science of Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System "Aikos" website. Aims and intended learning outcomes of the Programme are presented at exhibitions ("Learning, Studies and Career", "Education and Career", "Fair of Higher Education Institutions", and at College events. Information about the pursued Programme is presented at Šiauliai television programmes.

Aims and intended learning outcomes of the Programme meet the professional requirements, comply with the field of the economist activities and professional competences provided in the Economist Training Standard. The intended learning outcomes of the Programme are aimed to provide analytical skills in business area oriented towards practical work. The intended learning outcomes were developed considering on The Economist Job Description in the International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-08 and The Economist Training Standard (SER p. 8). Aims and intended learning outcomes of the Programme are based on the demands of the labour market: in November and December of 2009 the Department conducted a study of Business Economics specialists demand in Šiauliai region's industry and business organizations. Developing Business Economics Programme, meeting labour market demand, was founded on the basis of carried out study as well as with the approval by Association of Šiauliai Industrialists, Šiauliai Chamber for Commerce, Industry and Crafts and Šiauliai Territorial Labour Agency (SER p. 8). In spite of that during visit interview there was no any additional forecast information or collected data about volume of labour market, preliminary number of working places and positions for graduates in nearest period provided.

The consistency of the aim and intended learning outcomes of the Programme with the type and the cycle of studies is administered by the legislation of Lithuania (Description of Study Cycles and General Requirements). Aims of the Business Economics Study Programme meet the requirements of the higher education college studies. Intended learning outcomes are consistent with requirements of the description of higher education college first study cycle (professional bachelor) outcomes. The intended learning outcomes of the Programme include all the structural elements of the first study cycle (SER p. 8). However, clear and efficient system for assessment was not introduced. Likewise there is observed lack of attention on developing of social skills and critical thinking. Those two areas were distinguished during interviews with all groups and require greater attention in programme.

The key word in the title reflects the content of the Programme, the qualification degree awarded and defines the field of study - Business Economics. According information collected during interviews and presented learning aims and outcomes it can be stated that programme is focused on providing analytical skills for economics analysis and knowledge for entrepreneurial activities and management. In this case the name of programme is not entirely accurate. The name of programme does not accurately reflect clear link between learning aims and outcomes and potential positions for graduates in labour market (particularly from perspective of

internationalization, attracting international students and planning international career for graduates).

2. Curriculum design

In 2012, Programme study plan was updated (approved by College Academic Council resolution in accordance with the compatibility settings of European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Programme has been drawn up in accordance with normative documents. The duration of full-time higher education college studies is 3 years. Scope – 180 ECTS credits (4800 hr.). Each semester of full-time studies consists of 800 hours. The total student' workload consists of contact hours and self-study hours. 49.98 per cent of total hours are contact hours and 50.02 per cent -self-study work. Practical skills are allocating 35.83 percent (1720 hours) of total scope of the Programme. The structure of Programme complies with the General Requirements of the higher education college studies programmes.

Programme consists of 30 subjects, 7 practices, 2 subjects/practices and the Final Thesis. The arrangement of the Programme subjects in semesters aims to ensure purposeful student learning and development (SER p.10). (e.g. in the first semester, students acquire basic knowledge providing the foundation for further studies in the field, in the second semester students continue to deepen the knowledge in the study field, in the fifth and sixth semesters with the purpose for the students to have knowledge of the global market). Subjects in the study plan are arranged in such manner that the knowledge reached in each of the previously taught subject serve as a basis for the intended outcomes of the subject that goes after it. Topics of each study subject are different and non-repeating, pursuing a concrete study outcome. Each intended learning outcome of the Programme is pursued by learning outcomes of several study subjects (SER p. 10).

Content of the study subjects meet the requirements set out for the learning outcomes of the first-cycle studies. Compulsory subjects of the field of study are designed to provide knowledge of branch and develop skills to address specific business challenges. Elective subjects of the branch of study provide a deeper knowledge and develop practical skills. Alternative subjects are offered considering the companies' nature of activity in Šiauliai region (manufacturing, sales and services, energetic, construction etc.), but it also reflects nature of all Lithuanian or even Baltics economics. In this case there is difficult to identify focus or exclusivity of Šiauliai region. Freely elective subjects reflect an idea to satisfy individual needs of a student, expand a worldview and general erudition as well as for personality formation.

Aims and outcomes of the study subjects as well as main topics reflecting the content have been built up with purpose to provide learning outcomes. Study subjects pursue subject learning outcomes, at the same time pursuing the intended learning outcomes of the Programme, while utilizing various study methods. Implementing student-oriented studies, various activity forms during lectures are applied, which develop students' creativity and critical thinking and help to achieve intended learning outcomes (SER p. 14). Subjects of the study field are dominated by methods of providing and consolidating the fundamental knowledge and developing skills and abilities to be active, self-sufficient and critical thinker (SER p. 14) In order to achieve the learning outcomes of general college study subjects methods like problem conversation, logical proof, role plays, work with a text, brainstorming, usage of information resources, dialogue, maps of concepts is used. Despite the affirmation that named methods is for developing student' personal and social skills (SER p. 14) the systematic and integral approach on creativity and especially critical thinking is unnoticed.

To determine the scope of the Programme, time required to achieve intended learning outcomes is taken into account. The scope of the subject (in credits) is estimated considering intended outcomes of the study subject and the total students' workload which consists of contact and self-study hours (p. 14). The duration of the Programme is 3 years (120 weeks), scope - 180 credits (4800 hours). Scope of full-time one year studies – 60 study credits (1600 hours); not

more than 7 subjects can be studied during one semester. The scope of the Programme of part-time studies enables to achieve the intended learning outcomes during 4 years (160 weeks). The scope of the Programme in part-time studies is evenly distributed – every year in 45 credits. Field of study subjects in the Programme make up starting from 3-8 credits and practices - 30 credits. It is designed meeting legal requirements.

The intended learning outcomes of the Programme subjects are pursued utilizing modern management, economics, financial as well as accounting and other theories. During the Computerized Accounting practice in order to achieve learning outcomes students are being taught how to work with programmes which are commonly used in businesses. Activities of the company's simulated during Business Simulation practice. The constant focus is on new information technologies, software updates, development of computer network, creation of new computerized workplaces (SER p. 15). The average age of recommended literature in subjects is 5-6 years. There are international databases, software equipment included in the list of required resources for subject study. Thus, the closer attention of programme steering committee for monitoring, evaluating and updating is desirable.

3. Staff

The teaching staff implementing the study Programme is compiled according to Description of General Requirements of The Degree-awarding First Study Cycle and Integrated Studies approved by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania (SER p. 15). During 2012-2013 a. y. 11.85 percent of the total scope of study field subjects was delivered by the teachers with the doctoral degree. 75 per cent of the teachers of the Programme have at least 3 years of practical experience in the area of the subject that they teach. All teachers implementing the Programme have a Master's degree or an equivalent higher education degree. Thereby teaching staff meets legal requirements.

90 per cent of teachers implementing study Programme have extensive teaching experience (average of 14 years). Teaching staff is hired considering the set requirements for performance of the study programmes as well as conditions of the contest, in accordance with Šiauliai State College.

Every year, all the teachers have to account for the previous school year's planned scientific methodological work at the Department' meeting. Every 5 years attestation of the teacher' qualification is conducted – assessment of the teacher' compliance with minimal qualification requirements of the position and/or of the work during the term. Regarding foreign languages the English skills of teaching staff still need to be improved.

20 teachers are implementing the Programme, 16 of them teach study field subjects. General subjects of college studies are taught by 4 lecturers. The ratio teacher: students in this programme is 1:1,45. Thus, there is enough teaching capacity available for broadening.

During the evaluating period the turnover of the Programme teachers working in the main post was insignificant. During 2012-2013 a. y. approximately 80 per cent of the Programme teachers worked in primary posts (SER p. 16). This state requires constant attention for teaching staff professional development directly associated with programme.

The order of the staff pedagogical, professional and scientific improvement is described in the internal documents of Šiauliai State College. During the evaluation period 13 teachers (65 per cent) of the Programme improved their scientific qualifications while participating in various regional, national and international projects. During the analysed period, 10 teachers of the Programme went on practical internships and participated in the exchange programmes. To promote research activities and enhance the process of research competences improvement the College fully or partially covers participation expenses in regional, national and international courses and seminars. In order to develop the research potential of teachers, they are motivated to study for a PhD. Currently one teacher is a doctoral student (SER p. 17). Having in mind

limited resources there is need to focus on professional development activities directly linked with particular programme.

Teachers' participation in the external consultation and educational activities, as well as activities of various organizations, associations and fellowships, etc. reveals teachers' experience in academic and social sphere. Programme teachers are invited to teach courses, seminars and conduct training for external social partners of the College and the community of Šiauliai County. Teachers participate in the activities of associations of economics teachers and accounting educators and researchers. Goal-oriented scientific activities of the Programme teachers is substantiated by publications in Lithuanian and international scientific peer reviewed periodic journals, conference proceedings and presentations of papers in national and international conferences (SER p. 17). During the evaluation period teachers, implementing the Programme, published 23 scientific research papers. In spite of provided sample of common activities with social partners (administration of Kurtuvėnai Regional Park) there is still lack of applied research activities connected directly with programme. The collaboration with regional and international organizations (Chambers, Associations, Research Networks) related with programme field was unnoticed.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The following College premises are used for the implementation of the Programme: classroom and practical training is done in the Central Building of the College and in the First Building. Students also use the Library and Self-study Centre. Available premises (17 study rooms and 2 rooms for practice) are sufficient for theoretical and practical training and provide appropriate work conditions for implementation of the Programme. Premises for students' self-study have 100 workplaces, 47 of which are computerized. Library and Self-study Centre opening hours: I-IV: 8:00-19:00, V: 8.00-16.00. During sessions and examination periods library working hours are adjusted. Thus, the premises are adequate to ensure the smooth learning process.

To ensure the quality of study process College constantly improves of one of the main work tools - computerised work places and information technology systems (p. 19). Students and teachers have access to the College computers, which are connected to the local (internal computer network – intranet) and the Internet. All computers have the software licenses for Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office. In the study process students use following software: accounting programmes (Konto, Rivilė, Navision), statistical analysis and data processing programme SPSS, electronic form-filling program "ABBYY eFormFiller"; business simulation programme "Hard Nut: Simulation Activities". Business simulation programme "My Business" was acquired in March, 2013. Thus, the equipment is adequate, updated.

Practices in the College are organized in accordance with the Description of the Procedure of Organizing Students Practices of Šiauliai State College approved on 30 August 2012 by the Academic Council Resolution No. ATN-46. 5 professional practices are carried out in the same higher education institution. The premises for carrying out practices are equipped with all the necessary hardware and software. To carry out 3 professional practices at companies College has signed cooperation agreements with a variety of businesses obligating partners to create appropriate conditions for students to perform practice. When choosing practice placements, practice supervisors advise students and help them to find practice place as well as take part in preparation of tripartite agreements (SER p. 19). Thus, there is noticeable systematic approach to the arrangement for students practice.

The library subscribes to the following databases: EBSCO Publishing, Taylor & Francis, Emerald Management e-Journals Collection; the periodicals: "Valstybės Žinios" ("Official Gazette") and the electronic version of "Apskaitos, audito ir mokesčių aktualijos" ("Accounting, Audit and Tax Issues") available on the Internet. All College computers have free access to the

subscribed and tested scientific databases of Lithuanian Research Library Consortium as well as electronic catalogues of higher education institutions. The main subscribed periodicals are as follows: "Buhalterija" ("Accounting") and "Apskaitos ir mokesčių apžvalga" ("Accounting and Tax Review"). It has been noted that there is a lack of periodicals on business and economics (SER p. 20). During the visit to library between the proposed programme books some morally out of date samples were noticed. The literature dedicated to transformations of Lithuanian economics from Soviet command to liberal market could be used in studying of economics history, but not for providing necessary knowledge's and skills for contemporary professional. Methodological publications developed by the teachers are available to the students at the College library, reading room and study rooms. To increase the efficiency and internationalization of the self-study, sources of literature in foreign languages are constantly expanded, but the process could be faster and wider.

5. Study process and student assessment

Admission is pursued based on the general order to organize general admission of Lithuanian Higher Schools Association based on the order annually approved by the Minister of Education and Science concerning the "Description of Queue Making Order of the Graduates with the Best Marks of Secondary Education". During the two analysed years the average of competitive score in full-time studies is more than 15 points in state-funded places and it decreased by almost 2.3 points in state non-funded places (SER p. 21). The difference of applicants' average scores is noticed between state-funded and state non-funded places (it was on average 1.7 times higher in 2011 in state funded places, and 2.4 times in 2012). Provided by college data shows that compared 2012 to 2011, the number of applications to study according to all preferences increased by 100 and as the first preference by more than 11. Although the number of applications increased in 2012, but the number of admitted students decreased by 6 students. It might be assumed that it is potentially influenced by misleading name of programme.

System of the College studies, process, conditions and procedures, organization, College student rights and responsibilities as well as their relationships with the College are regulated by Šiauliai State College Study Regulations (SER p. 21). During the first lecture every teacher introduces students with the aims and learning outcomes of the studies and informs about the assessment system and criteria. Students have the possibility to consult with the study Programme teachers. Students have the possibility to retake exams, eliminate academic debts, repeat subjects, and continue their studies after elimination from the list of students according to the procedure provided in the College Study Regulations (SER p. 21). Dean of the Faculty upon recommendation by the Department can confirm an Individual Study Programme. After each session in accordance with Regulation for Assessment of Learning Outcomes summary of each group of students' achievements is prepared and analysis of learning outcomes is conducted. Each College' student must follow Code of Academic Ethics. For copying, plagiarism and cheating during the assessment or when accounting for different tasks, passing for a credit (pass/fail system) or taking an examination, the student is not allowed to re-pass credits or exams during the repetitive period of assessment settlement, the subject has to be repeated and the student might even be expelled from the College.

Student Scientific Society (SSS) is working in the Department. In 2011 four students of Programme became members of SSS and in 2012 – five. In 2012 conference held by SSS became international. Students of Programme participate in competitions organized by Šiauliai Municipality, Šiauliai Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, Šiauliai University, College and other organizations. Prize-winning places were taken at competition of math problem solving, as well as at youth entrepreneurship tournament "FIX". There to be noticed that majority of named events and competitions are dedicated to popularizing of entrepreneurship and have no primary integration with the programme aims, learning outcomes, curriculum design. For participation and achievements in scientific, cultural, sporting and social activities students are

awarded with one-off grants and acknowledgements (SER p. 23). In spite of provided support system there is still lack of applied research activities connected directly with programme.

In 2012-2013 three students went to study at the Baltic International Academy (Latvia) under the Erasmus exchange programme, which represents 10.3 per cent of all students in this Programme. In 2011 - 2013 eight students from Latvia were enrolled in partial studies at the Accounting and Finance department (not particular Programme). There was no clear information about studying language for foreign students (English, Russian, Lithuanian...) provided. Students are familiar with possibilities to study abroad, number of institutions in various countries. In spite of the strategic approach to internationalization there is still need for developing. Programme administration could not name strategic partners.

The difference of average scores between state funded and state non-funded places of applicants correlates with their different level of preparedness for the studies. To reduce the gap between the different levels of students' preparedness for the studies, additional lectures of Mathematics and individual consultations are being offered in the first semester. Ensuring academic support, introductory lectures on study programmes and freely elective subjects are organized for the first-year students (SER p. 24). College Student Admission and Career Centre provide individual and group consultations for students on preparation for labour market and finding employment. Students have the possibility to consult with the Programme teachers. Schedules of consultations are published on the College website and notice board, teachers consult students at the provided rooms, via e-mail, telephone, etc. Students are provided with social and material support. Dormitory is available to all students who express a need. Dormitory fees may be deferred or paid in instalments for the students whose financial situation difficult. Students are given opportunities to use social grants – these are loans, grants and financial help for the students with disabilities. This information is constantly updated and posted on the College' website. The Scholarship Granting Committee grants following scholarships: incentive scholarships for the study results, single scholarships for outstanding performance in scientific, cultural, sporting and social activities and scholarships in case of an emergency or in the event of difficult financial situation in the student' family. During the analysed period 5 incentive scholarships and 23 onetime scholarships were awarded (SER p. 24). Thus, the level of support is adequate.

The Assessment of subject and practice results is conducted during the entire semester and examination period applying cumulative assessment system and using individual cumulative index (ICI). Final assessment of the subject' learning outcomes (ICI) comprises of components of interim assessments (I) as well as examination (E) grade or other forms of study subject assessment indicated in the Programme (SER p. 25). Final assessment of the practice results consists of the components of the practical activities in the host institution and public presentation of the practice report. The descriptions of the study subjects interim assessments and examinations together with detailed achievement assessment criteria are available on the intranet. Nevertheless, there is still space for ambitious and inevitable improving regarding assessment of students' creativity, critical thinking, social skills.

6. Programme management

The Programme management and quality assurance processes and procedures as well as responsibilities of the Programme implementers are regulated by College Statute and documents of internal activities: Regulations of Faculty Activities, The Faculty Council Rules of Procedure, The Committee of Social Sciences Study Programme Implementation, Supervision and Study Quality Assurance (SER p. 26). The Department performs continuous monitoring and internal self-assessment of the Programme implementation. It organizes the receipt of feedback from the Programme participants - students, teachers and stakeholders. Supervision and quality assessment of the Programme is carried out by the Study Programme Committee and the Faculty

Council. Should be noticed that in the last year structural changes were made: Programme Steering Committee from faculty level was adopted to programme level. The Committee coordinates and supervises the improvement of the Programme, approves and accepts the development of new subjects, partial update of the Programme or subjects, carries out attestation of the subjects, approves the publication of the teaching and methodological tools, analyses partial self-assessment results and presents documentation to the Faculty Council for consideration and approval (SER p. 26).

The Department collects and analyses following data: the Department teachers' qualification and applied research; teachers' expert, project and consultation activities, teaching/learning and methodological tools developed by the teachers, publications, read papers, publication of research results, extent of new technologies usage, preparedness to teach in a foreign language, mobility, internships, cooperation with business and education associations, students and teachers number ratio and achievement levels of subjects' objectives. The data is analysed when preparing the Department' performance reports, it is also used when preparing Faculty, College performance reports and when improving the Programme implementation and quality assurance process. The following data is continuously collected: students' admission results, number of students and "wastage" causes, graduation results, and students' mobility. The data is analysed when preparing the Department' performance reports. It is also used when preparing Faculty', College' annual performance reports and when developing improvement actions for the next year plans (SER p. 27). Electronic document management system "Kontora" where documents of the Accounting and Finance Department' Study Programme organization, implementation and supervision are collected, stored and systematized;

- Student database (since 2004) has personal / contact details, information about the graduation from comprehensive or higher education / vocational training school.
- Alumni database (since 2004.) has annual employment monitoring data of graduates' for the last three years;
- Staff database (since 2011);
- Database of freely elective subjects (since 2005);
- Practice (internships) database (since 2009) (SER p. 27)

There is a lack of internal assessment system of study quality, a process for analysing the results (SER p. 27) what is the logical sequence of provided system oriented to the retrospective information collection.

According information provided by SER, after conducting self-assessment it was noticed that the student workload is insufficiently distributed - it is too big in the second semester and too small in the third. This was confirmed by students questioning, which indicated excessive workload in the second semester. It was also noticed that when the Computerized Accounting practice is held at the end of the third semester and accounting subject is taught in the second semester, students tend to forget the theoretical knowledge of the subject during the practice. Subject of Economics Analysis of Enterprises and practice of Economics Analysis is carried out in the fourth semester, therefore it would be appropriate to merge them, leaving a single, integrated subject / practice (SER p. 11). According samples provided above, information collected from teaching staff, students and stakeholders there is possible to state that outcomes of evaluations are used for improvements.

The academic community of the Faculty, students, employers and other social stakeholders when participating in surveys or directly can express their comments and suggestions to the Department and the Committee for the need to improve the quality and further development of the Programme (SER p. 28). Social stakeholders (teachers, students, employers, and others) are involved in the activities of the Academic Council, the Faculty Council and the Committee. They make proposals for the Programme implementation improvement and take part in the decision-making of the Programme implementation (SER p. 26). The feedback is received from stakeholders during different processes: in the course of study, after practices, after the examination and after the events. The main areas of cooperation are: self-assessment

development, the Programme' objectives, intended learning outcomes assessment and improvement, supervision of students' professional practices, reviewing Graduation Papers, participation in the work of the Defence of Graduation Papers Qualification Committee, evaluation of methodological tools for studies, participation in the events organized by the Department. In spite of wide range of named activities of stakeholder's involvement there is still a lack of targeting and formalising.

On purpose to achieve a systemic improvement of the quality of studies and administration processes, Šiauliai State College is implementing internal study quality management system that meets requirements of ISO 9001: 2008 standard, and integrates a part of the activity improvement model principles of European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) (SER p. 29). The experts can neither confirm nor deny that combining and integration of ISO 9001 and EFQM principles already ensures effectiveness and efficiency of internal quality assurance measure. However, during interview with college administration and self-assessment preparing group was confirmed that the efficiency of internal quality assurance measures is achieved through continuous monitoring and improvement of activities in accordance with the Quality Manual procedures and applying the PDCA-management cycle. It is worth to mention that for SER information about the studies, results of both quantitative and qualitative activities, identified strengths and weaknesses as well as other data was prepared according to model of quality assurance documented in Quality Book valid in the College till 2012.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The very new programme is continuously dynamic and developments are necessary for sustainability. There is need for more careful approach to graduates demand on local and international market prediction based on research and analysis continuously provided with local and international stakeholders and partners;
2. As the programme focuses on providing analytical skills for economic analysis and knowledge for entrepreneurial activities and management, the possibility of a change in name could be considered in direction to be more reflective of the nature and content of programme (e.g. „*Economic Analysis and Management*“);
3. More attention on systematic and integral development of social skills and critical thinking is required. These expectations of students and stakeholders should also to be reflected in the defined learning outcomes;
4. In case the programme has the focus on regional development and local labour market there is recommendable to increase approach and to provide more systematic knowledge about regional development (e.g. to design new alternative subjects like “*Regional studies*” or “*Regional economics*”);
5. More attention on internationalization is recommended. Collaboration within Latvia is good start for new programme, but more English language orientation is necessary. International mobility of students and teachers has to be significantly improved;
6. For the increasing of programme internationalization participation in international professional and research networks is intensively recommended;
7. For the programme with Professional Bachelor degree award increasing of applied research activities is necessary and strongly recommended. Team work and integration of students in joint research activities coherent with programme would be very welcome;

8. More attention on the purposeful work of the Programme Committee is required. The involvement of social partners, students, alumni's could be more formalized, documented (e.g. more detailed and scheduled protocols or meeting minutes) and targeted.
9. More collaboration within Lithuania is welcome. Not only participation in local initiatives is necessary. Collaboration with Universities, other higher institutions and programmes in Lithuania could assist to design career guide for programme graduates and provide additional added-value for community;

IV. SUMMARY

The programme aims and learning outcomes, although subject to further refinement as recommended, are well defined, clear, publicly accessible, and generally based on academic and professional requirements. They are also consistent with the type and level of studies and the nature of the qualification being offered.

Name of programme could be more reflective to the nature and content of programme.

Study subjects in curriculum design are spread evenly, their themes are not repetitive, and their content and scope are in harmony with both the type and level of studies and the prescribed learning outcomes.

Teaching staff are qualified and adequate in number to support students' achievement of the learning outcomes, and the College has created basic conditions for the ongoing professional development of teaching staff. There is need to encourage teaching staff to use provided support for *increasing English language skills*. The experts strongly believe that it would help to solve the *lack of internationalization*, which is observed in this programme.

The premises, teaching materials and learning facilities are adequate, both in size and quality. The greater attention could be paid to *economics subject literature (especially in English.)*

The admissions and study process arrangements are regarded as very appropriate. The comprehensive, although somewhat complex, regulations for the conduct of student assessment, including resits, appear to be well understood by students.

The College has an established structure for *programme development, monitoring and enhancement*, within which responsibilities are defined for each level of participation. The information and data collected from surveys involving all stakeholders, is used to inform programme development activity. Students consider that their views are sought, listened to and, where possible, acted upon. Teachers regard themselves as an integral part of the quality improvement efforts, and believe that their views are valued within the process. In spite of that the created structure is oriented to analysis of the past and not focuses on the future prediction, improving the present situation. *The programme still needs for sustainable approach*. PDCA cycle should be fully applied.

Labour market needs and expectations are the focus of this programme. The existing strong relationship between the College and the business community has been highly instrumental in the development of programme aims, learning outcomes and curriculum content. In spite of that there is still *lack of formalization and structuring of collaboration in further programme development, applied research activities*.

Programme management at all levels is seen to adopt a strategic and visionary approach, with quality, service, and effective team working high on all agendas related to how this particular programme which is the only programme of the economics field, implemented at College might be improved and further developed.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Business Economics* (state code 653L17004) at Šiauliai State College 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	3
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:	18

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

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

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

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

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof. Dr. Tiiu Paas

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Dr. Zoltán Sipos

Dr. Heinz-Ulrich Schmidt

Giedrius Romeika

Aldona Savičienė

Dalia Miklaševičiūtė

Santraukos vertimas iš anglų kalbos

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Šiaulių valstybinės kolegijos studijų programa *Verslo ekonomika* (valstybinis kodas – 653L17004) vertinama **teigiamai**.

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

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

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

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

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai, nors ir rekomenduojama juos toliau tobulinti, yra gerai apibrėžti, aiškūs, viešai prieinami ir, apskritai, parengti laikantis akademinų ir profesinių reikalavimų. Jie taip pat atitinka studijų rūšį, pakopą ir suteikiamos kvalifikacijos pobūdį. *Programos pavadinimas* galėtų geriau atspindėti programos pobūdį ir turinį.

Studijų dalykai programos sandaroje išdėstyti tolygiai, jų temos nesikartoja, o jų turinys ir apimtis atitinka studijų rūšį ir pakopą bei numatomus studijų rezultatus.

Akademinis personalas yra kvalifikuotas, o jo kiekis yra tinkamas, kad padėtų studentams pasiekti studijų rezultatus. Kolegija yra sukūrusi pagrindines sąlygas nuolatiniam dėstytojų kvalifikacijos kėlimui. Reikia skatinti akademinį personalą išnaudoti teikiamą paramą

anglų kalbos gebėjimų gerinimui. Ekspertai tvirtai įsitikinę, kad tai padėtų išspręsti *tarptautiškumo trūkumą*, kuris pastebimas šioje programoje.

Patalpos, metodiniai ištekliai ir mokymosi įranga yra tinkami, tiek dydžiu, tiek kokybe. Didesnis dėmesys turėtų būti skiriamas *ekonomikos dalykų literatūrai (ypač anglų kalba)*.

Stojimo procedūra ir studijų proceso organizavimas laikomi labai tinkamais. Išsamias, nors ir šiek tiek sudėtingas, studentų vertinimo taisykles, įskaitant perlaikymus, studentai, atrodo, puikiai supranta.

Kolegija turi nusistovėjusią programos kūrimo, stebėsenos ir tobulinimo struktūrą, kurioje yra aiškiai apibrėžta atsakomybė kiekvienam dalyvavimo lygiui. Informacija ir duomenys surinkti per visų socialinių programos dalininkų apklausas, yra panaudojami sprendimuose dėl programos tobulinimo. Studentai mano, kad jų nuomonė yra vertinama, išklausa ir, kai įmanoma, į ją yra atsižvelgiama. Dėstytojai laiko save neatskiriama kokybės gerinimo pastangų dalimi ir tiki, kad jų nuomonės šiame procese yra vertinamos. Nežiūrint to, sukurtoji sistema yra orientuota į praeities analizę ir nėra nukreipta į ateities prognozavimą, susijusį su dabarties situacijos gerinimu. *Programai reikia tęstinumą užtikrinančio požiūrio.* Turi būti taikomas visas PDCA (planuok-daryk-tikrink-veik) ciklas.

Ši programa atsižvelgia į rinkos poreikius ir lūkesčius. Stiprūs ryšiai tarp kolegijos ir verslo bendruomenės buvo išnaudojami kuriant programos tikslus, studijų rezultatus ir programos turinį. Nežiūrint to, vis tiek trūksta *bendradarbiavimo tolesniame programos tobulinime formalizavimo ir struktūravimo, o taip pat taikomųjų tyrimų veiklos.*

Programos vadyba visuose lygiuose taiko strateginį požiūrį su aiškia ateities vizija, kokybe, paslaugomis, ir efektyviu komandiniu darbu visose srityse, susijusiose su šios programos, kuri yra vienintelė ekonomikos krypties programa, vykdoma šioje kolegijoje, tolesniu gerinimu ir plėtojimu.

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Nauja programa yra dinamiška ir nuolatinis tobulinimas yra reikalingas jos tęstinumui. Reikia labiau atsižvelgti į absolventų poreikio vietinėje ir tarptautinėje rinkoje prognozes, pagrįstas tyrimais ir analize duomenų, kuriuos teikia vietiniai ir tarptautiniai socialiniai dalininkai ir partneriai.
2. Kadangi programa siekia ugdyti analitinius gebėjimus ekonominei analizei ir teikti verslo veiklos ir vadybos žinias, vertėtų svarstyti galimybę keisti programos pavadinimą, kad jis labiau atspindėtų programos pobūdį ir turinį (pvz., „*Ekonominė analizė ir vadyba*“).

3. Reikia skirti daugiau dėmesio sistemingam ir integraliam socialinių įgūdžių ir kritinio mąstymo ugdymui. Šie studentų ir socialinių dalininkų lūkesčiai turėtų taip pat atsispindėti apibrėžtuose studijų rezultatuose;
4. Kadangi programa nukreipta į regioninę plėtrą ir vietinę darbo rinką, rekomenduojama stiprinti tą požiūrį ir teikti sistemingesnes žinias apie regioninę plėtrą (pvz., sukurti naujus pasirenkamuosius dalykus, tokius kaip „*Regioninės studijos*” arba „*Regioninė ekonomika*”).
5. Rekomenduojama skirti daugiau dėmesio tarptautiškumui. Bendradarbiavimas su Latvija yra puiki pradžia naujojoje programoje, bet būtina labiau orientuotis į anglų kalbą. Turi būti reikšmingai pagerintas tarptautinis studentų ir dėstytojų mobilumas;
6. Programos tarptautiškumo didinimui primygtinai rekomenduojamas dalyvavimas tarptautiniuose profesiniuose ir mokslinių tyrimų tinkluose.
7. Profesinio bakalauro laipsnį teikiančiai programai būtinas ir primygtinai rekomenduojamas taikomųjų tyrimų veiklos didinimas. Skatintinas grupinis darbas ir studentų integravimas į programą atitinkančią tiriamąją veiklą.
8. Reikia skirti daugiau dėmesio tikslingam programos komiteto darbui. Socialinių partnerių, studentų, alumnų dalyvavimas galėtų būti tikslingesnis, labiau formalizuotas ir dokumentuotas (pvz., išsamesni susirinkimų protokolai).
9. Skatintinas didesnis bendradarbiavimas Lietuvoje. Reikalingas ne tik dalyvavimas vietinėse iniciatyvose. Bendradarbiavimas sus universitetais, kitomis aukštosiomis mokyklomis ir programomis Lietuvoje galėtų padėti sukurti karjeros vadovą programos absolventams ir suteikti pridėtinę vertę programai.