

STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Klaipėdos universiteto STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "EKONOMIKA" (valstybinis kodas – 6121JX063 (612L17001) VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF "ECONOMICS"
(state code – 6121JX063 (612L17001)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Klaipėda University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Ekonomika
Valstybinis kodas	6121JX063 (612L17001)
Studijų krypčių grupė	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Ekonomika
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (4 metai), ištęstinė (6 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Ekonomikos bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	No. ĮSAK-123, 25-01-2006

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Economics
State code	6121JX063 (612L17001)
Group of study field	Social Sciences
Study field	Economics
Type of the study programme	University Studies
Study cycle	First cycle
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (4 years), part-time (6 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	240 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Economics
Date of registration of the study programme	No. ĮSAK-123, 25 th January, 2006

Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes,** approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1)self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team at the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as "very good" (4 points) or "good" (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as "satisfactory" (2 points).

The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	ISI and SCOPUS publications of teaching staff.
2	Statistics on students' mobility.

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

Klaipėda University (hereinafter: KU) was established 1991 as an institution of higher education of the Republic of Lithuania. At present, the university is offering study programmes in humanities, arts, and social, physical, bio-medical, and technological sciences, and has about 4.000 students. Distinctive features of this university is orientation towards research, arts, and studies of

Lithuania as a maritime state in the Baltic region and education, health, and social well-being, economics and politics, as well as communications, and sustainable development of Western Lithuania and the city of Klaipeda, as stated in the introduction part of the SER.

KU registered the study programme "Economics" on the first (bachelor) level in May 1997. It was re-registered in 2006. The programme is one of 56 undergraduate study programmes of KU. Classes are delivered in Lithuanian language.

The programme was evaluated by an international external assessment expert group under the auspices of SKVC in October 2010. The program had been accredited for 6 years. This evaluation report is based on the self-evaluation report (SER), prepared by the self-evaluation group, and backed up by information gathered from the meetings the expert team had with self-evaluation group, teaching staff, students, alumni and social partners.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 26th of October, 2017.

- **1. Prof. dr. Stephan Schöning (team leader),** *Professor of Business Administration and Finance at SRH University of Applied Sciences, Heidelberg, Campus Calw.*
- 2. Prof. dr. Jakub Brdulak, Associate Professor SGH Warsaw School of Economics, Poland.
- **3. Prof. dr. Ramon Ramon-Muñoz,** *Associate Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Barcelona.*
- **4.** Mr Tautvydas Marčiulaitis, Baltics Private Banking Wealth Management, Danske Bank, Lithuania.
- **5. Mr Ignas Gaižiūnas,** student of Vilnius University study programme Theoretical Physics and Astrophysics.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The Self-Evaluation Report (hereafter SER) starts by presenting the aim, objectives and function of the university undergraduate study programme of Economics (pp. 5-6). The presentation

of this area is satisfactory in some respects thought not always efficient. Initially, the general aim is defined. This is followed by a list of three different objectives; and finally, there is a table presenting five different programme aims, which are linked to the intended learning outcomes (hereafter LO). A careful reading of all these aims and objectives, plus additional information, suggests that, although some subjects related to business are probably missing in the current curriculum design, the study programme is, in fact, mostly oriented towards business economics and, to some extent, business administration. The same applies when the LO are analysed (SER, pp. 6-10), particularly in the case of the LO connected to special abilities (named competences in the SER). According to the SER, the LO referred to special abilities aims "to develop the abilities to analyse the business environment from an enterprise viewpoint; to perform an economic project evaluation; to apply contemporary business analysis methods for the solution of economic problems; to use modern information technologies and economic information systems" (SER, pp. 6-7, Table 2). Whereas the experts judge this orientation as rationale, they also consider that the business bias of the programme needs to be emphasized in both the general aims and the title of the programme.

Regarding specifically to the programmes' intended LO, they meet the legal requirements of the Descriptor of the study field of economics. They are also presented in a clear manner. Thus, the tabular information presented in the SER allows, for example, connecting the intended LO to the specific courses. All this information is further complemented in Appendix 2, which provides descriptions of the academic subjects. Although in general the LO are satisfactory defined, occasionally the term *competency* is unsuitably used as an equivalent for ability and skill. Moreover, the onset meetings with the teaching staff showed some sceptical views about the process of defining LO, together with some concerns about the length of the list of LO and the difficulty for achieving and assessing some of the listed LO. The experts suggest a deep revision of both the process of defining LO and the relationship between the LO at subject level and those at programme level.

Both the programme aims and the intended LO outcomes correspond to the type and cycle of studies and the level of qualifications. In addition, they mostly correspond to the mission, operational objectives and/or strategy of the higher education institution. Nevertheless, and particularly regarding LO, the experts missed (and this was confirmed in the onsite meetings) to find clear references to one of the central missions of KU, i.e. to be a centre of marine and Baltic sea region studies, arts and sciences (ref. http://ku.lt/). Therefore, the experts recommend emphasising maritime topics in the BA programme.

The available evidence also shows that both the programme aims and intended LO are publicly announced through several websites and other means. Nevertheless, the experts have noticed certain mismatching between the LO presented in the SER and those provided in AIKOS, the website supervised by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science (https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/_layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=9725_2017&pt=of&ctx_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d). For example, the LO linked to social and personal abilities are difficult to be found in the AIKOS website, and, therefore, the experts suggest an update process of the programme LO when they are publicly announced.

If the programme aims and the intended LO outcomes are publicly announced, they also fit rather satisfactory with the academic and professional requirements, as well as with the public needs and the needs of the labour market. In general, it might be concluded that the learning outcomes are generally consistent with the professional requirement in the programme field. This is proved by the fact that "about 85% of our alumni have jobs in the profession, and the remaining continue studies" (SER, p. 31). An explanation of these high levels of employability could be a consequence of a close relationship between the Faculty of Social Sciences of KU and the social partners, as mentioned in the SER (pp. 10-11) and confirmed during the onsite meetings. However, the programme faces a continuous decline in the number of applicants and students in the full-time undergraduate study programme of Economics from 2012 to the present (SER, tables 11 and 122, p. 25). The experts consider that this could shadow over the match between aims and LO, on the one hand, and the labour market, on the other hand.

To sum up, whereas the Programme aims and LO are satisfactory in many respects, they also present several shortcomings. An important setback has to do with the real nature and specific characteristics of this Programme as well as its potential similarities with the BA in Management, which is also issued at the Faculty of Social Sciences (KU). The SER (p. 10) makes some statements on this issue, which, in general, were reinforced during the onsite meeting with the SER team. Nevertheless, in a context characterised by a declining number of students (SER, tables 11 and 122, p. 25), the experts are not convinced of the rationale of maintaining two separate programmes, one for economics with an orientation towards business and the other for management studies. In addition, and as confirmed in the onsite meetings, there is no conclusive evidence on the fact that the labour market in the region of Klaipėda makes a clear difference between economics, business economics, business administration and management. Therefore, the experts strongly recommend both reorienting the BA in Economics towards a BA in Business Economics and reconsidering the rationale of running two interlinked study programmes, i.e. economics and management.

All the available evidence presented above would then suggest that the title of the Programme, the intended learning outcomes, the content of the Programme and the qualification to be obtained are not totally well-tuned, yet satisfactory for the level of studies and regulation provided for this type of studies.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets legal requirements. Students both in the full-time and the parttime program have the same subjects. The volume of study programme is exactly equal to the maximum allowed 240 ECTS with 22 ECTS belonging to the general university education subjects (6 ETCS are electives) and 210 ECTS to the subjects of study field. The free-choice electives comprise 8 ECTS, practice 15 ECTS and final thesis 12 ECTS, all corresponding to the requirements. However, the experts were informed during visit that only a part of practice is done outside the university, whereas the rest consists of working in a training firm. The experts recommend prolonging the internships. The number of subjects (each 4-6 ECTS) per semester both in the full-time mode and part-time mode is below the maximum allowed 7. However, adding the foreign language alternatives in semesters 1 and 2 of the full-time study programme, the number of subjects exceeds the maximum number of subjects and number of ECTS a year. Before the site visit the experts received the information from the coordinator that these courses are outside of the curriculum. The experts do not consider this as a favourable agreement to support learning foreign languages. Additionally, experts panel finds that 240 ECTS (that is the maximum allowed volume for BA programmes in Lithuania) is a rather big volume for BA studies: Together with a following master programme (minimum 90 ECTS) the total ECTS volume exceeds the volume necessary for a master degree (300 ECTS). This leads to a long study duration and consequently makes the programme rather uncompetitive. It is also notable that if students continue their studies they are predisposed to repeating some contents, as, during the meeting with SER Committee, it was stated that some courses may count as Master's degree studies. The review panel suggests that curriculum for this bachelor programme should be revised and some of the contents from Bachelor's degree in economics would be transferred to Master's degree. However, this is not consistent with the separation of subjects between bachelor and master level. Taking into account that quite a lot of content is outside the economic study field and addressing the wishes of students the experts met, the experts suggest reconsidering the volume of the program.

Study subjects are spread quite evenly; their themes are mostly not repetitive. Within the full-time study mode, the volume of studies is 30 (+/- 1) ECTS for almost all (except the above mentioned language lectures) semesters having 5-7 study subjects per semesters 1 - 6 and 4 during

the 7^{th} semester. Part-time students have 4-6 study subjects per semesters 1-9 and 3 during the 10^{th} semester. The volume of studies here is 11-21 ECTS per semester. The workload for full-time students is 80-160 h per subject (about 800 h per semester). In the 3^{rd} and 4^{th} semester (full-time and part-time) students choose elective out of general university education. In 5^{th} and 6^{th} semester the students choose free-choice electives.

The contents of subjects are clearly defined and have in most cases the contents reflected in their title. A bit confusing, especially after looking into the descriptors, is that the course *Business Communication* is allotted to the courses of general university education, whereas the courses *Document Management* and *Databases and Research Sources of Information* belong to the study fields. It is not clear, why several courses delivered in several semesters have titles beginning with *Economic Special Course* (and there is another one with *Special course in Economics*). It should be considered to change (that is shorten) these titles.

The content of the programme and subjects suggest that the proportion of possible repetitive material is low. However, according to the course description there is a slight overlapping in *Regional Economics* and *Economic Geography*. The course *Accounting* is taught after more advanced course *Financial Markets*. This sequence of courses-topics means that there exists either major repetition of the material of this course or there are serious problems with the contents of the earlier subject. The review team suggests reconsidering the order of the subjects within the programme.

Mostly, the content of the subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies. The contents of subjects are clearly described in the syllabus. The majority of subjects are related directly to economics. However, there are quite a lot subjects oriented to the field of business administration or subjects have rather specific content (e.g. *Financing of International trade*). This mixture should be revisited, especially against the background of the programme volume and following master studies. As an alternative, the experts suggest to merge the programme with other programmes in the same area and define an economic specialisation. This could be a solution to deal with the declining demand for the programmes and an alternative to admittance only every second year. The amount of studies in foreign language also needs a change. Both students and graduates the experts met wish more lectures in English within the study programme. The experts support this, because foreign language skills are necessary within a globalized world. According to the course descriptions, the subjects are consistent with the level of the programme. However, in semesters 1 and 2 only a small part of the subjects is related to the main study field and thus students do not get an early insight into this. The experts suggest reconsidering the sequence and composition of the programme.

Almost all subjects refer to a rather small number of books (normally 3) mainly in Lithuanian language. The length of the lists of additional reading differs: mostly there are only 2-3 books listed, but others have a long list of additional readings (see e.g. *Accounting* with 18 titles). In some subjects it is questionable whether the students have access to the recommended books, because they are not available in the library (see e.g. *Databases and Research Sources of Information*). In general, the experts suggest reconsidering the attitude towards usage of references in the study program. It was astonishing for the experts to hear from the graduates that they did not use databases during their studies.

The content and methods of the subjects are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Considerable proportion of the courses is economic-related starting from a basic economic curriculum and leading students through the field of economics to the selected special questions. However, as mentioned above, the experts suggest reconsidering the composition and size of the study programme, for instance by concentrating on economic subjects and/or making some subjects (such as *Economic Geography*) to electives.

The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes of the Bachelor of Economics. The portfolio of different subjects in the programme has sufficient variety and coverage a for the bachelor level programme. In most cases, the specialty courses are preceded by the courses introducing the methods needed for the later studies in the programme. All subjects have the volume of 3-6 ECTS and have contact hours most frequently divided equally between lectures, seminars or practical classes and consultations. On average 32 % of the program consists of contact hours, 68 % are self-study. The content of the programme mostly reflects the latest achievements in science. One the one hand, this is indicated by the list of publications of some (but not all) professors and lecturers. However, the quantity and share of high level journals differs and the experts recommend more research in the study field. On the other hand, science-orientation of the programme is proved by the fact that the study literature is more or less up-to-date. However, as mentioned above, some literature list might need an update and there are deficits in the library (see facilities).

2.3. Teaching staff

According to the SER (p. 15), the composition of the academic staff meets provisions laid out the order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania issued on 30 December 2016, No. V-1168, "On Approval of General Requirements for Delivery of Studies" and other documents, which state that not less than 50 per cent of the subjects of the first cycle university study subjects in the study field should be delivered by scientists. Out of 32 teachers, 68

percent hold PhD. Academic staff is distributed as follows: 6 are professors, 11 are associate professors, 4 lecturers holding a PhD and 11 percent are lecturers without PhD. Professors teach 21 percent of the subjects. The teachers (SER, Appendix 4) have 2-42 years of educational experience (18 on average).

The qualifications of the teaching staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. With some deviations, staff members' research mostly corresponds to the subject they teach (SER, Appendix 4). According to the data provided in SER (p. 16), the average age of academic staff teaching in the Economics study programme was 48 years in 2017 (28.13 percent under 40, 37.5 percent 41–50, 21.87 percent 51–60, 15.6 percent over 60). The age structure of the Faculty is rather favourable for conducting academic teaching and research.

The SER (p. 16) informs that the teachers in the study programme of Economics pay great attention to the publishing of teaching-oriented academic literature – textbooks, teaching aids, methodological aids – in Lithuanian. The report (SER, p. 16) also states that the teachers of the Department of Economics in collaboration with co-authors published monographs and a theoretical study over the period of 2012–2016. The fact that teaching staff is engaged in research overall may have been confirmed during the visit, however international visibility of research should be increased. Yet, as was communicated during the meetings with teaching staff and administration, experts would suggest supporting this by reducing the pedagogical workload of teachers'. Teaching staff also confirmed what was stated in SER (pp. 15-20) that they develop professionally and use their knowledge and skills by participating in different national and international projects. During the meetings teaching staff has shown ability to freely communicate in English.

The expert team may confirm, from both SER (p. 15) and meetings, that the number of staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Most of staff members teach either one or two modules, the total number of people teaching this course, 32, is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. According to the SER (p. 15), the workload of a full-time University teacher is 36 hours per week and consists of: contact teaching hours (lectures, seminars, classes, lab works, practice, exams, and consulting): 14 to 10 hours; methodological work (preparing for contact hours and organization and control of student independent work): 12 to 10 hours; and research activity, 10 to 16 hours. The standard academic workload of a University teacher per academic year is 750 to 800 hours, including no less than 30% of contact hours. The workload of a full-time teacher of the Department of Economics employed in the Business Economics study programme is 779 hours on average, including 297 contact hours (i.e. 38% of the whole workload). During the visit, some of the members of teaching staff clearly expressed their concerns regarding the large number of contact hours and expert team agrees that this question should be addressed.

The current turnover of teaching staff seems to be adequate and poses no foreseeable threats to the study programme. According to the SER (p. 19), the teachers in the programme worked systematically, developed professionally, and got attested for the following term of office by means of public competition. The evaluation of the staff turnover proved that the number of young teachers in the study programme kept increasing which made a positive impact on the quality of the study program. The expert team has found during the visit that there are some young teachers who joined the staff recently. In accordance with the practice of the Faculty of Social Sciences, SER (p. 19) states that new staff mainly comes from the graduate and post-graduate studies of the University. Promising graduates of the Faculty are encouraged to participate in academic and research activity. The graduates, during the meetings, confirmed that motivated students are encouraged to participate in research activities. Overall, the structure of staff and the integration of new staff members seem to be well-organized.

KU offers rather good conditions for professional upgrading of staff necessary to implement the programme. According to the information provided by different groups during the visit, statements in SER (p. 19) stating that in order to achieve a better quality of teaching, the teachers regularly consult with one another, exchange teaching experience, and share theoretical and methodological materials, could be confirmed by the experts. The statement (SER, p. 19) that to improve the quality of studies, social partners are consulted was also confirmed during the meetings. The expert team also found evidence that in the meetings of the Department, problems arising in the teaching process are regularly discussed (SER, p. 19) and decisions are made whose implementation is controlled by the Head of the Department of Economics. The SER (p. 19) states that the professional development of the staff is ensured by making and implementing annual plans of individual activity..

During the meetings, it became evident that staff is included in research projects conducted with social partners. In addition, teachers have possibility to engage in research with colleagues from other countries. However, administration should consider readjusting the incentives system for research overall, including both financial and workload incentives. The expert team was not able to confirm that the professional development of the staff is ensured via the system of annual courses, as stated in the SER (p. 19), nevertheless some evidence that courses in general are being organized was provided during the visit. The SER (p. 18) also states that teachers and students of the study programme of Economics are also assisted by the auxiliary staff. A specialist of computer maintenance provides support in using computers, multimedia, copying, video-/audio-, and other equipment. The expert team may confirm that there is good multimedia infrastructure in Department's library, which is sufficient to carry out the before mentioned activities. All aspects

considered, the review team found that teaching staff in KU is adequate for this cycle of studies and is developing systematically, yet expert team would suggest reconsidering workload assigning processes within the faculty in order to assure that more time is spent on research.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The premises for studies are adequate in their size, but at the moment lack quality. During the visit to the KU expert team learned that the facilities of the Faculty responsible for the implementation of the study programme soon will be relocated to the central campus of the KU. Nevertheless, the expert team could only evaluate facilities which are presently used in the study process. Buildings of the Faculty are rather old and in need of renovation and improvement. Expert team could notice some parts of the walls in the Faculty complex cracking. There is a need of upgrading facilities not only to the building from outside, but to the classrooms from inside as well. Also, expert team recognizes as great concern that premises are not suited for the students with disabilities. There is no necessary infrastructure for such students to get to the second floor of the building where lectures are being held. Such students are also not able to access Faculty library of use individual working rooms present at second floor of the library. There are enough of classrooms for studies to hold lectures and other activities for the students. However, during the visit to the KU expert team made the observation that in most classrooms students are sitting in rows. Expert team raises a concern that these types of classrooms are not suited for competence based learning. KU should consider improving this situation by making classroom environment more flexible in order to provide possibilities for using different teaching and learning methods necessary in raising general competences of the students.

Faculty library is situated near the Faculty itself, making it easier for students to visit it. There are 4 academic hours long course for the students to learn to use resources of the library. Library also has 3 individual working rooms which could be used by the students by making request in advance. However, expert team stresses that these rooms might need improvement. During the visit expert team also learned that Faculty library is not based on open access. Students are granted access to the books only by ordering them through electronic system. Expert team considers this as situation which is in need of improvement as having direct access to the books is important part of the studying process. Students should be provided with possibilities to physically access books and examine them on the spot. Library computers have only basic software, such as MS Office, and do not have any specific software necessary for the student's studies. As a result, students cannot get access to the necessary software outside lecture time. Also, number of computers in the library seems to insufficient as only 18 computers are present with 16 available to

the students and the Faculty currently holds around 600 students. However, students are also provided with possibilities to access the library of KU at central campus.

The teaching and learning equipment (e.g. the computer equipment) is adequate both in size and quality: Faculty has two computer classrooms whose are equipped with 48 computers in total. Number of computerized workplaces seems to be sufficient to the study process. These computers are also equipped with software necessary for the study process. KU uses virtual learning environment (Moodle) which provides possibilities to enhance study process of the programme.

KU has adequate arrangements for students' practice: Students have to perform two practices during their studies at 6 and 8 semesters. First practice is carried out at the Faculty by performing simulation assignments in computer classrooms. Classroom is equipped with necessary software. Second practice is being done at an enterprise. Specific institution is chosen according to the interest of the students.

With some exceptions, teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) are adequate and accessible. There are a number of periodicals subscribed by the KU which are relevant to the programme. Currently there is a decrease in the number of books being acquired each year by the KU as priority is being given to e-books. As mentioned above, some books listed in the programmes' course descriptions as mandatory are not available in the library. There are also databases available to the students on the subject of economics subscribed by the library of KU. Library periodically analyzes usage of databases and decides which should be subscribed. Databases can be accessed by the students from home via VPN service. Various software is used in study process of the programme. According to SER (p. 22), this includes Windows XP Professional, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8, Windows 10, Microsoft Office 2003 Professional, MS Office Chrome, Acrobat Reader X, Adobe Flash Player, WINRAR, LedW, Copernic 2000, Acrobat Reader 6.0, Acrobat Reader DC, Elite type 2000, Macromedia Flash. However, it seems that there is a lack of software specifically dedicated to the studies of economics. Additionally, for IT-security reasons the experts suggest either to update old operating systems or at least keep these computers disconnected from the internet.

2.5. Study process and students' evaluation

The admission requirements to the study programme are clear and well founded. Students' admission requirements and rules are coordinated with Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. Admission is being conducted in accordance with order established by LAMA BPO (Association of Lithuanian Higher Schools to Organize the Unified Admission).

In general, students admitted to programme have relatively good average competitive score. However, students admitted to state non-funded places have rather low competitive score. The number of students admitted to full-time studies dropped in last years by four times: total number of admitted students to full-time studies in year 2012 was 48 and in 2016 it was 12. Number of part-time students dropped as well from 33 in 2010 to 4 in 2016. Expert team found out that KU is aware of the problem of dropping number of students. However, expert team is of the opinion that measures of solving this problem should not be put only to the changing subjects, hoping for international students or waiting for institutional decisions, but might need reconsidering the number of separate study programmes as well.

The organization of the study process ensures proper implementation of the programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The study year consists of spring and autumn semester. Exam session is being organized at the end of every semester. Intermediary evaluations and assignments of particular study subject seem to be distributed evenly throughout the semester. The proportion between contact and self-study time seems to be appropriate. SER (p. 25) indicates that students have possibilities to use computer labs for their self-studies. Material of the lectures is available to students online via virtual learning environment Moodle. Students are provided with possibility to make individual study plan. Study programme have rather high studies completion rate, fluctuating from 80 to 100%. Experts consider this as sign for a rather good support of students.

During the visit to the KU experts learned that teaching staff has good skills in speaking English. However, study programme would benefit from more lectures in English language. KU could consider providing students with flexibility to choose more study subjects in English. Students and graduates present at the meetings during the visit confirmed need for that. Better foreign language skills are necessary as Klaipėda is a port city where students have to work in international environment. Also, introduction of more English to the study programme would improve attractiveness of the programme for both foreign and Lithuanian students.

Teaching staff seems to be supportive and able to react to needs of students. Expert team also got the impression that teachers are open minded and open for discussions with students regarding their study subjects. After each study semester the results of students are discussed at the faculty and department levels. Teachers introduce students to the subject and the syllabus of subject during first lecture; students have access to these study subject descriptions in academic information system. The expert team welcomes initiative that students are also able to provide suggestions to the subject content and delivery.

SER (p. 26) indicates that KU has measures for encouraging students to participate in scientific and applied research activities. During the visit expert team learned that there are actually

some joint scientific activities with students. Managers' and Economists' Club operating in the KU was established by the students where students can take additional activities in the field of economics. However, the experts got feedback from students, that participation is rather low and could be increased.

Students are provided rather good conditions to take part in mobility programmes: SER (p. 25) indicates that KU has almost 180 ERASMUS partners in 25 countries. However, a rather low number of students use mobility programs to enhance their learning experience. KU should consider measures to improve this situation. Also, during the visit expert team understood that main partners for international mobility are Linnaeus University in Sweden and University of Bologna in Italy. Expert team would advise to consider increasing range of active international partnerships. At the moment, incoming foreign students study separately, having consultations only. The experts suggest integrating these students into the study process of the local students. Students of the programme stressed that this would be beneficial.

Apparently, KU ensures proper academic and social support of students. Staff of the programme provides students with consultations. Consultation time of teachers is publicly available. Programme seems to have rather good systems for information dissemination to the students of the programme through various channels (announcement boards, monitors of the students, meetings in the Deans office). Students are provided with psychological counselling for free. There are several types of grants available to the students. Students are also eligible to the incentives for scientific and public achievements. Expert team values that recent cooperation with the Klaipėda city municipality resulted in additional scholarships for best students in the programme. The expert team views this as a positive measure to motivate students. Over all, the experts have the impression that KU cares a lot about their students.

The system of assessing student achievements is public, clear, and mostly appropriate to assess the learning outcomes. During the first lecture students are introduced to the examination syllabus criteria (tasks, their weight and deadlines) of the subject., where the assessment system is clearly described. It contains information on tasks, their weight and deadlines. Cumulative assessment strategy is implemented in all study subjects. Exam sessions usually take place at the end of semester. Intermediary evaluation and assignment of particular study subject seems to be distributed evenly throughout the semester. Study subject's final evaluation always has to be half of their mark evaluated during the exam. This requirement raises concerns whether teachers can actually have enough freedom and autonomy in choosing best method to evaluate learning outcomes of the particular study subject. During the review of the exam material, expert team learned that most of the exams of the study subjects are based on closed type of questions where

student need only to select right answer of few answers given. Expert team can not recognize this as an appropriate way of assessing whether student has achieved learning outcomes and recommend reconsidering this assessment system. The review team suggests reviewing examination procedures, e.g. by introducing more open questions.

Topic of the final thesis can be chosen by students. All topics of the thesis have to be approved by committee formed on rectors' order. Final thesis is defended publicly and evaluated by Qualification committee which consists of three members. Members of the committee are teachers of the KU. There should be considered to include members outside institution to the Qualification committee as it would provide opportunity to give more impartial evaluation.

Professional activities of the majority of programme graduates correspond to the expectations of programme operators and employers: KU collects information on employability of the graduates and according to data 85% of graduates continue their studies or work in the field. The study programmes seems to be directed to the needs of the region and social partners confirm this. However, data is collected only on regional level of Klaipėda and does not provide possibilities to analyze how students fare on national level. KU should consider doing more detailed analysis on the matter.

The programme mostly corresponds to the state economic, social and cultural and future development needs: SER (p. 29) indicates that programme meets National Youth Entrepreneurship Development and Promotion Programme 2008-2012 and Klaipėda City Strategic Development Plan 2013-2020. It is also mentioned that rise of legal persons in Klaipėda indicates the need of programme graduates. However, this increase does not necessarily mean the need economics graduates. KU could consider taking a deeper look on a need for the graduates and competences they gain in order to meet national and regional needs.

Fair learning environment seems to be ensured. SER (p. 30) indicates that a number of KU internal documents define assurance of fair studying. For instance, for violation of academic ethics students are removed from exam and their work is evaluated as zero. Nevertheless, KU should consider implementing measures for raising awareness of this problem as well.

Students are provided opportunities to make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures. Procedure for complains and appeals is outlined in Study Regulations and Student Appeals Regulations. However, students can appeal results of their assessment only within two days. This term seems to be too short as students should be provided with possibility to get acquainted with the results and explanations of their assessment. Also, procedure of reassessment of students' examination or credit works is not necessarily unbiased since the teachers themselves participate in reevaluation only with the head of the department. This

procedure should be changed involving a neutral examination committee. In the opinion of the experts group, this procedure should be changed, e.g. by involving a neutral examination committee.

All in all, the study process is understood as fair, just and satisfactory for the cycle of the study programme.

2.6. Programme management

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. KU Statute regulates programme management. The main unit responsible for the programme is a Department. The programme is administered by the Programme Committee – the head of Programme Committee is the Head of the Department of Economics (SER p. 30). The interviews confirmed that Head of the Department is responsible for the programme. Academic staff is responsible for the development of their courses (SER, p. 31). However, during the meeting with teaching staff, the expert's team had an impression that teaching staff had outdated understanding about how the changes can be done to curriculum. Now, for a Bachelors's degree programme, the regulation¹ is that study programme has to be changed and updated regularly, and there are no limitations on how much of the programme can be changed (per cent-wise) without additional approval. This leads the review team to suggest KU EF takes action to update the management of the programme and the process of informing the teaching staff. According to interviews, the changes are introduced and the courses indeed are developed. However, the experts noticed that there are gaps in usage of learning outcomes for improvement of curricula by teachers and suggest improving this aspect.

Data and other information regarding programme implementation are collected and analysed periodically. To get a feedback on the quality of studies, after each semester, students are asked to evaluate the content of the courses and the quality of their teaching by filling in a questionnaire (SER, p. 31). Because of small number of students, a direct contact of students with the teaching and senior staff is possible. To provide a fast feedback about the course, students directly contact with a teacher. If the teacher does not respond, students report to the Head of Department.

The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for the improvement of the programme. The evaluation of programme is based on qualitative methods. There is no need to use quantitative methods. According to interviews, the students are involved in the enhancement of courses, but there is a lack of discussion with students about the structure of the

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¹ https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.369937/sjXTbevczp (Chapter I, point 11)

whole programme. But it can be stated that the quality assurance measures are enough effective for the programme.

The evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders. Faculty of Social Science (SSF) cooperates with its stakeholders and some even provide a financial support for the programme (SER, p. 33). The data of the questionnaire surveys conducted in 2016 proves that 95% of the surveyed employers are satisfied with the knowledge, skills, and performance of the Economics study programme graduates (SER, p. 32). According to interviews, there are regular discussions with stakeholders about the programme. The last meeting with stakeholders was in May 2017 when the changes in the programme for the next year were discussed. Stakeholders also provide the comments about the programme to the university through filling the evaluation form of students' internship. However, according to the stakeholders the experts met, they do not get feedback from the university about the usage of their comments. The review team believes that this issue should be addressed and a formal link between social partners and university should be established. This would provide feedback from the university for social partners.

The information about the study programme is public – it can be reached through web page of the university and also, via Facebook. It is easy accessible and relevant (see point 2.1.)

All aspects considered, the review team believes that this programme is managed sufficiently and well enough for this cycle of the programme.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The presentation of the programme aims should be improved and both the programme aims and learning outcomes should more clearly emphasize the priority for maritime research as well as the business orientation of the studies.
- 2. The process of defining learning outcomes as well as the relationship between learning outcomes at subject level and those at programme level should be revised. In this process, the use of the terms competency, ability and skill should be also clarified when necessary.
- 3. The contents of the programme learning outcomes should be updated in the AIKOS website and, perhaps, in other public platforms as well.
- 4. The possibilities to both reorient the current programme towards a BA in Business Economics programme and, perhaps, to merge economics and management in a single Business Economics programme should be seriously considered.
- 5. The size and the composition of the programme should be reconsidered, either concentrate on economic subjects or (after merging with other neighbouring programmes) by defining specific tracks/specialisations.
- 6. There should be more obligatory lessons in English within the curriculum.
- 7. Faculty library should be upgraded in order to provide students with open access to the books and make it more oriented to the study process.
- 8. Premises of the Faculty should be renovated.
- 9. KU should consider measures for adjusting classrooms for competence based learning.
- 10. Facilities should be improved so students with disabilities would be provided possibilities to study.
- 11. The assessment system should be reconsidered making it more oriented to learning outcomes, rather than to the specific content to the study subject.
- 12. KU should implement measures to increase student mobility.
- 13. Improvement of the procedure of student appeal should be done.
- 14. The programme management should respond to the trend of decreasing number of students higher quality of the programme should be recognized by candidates and should lead to higher number of students.

IV. SUMMARY

The part of the Programme devoted to aims and learning outcomes can be assessed as satisfactory. Publicly announced, they meet the legislation requirements and, in general, fit rather well with the academic and professional requirements as well as the public needs and the needs of the labour market. The programme has also a close relationship with the social partners. Nevertheless, there are some shortcomings that need to be mentioned. Whereas learning outcomes are presented in a clear manner, the same cannot be said for the programme aims. Both the process of implementing learning outcomes and their public content is not fully satisfactory. Finally, the aims and the learning outcomes of the Programme do not clearly reflect either the central missions of the University of Klaipėda and the business orientation of its curriculum.

The programme structure is in line with the legislative requirements. The subjects of study are taught in a consistent manner and there seems to be only little overlapping. The content of subjects corresponds to the type and cycle of studies. However, the integration of management-oriented topics decreases the visibility of the economic focus of the programme. The experts suggest either to concentrate the curriculum on economic subjects or (as a reaction to the overall declining numbers of applications) to merge the programme with neighbouring programmes. The content of subjects and study methods in general enable to achieve the intended learning outcomes, but the implementation of more lectures in English is necessary. The scope of the programme is sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes, but the size of the programme and the amount of subjects not directly related to the economic study field should be reconsidered. The content of the programme corresponds to newer academic achievements, but there is only a rather small amount of staffs' research oriented to the study field and the attitude towards using literature might need a revision.

The staff composition corresponds to the legislative requirements. Teaching staff is well qualified and their qualifications seem to be adequate to ensure the learning outcomes. Teachers are engaged in research; nevertheless the quantity and international visibility of research could be increased. There are enough staff members to ensure learning outcomes. However, their workload could be readjusted. The teaching staff turnover is able to ensure an adequate provision of the programme, new young teachers join the staff and there are some PhD students. The higher education institution ensures condition for professional upgrading of staff, nevertheless there might be a need for more direct conversations with individual staff members.

Facilities of the Faculty satisfy the needs for the studies only on the minimal level. KU has necessary software for study process. Teaching and learning resources and needed number of

computers are available at the Faculty. Premises are also adequate in size. However, premises from inside and outside are in need for renovation. Also, Faculty and Faculty library premises are not fitted for students with disabilities. This situation results in students with disabilities not having possibilities to access higher education in this programme. Faculty classrooms should also be adjusted for competence based learning. Library should also be improved on the open access for student basis.

Study process is organized well to achieve aims and learning outcomes of the programme. Admission is being carried out in accordance to national regulations. Students receive sufficient financial support and academic support from the teaching staff. Some of the students participate in joint scientific activities with teachers. Study programme would benefit from introducing more English language study subjects in the programme. This could improve situation with foreign attractiveness. Students participate in mobility programmes, but participation could be increased. Evaluation of the learning outcomes is clear and information about it is accessible to the students. However, current evaluation system should be reconsidered and be made more oriented to the assessment of the learning outcomes. Institution should also pay attention for current system for students' appeal. Generally, graduates of the programme met the expectations of the programme as well as social partners.

Programme management is good. The process of improvement of the programme is running - based on the qualitative methods - but programme management should better response to the trend of decreasing number of students. It is recommended to increase the quality of the programme so it provides higher value for students.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Economics* (state code – 6121JX063 (612L17001) at Klaipeda University is given **positive/negative** 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	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	15

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

^{4 (}very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Stephan Schöning
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Jakub Brdulak
	Ramon Ramon-Muñoz
	Tautvydas Marčiulaitis
	Ignas Gaižiūnas

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

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

KLAIPĖDOS UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS EKONOMIKOS (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 6211JX063) 2018-03-22 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-51 IŠRAŠAS

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Klaipėdos universiteto studijų programa *Ekonomika* (valstybinis kodas – 6211JX082) 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	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	15

- * 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 programos dalis, skirta tikslams ir studijų rezultatams, gali būti vertinama kaip patenkinama. Jie skelbiami viešai ir atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus, ir apskritai gana gerai tenkina akademinius ir profesinius reikalavimus bei visuomenės ir darbo rinkos poreikius. Studijų programos ryšiai su socialiniais partneriais yra glaudūs. Vis dėlto galima paminėti keletą trūkumų. Nors studijų rezultatai yra aiškiai išdėstyti, to paties negalima pasakyti apie studijų programos tikslus. Tiek studijų rezultatų įgyvendinimo lygis, tiek jų atviras turinys nėra visiškai įtikinami. Galiausiai, programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai neaiškiai atspindi Klaipėdos universiteto pagrindinę misiją ir programos verslo orientaciją.

Studijų programos struktūra atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus. Studijų dalykai dėstomi nuosekliai, tik kur ne kur pasikartoja. Dalykų turinys atitinka studijų rūšį ir pakopą. Tačiau į vadybą orientuotų temų integracija mažina programos ekonominės orientacijos matomumą. Ekspertai siūlo arba sutelkti studijų turinį į ekonomikos dalykus, arba (reaguojant į bendrą stojančiųjų paraiškų

skaičiaus mažėjimą) sujungti studijų programą su artimomis programomis. Dalykų turinys ir studijų metodai apskritai leidžia pasiekti numatomus studijų rezultatus, tačiau turėtų būti daugiau paskaitų anglų kalba. Studijų programos apimtis yra pakankama, kad būtų pasiekti studijų rezultatai, tačiau reikėtų peržiūrėti programos dydį ir tiesiogiai su ekonomikos sritimi nesusijusių dalykų skaičių. Studijų programos turinys atitinka naujesnius akademinius pasiekimus, tačiau tik nedidelė personalo tyrimų dalis yra orientuota į studijų kryptį, o požiūrį į naudojamą literatūrą galbūt reikėtų persvarstyti.

Personalo sudėtis atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus. Dėstytojų kvalifikacija aukšta ir tinkama studijų rezultatams užtikrinti. Dėstytojai vykdo tyrimus; vis dėlto tyrimų kiekį ir tarptautinį matomumą galima didinti. Yra pakankamai dėstytojų, kad būtų užtikrinti studijų rezultatai. Tačiau jų darbo krūvis galėtų būti koreguojamas. Dėstytojų kaita užtikrina tinkamą studijų programos vykdymą; prie personalo prisijungia jauni dėstytojai, taip pat yra keletas doktorantų. Aukštoji mokykla užtikrina personalo profesinio tobulinimosi sąlygas, tačiau gali tekti tiesiogiai pasikalbėti su atskirais dėstytojais.

Fakulteto materialioji bazė tik minimaliai tenkina studijų reikmes. Klaipėdos universitetas turi studijų procesui reikalingą programinę įrangą. Mokymo ir mokymosi ištekliai bei reikiamas kompiuterių kiekis yra prieinami fakultete. Patalpos taip pat yra tinkamo dydžio. Tačiau reikalinga tiek išorinė, tiek vidinė patalpų renovacija. Be to, fakulteto ir bibliotekos patalpos nėra pritaikytos studentams su negalia. Todėl negalią turintys studentai neturi galimybių studijuoti šios studijų programos. Fakulteto auditorijos taip pat turėtų būti pritaikytos kompetencija grindžiamam mokymuisi. Bibliotekoje turi būti atlikti pagerinimai dėl studentams suteikiamos atviros prieigos.

Studijų eiga gerai organizuota, kad būtų pasiekti programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai. Priėmimas į studijas vykdomas pagal nacionalinių teisės aktų reikalavimus. Studentai gauna pakankamą finansinę paramą, taip pat akademinę paramą iš dėstytojų. Kai kurie studentai kartu su dėstytojais vykdo bendrą mokslinę veiklą. Studijų programai būtų naudinga įtraukti daugiau studijų dalykų anglų kalba. Tai padidintų programos patrauklumą tarptautiniu lygiu. Studentai dalyvauja judumo programose, tačiau dalyvavimą reikėtų intensyvinti. Studijų rezultatų vertinimas yra aiškus, o informacija apie jį prieinama studentams. Vis dėlto reikėtų peržiūrėti dabartinę vertinimo sistemą ir labiau ją orientuoti į studijų rezultatų vertinimą. Institucija taip pat turėtų atkreipti dėmesį į esamą studentų apeliacijų teikimo sistemą. Apskritai, programos absolventai tenkina pačios programos ir socialinių partnerių lūkesčius.

Programos vadyba yra gera. Programos tobulinimo procesas vyksta remiantis kokybiniais metodais, tačiau programos vadovybė turėtų labiau reaguoti į mažėjančio studentų skaičiaus

tendenciją. Rekomenduojama kelti studijų programos kokybę, kad ji suteiktų didesnę vertę studentams.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

- 1. Reikėtų patobulinti studijų programos tikslų pateikimą, o tiksluose ir studijų rezultatuose turėtų būti aiškiau pabrėžtas prioritetas jūrininkystės moksliniams tyrimams bei verslo orientacija.
- Reikėtų peržiūrėti studijų rezultatų formulavimo procesą, taip pat jų tarpusavio sąsajas dalyko lygmeniu ir studijų programos lygmeniu. Prireikus, taip pat reikėtų paaiškinti tokius terminus kaip kompetencija, gebėjimas ir įgūdis.
- 3. Studijų rezultatų turinys turėtų būti atnaujintas ir AIKOS svetainėje bei galbūt kitose viešai prieinamose platformose.
- 4. Reikėtų rimtai apsvarstyti galimybes pakeisti dabartinės "Ekonomikos" studijų programos orientaciją į verslo ekonomiką ir galbūt sujungti ekonomiką bei vadybą į vieną "Verslo ekonomikos" studijų programą.
- Reikėtų peržiūrėti studijų programos dydį ir struktūrą ir arba susitelkti į ekonomikos dalykus, arba (sujungus su kitomis artimomis studijų programomis) nustatyti specifines kryptis / specializacijas.
- 6. Studijų turinyje turėtų būti daugiau privalomų paskaitų anglų kalba.
- 7. Reikėtų atnaujinti fakulteto biblioteką, siekiant suteikti studentams atvirą galimybę naudotis knygomis ir labiau ją orientuoti į studijų procesą.
- 8. Fakulteto patalpas reikėtų renovuoti.
- 9. Klaipėdos universitetas turėtų apsvarstyti priemones, kaip pritaikyti auditorijas kompetencija grindžiamam mokymuisi.
- 10. Materialioji bazė turėtų būti pagerinta, kad negalią turintys studentai turėtų galimybę studijuoti.
- 11. Reikėtų peržiūrėti vertinimo sistemą ir labiau ją orientuoti į studijų rezultatus, o ne į konkretų studijų dalyko turinį.
- 12. Klaipėdos universitetas turėtų įgyvendinti priemones, siekdamas padidinti studentų judumą.
- 13. Reikėtų patobulinti studentų apeliacijų teikimo tvarką.
- 14. Programos vadovybė turėtų reaguoti į mažėjančio studentų skaičiaus tendenciją kandidatai turėtų pripažinti aukštesnę studijų kokybę, todėl studentų skaičius turėtų išaugti.

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Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais.

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė, parašas)