



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademijos
TEATRO STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS (612W41003,
61203M108)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF THEATRE STUDIES (612W41003, 61203M108)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language is English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Teatro studijos</i>
Valstybinis kodas	612W41003, 61203M108
Studijų sritis	meno studijų sritis
Studijų kryptis	teatro kryptis, nuo 2010 m. teatro ir kino kryptis
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	160 (240 ECTS)
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	teatro bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2005-07-29

INFORMATION ON ASSESSED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<i>Theatre studies</i>
State code	612W41003, 61203M108
Study area	Creative Arts and Design
Study field	Theatre Studies, since 2010 Theatre and Film
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Level of studies	first
Study mode (length in years)	full time (4)
Scope of the study programme in credits	160 (240 ECTS)
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Bachelor of Theatre Studies
Date of registration of the study programme	July 29 2005

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre is a well-established and respected institution. The mission of the Academy is to train highly qualified professionals in music, theatre, and multimedia art.

The LMTA has a Faculty of Theatre and Film (FTF) that offers the following study programmes: Acting, Theatre Directing, TV Directing, Sound Directing, Theatre Studies, Film Studies, Screenwriting, Film Studies and Art Management.

The programme being evaluated is located at the Faculty of Theatre and Film, one of the two faculties in the Academy. It is the only programme of its type in Lithuania and is designed to meet the country's need for specialists in this subject area. The programme was last evaluated in 2005. No international evaluation of the programme has been undergone previously to the present one.

The International Peer Review visit of the expert panel to the B.A. Theatre Studies Programme at LMTA took place on 22 September 2011. All necessary documentation (in English) had been submitted to the expert panel in advance. All meetings (with senior administrative staff, staff responsible for preparation of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), teaching staff, students, graduates, employers) and observations (of facilities) were carried out in accordance with the preliminary Agenda. The atmosphere of the meetings was open and informative. Finally, the key general conclusions and remarks were introduced by the team leader of the expert panel to the representatives of the Programme. These conclusions have formed the basis of the present evaluation report.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined and clear; public accessibility could be bettered by publicising information of the programme on the institutional website.

The BA Theatre studies programme is offered exclusively at the Academy and fulfills the need for specialists in the market.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are overall consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered. However there should be direct proves of learning outcomes matching the Dublin Descriptor for First Cycle studies. It is not sufficiently clear from the description of the learning outcomes what level of competences is aimed at in the bachelor programme, in comparison with that of the master one. The correspondence of the learning outcomes with the Dublin Descriptor is in need of clarification. Besides, the subject course descriptions also do not specify in which way each subject course contribute to attainment of the programme learning outcomes.

It is also noteworthy that the reference to the international documents of higher education in arts, such as the Dublin Descriptors (Polifonia) aimed at artistic competences (paragraph 27), is misleading and does not comply with the nature of the programme. The programme experiences lack of subject benchmark statements or exemplary documentation to describe its

proper nature and characteristics in the subject area of theatre studies rather than theatre performance.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with each other.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Main strength:

- Uniqueness of the programme among institutions of higher education in arts.

Main weaknesses:

- Lack of subject benchmark statements or exemplary documentation to describe the nature and characteristics of the programme in the subject area of theatre studies.
- It is not sufficiently clear from the description of the learning outcomes what level of competences is aimed at in the bachelor programme, in comparison with that of the master one.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets general legal requirements, but there is obviously a need to introduce systematically the ECTS methodology for management of students' workload. The curriculum lacks coherence in calculation of students' workload as provided in table 4, according to national regulation which prescribes 1 ECTS credit for 25-30 hours of student's work (see ECTS user guide).

There is good coherence within the curriculum in terms of spread of subjects and thematic representation. The content of the subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies.

The ratio between contact hours and student's self-study which varies in percentage from 75:25 (see Lithuanian Dramaturgy) to even 90:10 (see Old Lithuanian Theatre and Dramaturgy) shows that self-study is badly undervalued and requires reconsideration with regards to developing skills of further studies in a certain subject field (cf. Dublin descriptor for first cycle **awards). Non-allocation of contact hours for professional practical training, which puts under question the guided supervision in practical training, is in urgent need of workload restructuring.

The scope of the programme reflects an overwhelming concern with Lithuanian theatre tradition based on high academic expertise. However, to attain the learning outcomes that pertain to theatre art in general, the study of the history of European theatre should be accompanied with introduction of a wider scope of theatre traditions or forms, such as non-European theatre, opera, pantomime, etc.

The content of the programme would better reflect the latest agenda of theatre art if wider scope of interdisciplinarity was introduced. During the site visit the need for closer co-operation with humanitarian units from other institution, more interdisciplinary content and shared courses with cognate subject programmes (such as theatre management) was voiced by the alumni and employers. The labour market for the majority of graduates of the programme demands at least basic competence of cultural management for which purpose an introductory course to cultural management would be of benefit.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Main strength:

- High level of expertise in Lithuanian theatre history and criticism.

Main weaknesses:

- Although Lithuanian higher education institutions are still in transitional period from the point of view of view of ECTS system, it is noticeable, that curriculum is designed unsystematically, therefore a greater attention should be paid to ECTS methodology.
- Underdeveloped competences related to non-Lithuanian theatre traditions;
- Low level of interdisciplinarity.

3. *Staff*

The composition of the staff of the programme fully meets legal requirements. Core subjects in the study field of the study programme are taught by 8 teachers 5 of whom are professors and associate professors and 7 have acquired research degree.

The Faculty has 12 technical staff, including librarians, who provide appropriate support for the Faculty's programmes, including the BA Theatre Studies.

The range of pedagogical experience of teachers on the programme is from 2 to 29 years. The proposal to teach a number of modules in English is laudable, but it is essential that staff (and student) competence in the language is at a sufficiently high level for this to be effective. The experts' consider that this varies from excellent (fluent) to weak. Selection and preparation/training of staff to deliver these modules will need to be managed carefully.

Teachers are active in their professional fields as evidenced by the production of artistic works and events, and publication of academic papers. These are used to inform their teaching on the programme and enrich the students' learning experience. A number of teachers hold positions in relevant associations and committees. This serves not only to enhance the programme but also to raise the profile and recognition of the programme and the Academy.

The staff experience and very high expertise in Lithuanian theatre studies fully ensure learning outcomes associated with the national tradition. On the other hand, none of the teachers involved into the programme is actually majoring in research on non-Lithuanian theatre, historical or contemporary, which puts into risk the attainment of the learning outcomes of the programme aimed at the competences to deal with the theatre phenomenon on wider scale.

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes, however the range of research interests represented by the scholars involved needs to be more diversified. A significant number of staff of the department, and outside speakers, contribute to the programme on a part-time basis. There is an urgent need to have more full-time positions at the department for running this programme.

The teaching staff turnover is relevant and entails the changes in the curriculum. During the period from 2005 to 2010, 5 new teachers were employed as a consequence of introduction of new subject courses.

It is stated in the SAR (paragraph 69) that teachers of LMTA have a nominal 40 hours per week workload of which half is expected to be spent in the classroom while the other part is allotted to artistic/research, methodological and other activity. Since national legislation allots 36

weekly hours for the teachers, the workload allocation should be reviewed accordingly. Besides, an expected class contact of 20 hours per week is high, especially for staff expected to pursue research and/or maintain their standing as artists. There is a need to reconsider the methodology of teachers' workload distribution to ensure their possibilities for pedagogical and scholarly development.

The statute of the Academy states that '...every five years teachers may be relieved of pedagogical work for a period of up to one year to engage in scientific research, artistic activity and professional skills improvement. During this period teachers are paid their average monthly salary.' However, this paid sabbatical scheme has been suspended as a result of financial conditions. While the experts recognise the immediate financial imperative, the Academy must be mindful that its reputation depends to a large extent on the credibility and recognition of its staff in their respective fields. If staff is not to stagnate, but to maintain their standing and remain at the forefront of their professional field, they need to refresh their knowledge and skills. The Academy needs to provide further opportunities for staff to engage in professional development activities such as scholarship and research and general updating of subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Notwithstanding the withdrawal of the sabbatical programme, staff continues to enhance their professional standing through teacher exchange programmes and conference participation. It is important that the outcomes of these activities are clearly linked to programme delivery and development in order to enhance the student learning experience.

The Academy is partially supportive of the professional development of the teaching staff in term of provision of funds for visiting festivals, conferences or other events abroad, however the lack of funds for publication makes scholars publish their research in other institutions.

The teaching staff is composed of the leading scholars in the field of theatre studies on the national level which has good relevance to the programme being reviewed. The expert panel experienced high commitment of staff, in spite of low salaries, honest dedication and openness to develop the programme.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Main strengths:

- High professional qualification of staff which is comprised of leading national professionals in the field.
- High commitment of staff, in spite of low salaries; honest dedication and openness to develop the programme.

Main weaknesses:

- Inappropriate methodology of teachers' workload distribution with regard to scholarly and pedagogical development;
- Too low number of full time teaching staff; low international exchange rate.

4. Facilities and learning resources

Facilities and learning resources for the programme are distributed between the Academy's buildings. The SAR indicates that for the programme classes 6 rooms can be used. It is also noted that currently LMTA has 6 classrooms equipped with multimedia, audio and video facilities and Internet 2 of which are located in the building where the classes of the programme

are usually convened. Students did not report any problems of a lack of space, yet insufficiency of classes equipped with the multimedia was referred to.

There is a continuing refurbishment programme, although much work remains to be done to ensure that the premises are fit-for-purpose.

Students and teachers have access to libraries, reading rooms. However, opening times (0900 to 1700 or 1800 hours) are limited and the Academy is advised to consider extending the opening times to facilitate greater access of students and teachers to these resources.

Although the self assessment report indicates that the Academy considers the provision to be adequate, the experts consider that it is insufficient and in some case, outdated. Further investment in specialist resources is required, including the replacement of outdated equipment, and improved student access to equipment by extending times when it may be obtained

There are just 4 PCs available for students in Slušakai building, which the experts consider to be clearly insufficient for the student numbers, a view shared by the students. Although wireless internet connectivity is available in all buildings and students may bring their own laptops, the experts consider that IT provision is inadequate and requires augmentation as a matter of urgency.

Students are required to undertake some practical training. This is usually undertaken by placement in professional organisations. Selection of placements can be by the students independently, or in collaboration with the Department. Either way, all students are able to obtain placements

Although the Theatre Study programme students are provided with major textbooks in Lithuanian, the experts consider that library provision is in urgent need of improvement. Book and journal stock should be enhanced, particularly in international texts and there is a need to increase the provision of multiple copies for borrowing. Considerations should also be given to substantial augmentation of visual archive of video records of various plays that are used during lectures and seminars.

The experts consider the library provision to be limited and in need of considerable augmentation. Provision of borrowing rights and an extension of the currently limited hours of opening need to be addressed by the Academy.

Although the Academy subscribes to appropriate databases and other useful catalogues and websites, as mentioned previously there are relatively few PCs available within the Academy to enable students to access these, unless they have their own laptops.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Main strength:

- Good availability of textbooks and resource material on Lithuanian theatre.

Main weaknesses:

- Provision of research library, especially with books in foreign languages, and computing facilities needs urgent improvement;
- Poor technical equipment of classrooms.

5. Study process and student assessment

Recruitment to the programme takes place every two years and for almost all applicants the programme is their first choice. The programme experienced a decrease of the number of students enrolled from 9 in 2007 to 6 in 2009 due to new national regulations of admission to the art field studies. The programme overall enjoys good demand among the applicants.

Prospective entrants are required to sit a written exam (analysis of a theatre play) and undergo an interview. This is effective in identifying the necessary ability and motivation to succeed.

The organisation of the study process generally ensures an adequate provision of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes. Administration reported a problem of formal recognition of students' achievements gained during participation in the activities or projects other than study abroad based on institutional agreement. In these cases administration is taking decision individually. To encourage students' initiative to increase professional knowledge and skills gained informally or by self-education the institution is suggested to formalise the system of recognition of such student achievements.

Students are encouraged to participate in research and applied research activities, such as students' conference and writing reviews of theatre performances for the culture and art newspapers and journals.

The SAR states that "the mobility of the students in the study programme of Theatre Studies was comparatively high", but it is evidenced that majority of the visits were the short-term ones and targeted to attend seminars, international festivals, student conferences, while only two students went on Erasmus visit for the semester. Those students who studied abroad felt that it enriched their learning considerably and contributed to their personal development. There were no incoming students. This inequality may be addressed if the intention to provide courses in English comes to fruition and that the programme is seemed sufficiently attractive to external audiences.

The programme does not have a strategy to promote international exchange of staff or students. The Academy, and Department, will need to address this issue in order to raise the profile of the programme. Students and employers would welcome more international teachers spending some time in the Academy. The Academy is recommended to increase its efforts to attract foreign academics to spend time there in order to support staff professional development and to expose students to a wider range of perspectives on their subject. To this end the Academy is encouraged to adopt a more proactive approach to encouraging student and staff mobility, including greater provision of opportunities to develop foreign language competences.

According to the SAR there are many ways in which the Academy provides students with information about the programme: LMTA website, introductory days, meetings with administration and teachers, Faculty announcement board, personal communication with teachers, via the Academic Affairs Office, etc. On the other hand, no systematic continuous and regular way of communicating information is mentioned. During the meetings students noted, that such dynamic system for information dissemination exists in the form of e-mail messages. But talking to students also revealed that only some students use university e-mail inbox as a means of acquiring this information. For example, during the meeting with students a considerable part of them stated that they do not get information on international exchange programmes whatsoever, while others replied, that such information is supplied by email.

Student achievement is assessed in grades (from 1 to 10; negative marks are from 1 to 4 inclusive). Students' knowledge and acquired skills are evaluated in diverse ways and forms (exams, tests, public performances, etc.) not only in grades but also in pass/fail (course credit) assessment. The new legislation no longer allows the latter assessment system, therefore academy should take steps immediately to replace it by other forms of assessment.

Assessment criteria reflect the intended learning outcomes of the courses and take in to account knowledge and skills, however a few course descriptions contain assessment criteria for identifying the level of academic attainment. The final assessment score is based on intermediate and final performance. Typically the final assessment, such as an end-of-course examination, contributes between 60 and 70 per cent of the final grade. Students may retake exams in accordance with the Law of Higher Education. The possibility to study according to the individual programme exists and is regulated as well. Assessment criteria are made available to students, often through discussion at the start of a semester and in subject documentation. Students expressed satisfaction with the information they receive.

Counseling of students about their career possibilities does not appear to be very active or structured. Self assessment report indicates that the main burden of this sort of counseling is expected to be taken by teachers, who are professionals, capable of doing so. According to the SAR, the Majority of graduates of the programme enter the theatre or culture labour market. However, institutionally there is no clear system of supporting students in their pursuit of career and plans for improving on this aspect of academic support should be embodied.

The Academy's Physical Education Centre provides students with possibility to go in for sports. Moreover, the specificity of the programme allows for good possibilities of students creative / cultural activities. The student's cooperation with cultural press is encouraged.

Students of the programme receive government funded scholarships. As an addition, one-time scholarships by LMTA Senate are awarded for the very best students. However the biggest part of student financial support is from modest government grants and, taking into account comparatively expensive living in Vilnius, additional sources for supporting students would be welcome. On the positive side, the administration of the programme stated that due to the efforts of the Faculty one Theatre Studies student received a grant covering the study tuition fee, which is a very considerable support.

Students did not have complains about insufficient dormitory placement, but it was noted that dormitories need serious maintenance repair.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Main strengths:

- High commitment and motivation of students.
- On the whole, good communication and interaction between teachers, administrative staff and students.

Main weaknesses:

- Low students' mobility and international involvement;
- Institutionally there is no clear system of supporting students in their pursuit of career and plans for improving on this aspect of academic support should be embodied.

6. Programme management

Much of the programme management is conducted at faculty and institutional level, with little input at the operational, programme, level. Notwithstanding the relatively small size of the Academy, the experts consider it important that a programme leader other than the head of the department be appointed to have lead responsibility for day-to-day programme management as well as informing medium to longer term programme development.

The involvement of other stakeholders is often on an informal basis. The graduates and employers who met the experts said they would be happy to be involved in advisory panels to inform programme development. This represents an invaluable source of information which the Academy could use to ensure the currency of the programme and enhance the employability of its graduates.

There is a paucity of information on key performance indicators for the programme available. The collection, collation and analysis of statistical information on graduate attributes, employer requirements and employment patterns is vital if the Academy is to secure the continued relevance of the programme.

The only evaluation of the study programme of Theatre studies was conducted nationally in 2005. As a result of recommendations of this evaluation, new descriptions of the subject courses were prepared and the content of the study programme was supplemented by 6 new subject courses.

Students can inform quality improvement through student representatives and informal contact with teachers. However, there were no examples of how students have effected change in the programme. Also the site visit proved that the surveys of students' opinion are irregular while its results lack visibility. The Academy is advised to formalise and generally improve means of obtaining and using student feedback in order to enhance the provision.

Teachers can inform quality matters through formal participation in task forces or departmental meetings. However, once again, no specific instances of teachers influencing the programme were presented.

The Academy Council includes a number of eminent external stakeholders. However, the SAR states that 'the role of the majority of members of the Council elected in 2005 in the activity of LMTA is not as significant as it could be and their influence on study quality is minor'. This is a missed opportunity that the Academy may wish to address by involving stakeholders at a more operational level in order to provide concrete support for the programme. There is a need to establish a more formal and effective system to engage with local organisations to support student learning and curricular enhancement, such as an employers' forum or advisory board.

The SAR admits that the Academy's internal quality assurance system has not been formalized. Currently it is fragmented, spread across a number of functional areas of the Academy. There is, as yet, no clear set of key performance indicators with which to conduct an internal quality assessment. The experts consider that, as a matter of necessity, the Academy needs to implement a robust quality assurance system with clearly articulated performance indicators against which the programme can be evaluated.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Main strengths:

- For the great majority of applicants the programme is their first choice which is indicative of its prestige.

Main weaknesses:

- Informal rather than formalized system of quality assurance; no clear set of key performance indicators with which to conduct an internal quality assessment.
- Student feedback should be more regular and its impact should be more visible.
- Insufficient involvement of external stakeholders at operational level.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. The library provision is in urgent need of improvement. Book and journal stock is in urgent need of enhancement, particularly in international texts and there is a need to increase the provision of multiple copies for borrowing. Considerations should also be given to extending the opening hours to facilitate greater accessibility, at least during the session time. Computing facilities are extremely limited and require augmentation as a matter of urgency.

3.2. The Academy needs to enhance support and motivation for teachers to engage in professional development such as scholarship and research, participation in international conferences and research networks, and general updating of subject and pedagogical knowledge and skills, including possibility for sabbaticals.

3.3. There is a need to introduce into the programme interdisciplinary content and shared courses with cognate subject programmes on larger scale, to enhance closer co-operation with humanitarian units from other institution. It is suggested that there could be at least an introductory course to cultural management.

3.4. The Academy is recommended to increase its efforts to strengthen and diversify intercultural exchange and co-operation, e.g. consider possibilities of joint degrees, to attract foreign academics to spend time there in order to support staff professional development and to expose students to a wider range of perspectives on their subject.

3.5. Organisation and management of the programme needs more clear articulation and responsibility allocation. Appointment of the programme leader or manager – a member of the teaching staff, with a vision for the content and development of the programme, and the programme committee with participation of student representative would enhance effectiveness of the programme on operational level. The Academy is advised to formalise and generally improve means of obtaining and using student feedback.

3.7. There is a need to establish a more formal and effective system to engage with stakeholders (alumni, employers, external experts, people/institutions with vested interests) at an operational level, such as an employers' forum or advisory board, to facilitate timely updates of the programmes and increase commitment to graduates' careers.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Teatre Studies* (state code – 612W41003, 61203M108) is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by fields of assessment.

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

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

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

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

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

Grupēs vadovas:

Team leader:

Grupēs nariai:

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