



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Klaipėdos universiteto  
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "VERSLO EKONOMIKA"**  
*(valstybinis kodas –6211JX090 (621L10014))*  
**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**  
**OF "BUSINESS ECONOMICS"**  
*(state code – 6211JX090 (621L10014))*  
**STUDY PROGRAMME**  
at Klaipėda University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba  
Report language – English

## DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Verslo ekonomika</i>
Valstybinis kodas	6211JX090 (621L10014)
Studijų krypčių grupė	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Ekonomika
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antroji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (1,5 metai)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	90 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Ekonomikos magistras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	No. SV6-7, 14-02-2012

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## INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Business economics</i>
State code	6211JX090 (621L10014)
Group of study field	Social Sciences
Study field	Economics
Type of the study programme	University Studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (1.5 years)
Volume of the study programme in credits	90 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of Economics
Date of registration of the study programme	No. SV6-7, 14 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012

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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 than 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 has started a study programme “Business Economics” on the second (master) level in 2012. It is one of 59 graduate study programmes of KU. The first 7 students were admitted in 2012 (See SER, table 13). The programme is being offered each year, but didn’t start this autumn due to new regulations of the minimum number of entrants. Classes are delivered in Lithuanian language.

So far, the programme hasn’t been evaluated by an international external assessment expert group under the auspices of SKVC yet. The accreditation is pending until 31-08-2018. This evaluation report is based on the 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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) presents the programme aims and the intended learning outcomes of the Master in Business Economics by following the standard procedure. To start with, it defines the general purpose of the programme. The SER distinguishes between the

purpose and the aim of the graduate of Business Economics study programme. Whereas the purpose and the aim are satisfactory defined, this distinction is somewhat confusing as many of the contents that form the purpose could be identified as aims and vice versa. In addition, the description of the aims as presented in the SER (pp. 5-6) does not totally conform to those presented in below in the SER (table 2, pp. 6-8). The onsite meetings did not totally clarify this issue. The experts suggest more clarity in defining aims and purposes.

The learning outcomes of the programme are satisfactory defined. Following the Descriptor, they are divided into five categories (SER, pp. 6-8), although the categories are not explicitly mentioned in the SER: (1) Knowledge and its application, (2) Research skills, (3) Special abilities, (4) Social abilities and (5) Personal abilities. Presented in table 2, the learning outcomes are connected to the programme aims and to the different subjects. A major concern of the experts is that during the meetings with the teaching staff the process of defining and implementing LO was interpreted with scepticism; and there were also some worries 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.

The programme aims and the intended LO mostly correspond to the type and cycle of studies and the level of qualifications, as confirmed by both the SER (p. 35) and the onsite meetings. Moreover, they were in general formulated on the basis of the mission, operational objectives and strategy of KU. Nevertheless, it is not clear enough whether or not the MA in Business Economics aims at prioritising “*maritime research and the building of the knowledge nucleus of the Maritime Valley*” (SER, p. 6), which is one of the main missions of KU (ref. <http://ku.lt>). Whereas it is true that in the period 2014-2017 23% of the master’s final thesis dealt with topics such as Baltic Sea ports’ performance, the transport sector or the maritime cluster development (SER, Appendix 4), it is also true that clear references showing a prioritisation of maritime research – an issue that was tackled during the onsite visit – are hardly found in the current programme aims as well as in the intended LO. The experts recommend filling this gap.

The SER rightly states that the Programme aims and the intended LO are publicised. This is made, among others means, through the KU website as well as through the AIKOS website, which is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania ([https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=6105\\_2017&pt=of&ctx\\_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d](https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=6105_2017&pt=of&ctx_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d)). Nevertheless, the experts have noticed certain mismatching between the LO presented in the SER and those provided in AIKOS. The LO linked to social and personal abilities, for example, 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.

The SER states in both section 1 (programme aims and the intended learning outcomes) and section 6 (programme management) that employers and other social partners collaborate in defining the aims and the LO of the study programme (SER, p. 8) and in its evaluation (SER, p. 34). This collaboration also consists of the organization of meetings with employers. Moreover, it is mentioned in the SER (p. 34) that *“employer representatives help students find jobs and collaborate in the initiation of writing final theses relevant for them”*. All this evidence (which was mostly confirmed during the onsite visit) might show that the programme aims and the learning outcomes are based on the professional requirements, public needs and the needs of the labour market. Nevertheless, there are also some evidences against this latter statement. In the SER (section 5), it is mentioned that *“graduate studies are usually applied for by those who have jobs: in Master’s study programmes, just about 10% of all students do not have jobs”* (SER, p. 32), which might question the real connection between this programme and the labour market. In fact, the experts learned during the onsite visit that this programme did not start in the academic year 2017-2018, due to the fact that the number of applicants is too low to meet legal requirements, which, among other factors, might reflect a mismatch between labour market requirements and this programme.

The name of the programme, its learning outcomes, content, qualifications and title offered are in general compatible with each other. At a formal level, however, it is confusing that the name of the study program is Business Economics, but the Degree and professional qualification awarded is Master of Economics. This is not the case for example in the case of the Master in Marketing, which is also awarded by KU. According to information from <https://www.ku.lt/smf/en/socialiniu-mokslu-fakultetas/struktura/ekonomikos-katedra/studijos/>, in this latter case both the name of the study programme and the awarded qualification are the same.

A major problem emerges when this programme is compared to other (similar) MA programmes awarded by KU. This is a totally missing issue in the SER and the experts regret such an omission. For example, a comparison between the MA in Business Economics and MA in Business Management would have been illuminating and helpful. As already mentioned, the former programme is not currently running, whereas the latter is still being awarded. Both programmes appear to be partly overlapping each other, at least in terms of access to professional activity. According to the information provided in AIKOS, the *“graduates of Business Economics master program will be able to work in various types of manufacturing, service and trading companies; specialized business economics services agencies, business consulting centers as economists, economic project managers /consultants in foreign business companies economic departments.*

*Graduates will be qualified to provide consulting services for companies concerned with economic problems”*

([https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/\\_layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=6105\\_2017&pt=of&ctx\\_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d](https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/_layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=6105_2017&pt=of&ctx_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d)). Similarly, “*graduates of the Master study programme of Business Management can work as researchers, consultants, or managers of divisions or organizations in any business organizations* ([https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/\\_layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=6105\\_2017&pt=of&ctx\\_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d](https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/_layouts/15/Asw.Aikos.RegisterSearch/ObjectFormResult.aspx?o=LO&f=MokGalEn&key=6105_2017&pt=of&ctx_sr=NGkQxEZ2UKW7pbzkvRJh%2bdg86Hc%3d)). In a context of serious difficulties owing to the declining number of students, the experts recommend to seriously explore the possibility to reorient the current programme towards a MA in Business Economics and Management (or Administration), a title that can be found in other European universities.

## **2.2. Curriculum design**

The curriculum design meets legal requirements. The volume of the programme (90 ECTS, SER pp. 10-11 and Appendix 5 “Curriculum study programme”) and the volume of subjects in the study field (also 90 ECTS) satisfy the legal requirements. The study field subjected are divided into mandatory (78 ECTS, including master thesis) and electives (12 ECTS), where students have to choose one subject out of 2 blocks (*Sustainable Business Development or Modern Consumption Theories, Statistical Analysis Methods in Economics or Quantitative Research Methods in Economics*).

Study subjects are spread evenly and their themes described in Appendix 1. Course descriptions are not repetitive. According to the study plans (SER, pp. 10-11) the number of 6 ECTS study subjects per semester is 5 (in the last semester three) for full-time version of the programme, the master thesis work (in total 30 ECTS meeting minimum requirements) is spread over the whole programme.

The content of the subjects is consistent with the type and level of the studies. In comparison with the first level (undergraduate) studies, the study field subjects are of a higher qualitative problem-solving or scientific innovation level as regards the study content (see course descriptions presented in Appendix 1). Additionally, compared with the bachelor programme economics there is a clear concentration on economic topics.

The content and methods of the programme are appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. By analysing the course descriptions, it becomes evident that no less than 30% of the volume of every study subject is independent work. However, the SER states the



volume of independent work as 35.7% (see p. 11), but this contradicts table 4 on p. 14 with 75%). The relationships between ILO-s and contents of the programme are described in most of the course descriptions. However, some are rather short and not completely reflect the ILOs (see e.g. *Modern Theories of Consumption* or *Application of Statistical Analysis Methods in the Economics*, also see a statement in the SER (p. 15): “The analysis of the course descriptions proved that some of them failed to fully indicate all the learning outcomes”. The experts suggest revisiting these course descriptions.

The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes. As mentioned above, the programme totally concentrates on advanced economic content connected with business. Therefore, the title of the programme “Business Economics” does completely coincide with the contents of the programme. However, taking a closer look at the course descriptions, it becomes clear that the programme has content typical for advance business administration studies (see e.g. *Economic Feasibility of Business Investment and Risk Assessment*). In one course description (see *Economic Analysis*) the experts even found a misleading description, which might be the consequence of using the course in other study programmes: “Develop a robust framework for the training of *marketing MBAs*”). As mentioned in chapter 2.1 of this report, merging the programmes might be useful.

The content of the programme reflects with minor restrictions the latest achievements in science. Most professors participate actively in research, but the number of publications outside of Lithuania quite is low. The literature list of some subjects contains advanced national and international textbooks, but sometimes these publications are not available in the library (or only in one copy) and it is questionable whether the students have access to these books. In some courses the recommended books are rather old and do not represent the major sources in the subject (see e.g. the subject *Economic Feasibility of Business Investment and Risk Assessment*). Therefore, the literature should be revisited and the availability of books should be increased.

Overall, curriculum of the study programme is up to date, appropriate of achieving the ILO and meets legal requirements, and is viewed as good.

### **2.3. Teaching staff**

According to the self-evaluation report (SER, pp. 15-16), 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 states that at least 80 per cent of Master studies teachers should hold a Doctor’s Degree and at least 20 per cent of subjects in the field should be*

*taught by teachers holding positions of a professor*". All 10 teachers hold PhD: 4 are professors, 4 are associate professors and 2 are lecturers. Overall, at least 40 percent of the subjects are delivered by professors. The teachers (SER, p. 16) have 1-37 years of research experience (13.5 on average), 5-37 years of academic experience (18.6 on average) and 4-42 years of practical experience (18.5 on average).

Staffs research mostly corresponds to the subject they teach with some deviations (SER, Appendix 3). According to the data provided in self-evaluation report (SER, p. 16), the average age of Economics study programme academic staff was a 44 years in 2017 (40 percent under 40, 40 percent 41–50, 10 percent 51–60, 10 percent over 60). The age structure of the Faculty is rather favourable for conducting academic teaching and research.

According to the self-evaluation report (SER, p. 16), the teachers in the study programme of Business Economics pay great attention to the publishing of academic literature – textbooks, teaching aids, methodological aids – in Lithuanian. Yet, as was communicated during the meetings with teaching staff and administration, experts would suggest adjusting the teachers' workload so that academic research visibility, especially international, could be increased. Self-evaluation report also states (SER, p. 16) that the teachers of the Department of Economics in collaboration with co-authors published monographs, textbook, and methodological aid, 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 could be increased, especially taking into account the fact that staff members teach graduate students. Teaching staff also confirmed what was stated in self-evaluation report (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, by the evidence based on both self-evaluation report (SER, p. 16) and meetings, that the number of staff is adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Most of staff members teach either one or two modules and the total number of people teaching this course (10) is sufficient to cover the total of 15 modules taught during the second cycle study program.

According to the self-evaluation report (SER, p. 16), 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, teaching staff clearly expressed their concerns regarding the large number of contact hours and expert team agrees that this question should be addressed.

According to the self-evaluation report (SER, p. 16) and live meetings with teaching and administrative staff, it was confirmed that 9 students on average enrol into the Business Economics study programme. Thus, the average ratio of teachers and students is less than 1 student per one teacher. Advising of final theses is included in the annual academic workload of teachers and, in accordance with the KU procedures, one teacher can act as an academic advisor for no more than 12 students. As the number of students in the full-time studies is on average 10, one teacher acts as an advisor for 1 to 3 final theses. In the experts' opinion, this is a very favourable, but of course not efficient relation.

The current turnover of teaching staff seems to be adequate and poses no foreseeable threats to the study programme. According to the self-evaluation report (SER, p. 20), the teachers in the Business Economics study programme worked systematically, developed professionally, and got attested for the following term of office by means of public competition. During the visit, the expert team met some young teachers who joined the staff recently. 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 SER (p. 19) also states that promising graduates of the Faculty are encouraged to participate in academic and research activity. During the meetings with the experts, the graduates confirmed that motivated students are encouraged to participate in research activities. According to SER (p. 19), the staff of the Faculty is regularly joined by new researchers. Three staff members of the Department of Economics (A. Šneiderienė, L. Prancevičiūtė, and E. Baranskaitė) study in the joint doctoral study programme of Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) and KU. Expert team is able to confirm that there are graduates who are currently working towards their PhD. Overall, motivated graduates have opportunities and support to conduct research and join the ranks of teachers.

According to the information provided by different groups during the visit, statements in SER (p. 21) 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, may be confirmed by the experts. The statement (SER, p. 21) that to improve the quality of studies, social partners are consulted was also confirmed during the meetings.

The expert team also found evidence that (SER, p. 21) in the meetings of the Department, problems arising in the teaching process are regularly discussed and decisions are made whose implementation is controlled by the Head of the Department of Economics. The SER (p. 21) 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 may consider readjusting the incentives system for research overall, including both financial and workload incentives, because the attitude of some staff members towards research seems to worth reconsidering.

#### ***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 classrooms for studies to hold lectures and other activities for the students. However, during the visit to the KU expert team could see only the classrooms where students are sitting in rows. Expert team raises a concern that this type of classroom is 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.

It could be noticed that there are printing possibilities openly accessible to students in the facilities. Wireless internet connection is available in all of the faculty premises.

Faculty library is situated near the Faculty itself, making it easier for students to visit it. There is a 4 academic hours lasting course for the students to learn to use resources of the library. Library also has 3 individual working rooms which can be used by the students by making request

in advance. However, expert team stresses that these rooms are not of the best condition and would benefit from improvement. During the visit expert team also noticed 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 recommend considering this situation, because students should be provided with possibilities to physically access books and examine them on the spot. Computers in library only have basic software, such as MS Office, whereas specific software necessary for the studies is not installed. As a result, students cannot get access to the necessary software outside lecture time. Also, number of computers in the library seems to be insufficient against the background, that the Faculty currently has around 600 students: At the moment, overall only 18 computers are present, of which 16 are available to the students and the. However, students are also provided with possibilities to access the library of KU at central campus.

The teaching, learning and computer equipment seems to be adequate both in size and quality: Faculty has two computer classrooms which 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.

As the practice is not present in evaluated programme, the criterion *adequate arrangements for students' practise* can not be applied and analyzed.

Teaching materials (textbooks, books, periodical publications, databases) mostly are adequate and accessible. 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.

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. There are a number of periodicals subscribed by the KU which are relevant to the programme. 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.

Overall, facilities of the Faculty satisfy the needs for the studies only on the minimal level and need improvement especially regarding the library and the building, where the programme is delivered.

### ***2.5. Study process and students' evaluation***

The admission requirements to the study programme are clear and well-founded. Admission is carried out in two rounds via electronic systems which provide the possibility to make admittance process easier. Students are admitted on the basis of competitive score. KU has two different types of calculating competitive score: one with admission exam and one without. In first type, admission exam substitutes the grade of the final thesis. Students can also be awarded additional points on competitive score for their scientific activities. KU also applies minimal entrance criteria for admission of students of 6. This helps to ensure admission of better students.

During the last years, there were a quite stable number of admitted students to the study programme. Also, programme was increasing in popularity as number of total request to the programme has risen from 8 applicants in 2012 to 47 in 2016. However, during the visit expert team learned that the admission to study programme is going to be carried out only once every second year due to the national requirement of minimal 10 students needed to start the study programme. Expert team commends KU initiatives to face the problem of decreasing applications. However, expert team are in doubt that the action undertaken is sufficient and suggest more changes to the organization of the separate study programmes in the Faculty responsible for the implementation of the study programme.

The organisation of the study process ensures proper implementation of the programme and achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Study year consists of spring and autumn semester. An 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. There is good completion of the studies rate (74.5%, SER p. 27). Students have opportunities to choose elective subjects. Lectures for the students of the programme are being carried out in the evening of the work days starting from 5 p.m. and ending at 8.15 p.m. Material of the lectures is available to students online via virtual learning environment Moodle. Students are provided with possibility to make individual study plans. 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. Within a masters' degree programme research and its internationality generally plays an important role, therefore the expert team would suggest enforcing the internationality of the

research. Also, KU should consider that better foreign language skills are necessary as Klaipėda is a port city where students have to work in international environment. More subjects in English or an entire programme in English would improve attractiveness of the programme for both foreign and Lithuanian students. Both students and graduates the experts met were very supportive of introduction of English study subjects.

Teaching staff seems to be quite supportive and able to react to needs of students. Expert team also made a good 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 and students have access to these study subject descriptions in academic information system. Expert team commends the initiative that students are also able to provide suggestions to the syllabus upon first lecture as final version of the particular study subject description is agreed. However, expert team learned from the graduates that sometimes teaching might need to be more proactive in the study process and to provide support when students fail to cooperate in group works and lack motivation.

Generally, participation of the programmes' students in the scientific activities is quite good. Each year, students participate in a local scientific conference organized by the Faculty of Social Sciences. However, students should also be encouraged to participate in national and international conferences. Established by the students, a Managers' and Economists' Club operates in the KU where students can develop additional activities in the field of economics, yet, it has been stated during the meetings with students that participation in this club is rather low and should be increased.

Students are provided basic conditions to take part in mobility programmes, as SER (p. 30) indicates, that KU has almost 180 ERASMUS partners in 25 countries. However, from 2012 to 2016 only 8 students used mobility programs. This number has to be increased and KU should implement necessary measures.

There is evidence that KU ensures proper academic and social support of students. Staff of the programme provides students with consultations. Consultation time of teachers is publicly available. It is interesting to hear from teachers that consultations can even be held by skype. The 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. Sportsmen can receive additional incentive and financial support. Also, expert

team values that recent cooperation with the Klaipėda city municipality resulted in additional scholarships for best students in the programme.

The system of assessing student achievements is clear and public. During the first lecture of a subject students are introduced to the evaluation criteria of the subject. The assessment system is clearly described in study subject descriptions. Cumulative assessment strategy is implemented in all of the study subjects. Evaluation system is clearly described in study subject descriptions. It contains information on tasks, their weight and deadlines. Exam sessions usually take place at the end of semester. Students can retake no more than two failed exams in one semester. Intermediary evaluation and assignment of particular study subject seems to be distributed evenly throughout the semester. It should be noted that non-formal and informal learning can be recognized as self-study assignments. However, in the opinion of the experts, the system of assessing student achievements is not in total appropriate to assess the learning outcomes: 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 students only need to select the right answer of a few answers given. Expert team does not recognize this as a satisfactory way of assessing in a master's programme and recommends reconsidering this type of exams. Students the expert team met also criticized that not enough attention is paid in evaluation of the group works performed by the students. Teaching staff should devise clear criteria to evaluate work of each student in the group projects, as sometime students are evaluated for the work performed by other team members (as stated during the meeting).

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.

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 KU. There should be considered to include members outside institution to the Qualification committee as it would provide opportunity to give more impartial evaluation.

There is evidence that 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. Graduates meet needs of local labor market and this was confirmed by the social partners. However, data is collected only on regional level of Klaipėda and does not provide possibilities to analyze how students fare on national level. KU could consider doing more detailed analysis on the matter.



According to SER, the programme corresponds to the state economic, social and cultural and future development needs: SER (p. 29) contains the statement that the 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, the same motivation was used to support the need of the bachelor programme of Economics and SER doesn't indicate the differences for the need for master's study programme. Therefore, KU should take a deeper look on a need for the graduates and competences they gain in order to meet national and regional needs.

Fair learning environment is ensured in the KU. Students for violation of academic ethics are removed from exam and their work is evaluated as zero. KU could consider implementing measures for raising awareness to the students of this problem.

Students are provided opportunities to make complaints and lodge appeals in accordance with clear, public and transparent procedures, but this area needs improvement. Procedure for complains and appeals is outlined in Study Regulations and Student Appeals Regulations. Students can appeal results of their assessment only within two days. This term seems to be rather 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 teacher itself participates in reevaluation only with the head of the department.

## ***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. 32). The interviews confirmed that Head of the Department was responsible for the programme.

Data and other information regarding programme implementation are collected and analyzed 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. 33). The number of students is decreasing. The programme was not launched in the academic year 2017/2018 due to the lack of enough candidates. According to the senior staff, it is planned to run the programme every 2 years. In the experts' opinion, KU should consider merging study programmes to one programme with strong specializations instead, because starting

only every second years might not solve the general problem arising from the demographic situation.

The outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are in parts used for the improvement of the programme. Because of small number of students, there is possible direct contact of students with the teaching and senior staff. 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. According to interviews, the students are involved in the enhancement of courses, but there is lack of discussion with students about the structure of the whole programme. The MA students should be deeply involved in the process of programme management. It is expected that the MA students would be active in the field of programme improvement and adjusting to their needs.

The academic staff is responsible for the development of their courses. 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 Master's degree programme, the regulation<sup>1</sup> 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 are developed. However, there are gaps in usage of learning outcomes for improvement of curricula by teachers, and this issue has to be addressed.

The internal quality assurance measures are quite effective and efficient. The evaluation of programme is based on qualitative methods. Because of the small group of students, there is no need to use quantitative methods.

The evaluation and improvement processes involve stakeholders. Faculty of Social Science (SSF) cooperates with its stakeholders and some stakeholders provide a financial support for the programme. The data of the questionnaire surveys conducted in 2016 proves that employers are satisfied with the knowledge, skills, and performance of the Business Economics study programme graduates. 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. The opinion of stakeholders about the programme is positive.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.374821/LCfDxYkYSZ> (Chapter I, point 9)

The information about the study programme is public – it can be reached through web page of the university and also via Facebook (SER p. 33). It is easy accessible and contains relevant information.

Overall, programme management is satisfactory. Nevertheless, it should respond more actively to the trend of decreasing number of students.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS\***

1. The aims and purposes of the programme should be more clearly defined; and clear references showing a prioritisation of maritime research should be explicit in the aims, as well as in the intended learning outcomes of the current programme.
2. The process of defining learning outcomes as well as the relationship between learning outcomes at both subject level and programme level should be revised.
3. The mismatching between the learning outcomes presented in the SER and those provided in AIKOS should be corrected.
4. The curriculum should be revisited by sharpening the profile. Against the background of declining numbers of students and overlapping of content the possibility to reorient the current programme towards a MA in Business Economics and Management (or Administration) should be seriously considered.
5. The curriculum should be revisited by sharpening the profile. Against the background of declining numbers of students and overlapping of content merging of master programmes might be considered.
6. International orientation of the programme should be enlarged and more lectures should be delivered in English language.
7. Some course descriptions need a revision regarding intended learning outcomes and literature.
8. 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.
9. Premises of the Faculty should be renovated.
10. KU should consider measures for adjusting classrooms for competence based learning.
11. Facilities should be improved as students with disabilities would be provided possibilities to study.
12. Assessment system should be reconsidered making it more oriented to learning outcomes rather than to the specific content to the study subject.
13. KU implement measures to increase student mobility.
14. Improvement of the procedure of student appeal should be done.
15. 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. Running the programme every 2 years is not the satisfactory solution of the problem of small number of candidates.
16. MA students should be deeper involved in the programme enhancement.

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

The aims and learning outcomes of the programme are, in general, satisfactory and meet legal requirements. There is also the effort to connect learning outcomes to the programme aims as well as to the different subjects of the curriculum. In addition, there is evidence that employers and other social partners collaborate in the definition of the aims and the learning outcomes of the programme as well as in its evaluation. Nevertheless, there are some shortcomings that would need to be solved. These shortcomings are, among others, related to the definition of the programme aims, the links between the programme and the mission of KU, the process of implementing learning outcomes, and how they are publicly. Last, but not least, a major problem emerges when this programme is compared to other (similar) MA programmes awarded by KU.

The programme structure is in line with the legislative requirements. Subjects of study are taught in a consistent manner and there is only little evidence of overlapping of subjects and topics. The content of subjects (modules) corresponds to the type and cycle of studies. The content of subjects (modules) and study methods enable to achieve the intended learning outcomes. However, there is a close connection to a Management study programme. The scope of the programme is sufficient to achieve most of the learning outcomes. Proved by the research efforts of staff and the reading lists, there is evidence that the content of the programme corresponds to the latest academic achievements.

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, especially taking into account that staff teach graduate students. 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 stated that programme has met their expectations of the programme, as well as social partners'.

Programme management is satisfactory. The process of improvement of the programme is running (based on the qualitative methods), but programme management should respond to the trend of decreasing number of students. It is recommended to increase the quality of the programme, so it will provide higher value for students and it allows starting programme every year. Master students should be also deeper involved in the process of improvement of the programme.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The joint study programme *Economics* (state code – 6211JX082 (621L10013) at Klaipeda University is given **positive** evaluation.

*Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	2
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	2
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	2
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>15</b>

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

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

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

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

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

**KLAIPĖDOS UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS  
VERSLO EKONOMIKOS (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 6211JX082) 2018-03-22  
EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-51 IŠRAŠAS**

**V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS**

Klaipėdos universiteto studijų programa *Verslo ekonomika* (valstybinis kodas – 6211JX082) vertinama **teigiamai**.

<b>Eil. Nr.</b>	<b>Vertinimo sritis</b>	<b>Srities įvertinimas, balais*</b>
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	2
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	2
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	2
	<b>Iš viso:</b>	<b>15</b>

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

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

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

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

**IV. SANTRAUKA**

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai apskritai yra tinkami ir atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus. Taip pat matyti pastangos susieti studijų rezultatus su programos tikslais bei skirtingais programos dalykais. Be to, yra įrodymų, kad darbdaviai ir kiti socialiniai partneriai bendradarbiauja nustatant programos tikslus ir studijų rezultatus bei ją vertinant. Vis dėlto yra keletas trūkumų, kuriuos reikėtų pašalinti. Šie trūkumai, be kita ko, yra susiję su programos tikslų apibrėžimu, sąsajomis tarp studijų programos ir Klaipėdos universiteto misijos, studijų rezultatų įgyvendinimo procesu ir kaip tai viešinama. Paskutinė, bet ne mažiau svarbi problema iškyla palyginus šią studijų programą su kitomis (panašiomis) magistrantūros studijų programomis, kurias vykdo Klaipėdos universitetas.

Studijų programos struktūra atitinka teisės aktų reikalavimus. Dalykai dėstomi nuosekliai ir tik kur ne kur dalykai ir temos kartojasi. Dalykų (modulių) turinys atitinka studijų rūšį ir pakopą. Dalykų (modulių) turinys ir studijų metodai leidžia pasiekti numatomus studijų rezultatus. Tačiau



yra labai glaudžių sąsajų su „Vadybos“ studijų programa. Studijų programos apimtis yra pakankama daugumai studijų rezultatų užtikrinti. Remiantis dėstytojų vykdomos tiriamosios veiklos ir literatūros sąrašų įrodymais, akivaizdu, kad studijų programos turinys atitinka naujausius akademinis pasiekimus.

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, ypač atsižvelgiant į tai, kad dėstytojai moko magistrantus. 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 išteklių 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 nacionalinius teisės aktus. 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 intensyvuoti. 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 teigė, kad programa atitiko jų ir socialinių partnerių lūkesčius studijų programos atžvilgiu.

Programos vadyba yra tinkama. Programos tobulinimo procesas vyksta (remiantis kokybiniais metodais), tačiau programos vadovybė turėtų reaguoti į mažėjančio studentų skaičiaus tendenciją. Rekomenduojama kelti studijų programos kokybę, kad ji suteiktų didesnę vertę studentams ir galėtų būti vykdoma kasmet. Magistrantai taip pat turėtų būti labiau įtraukti į studijų programos tobulinimo procesą.

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### III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. Studijų programos tikslai ir paskirtis turėtų būti tiksliau apibrėžti; taip pat programos tiksluose ir numatomuose studijų rezultatuose turi būti aiškiai nurodytas prioritetas jūrininkystės moksliniams tyrimams.
2. Reikėtų peržiūrėti studijų rezultatų formulavimo procesą, taip pat jų tarpusavio sąsajas dalyko lygmeniu ir studijų programos lygmeniu.
3. Reikėtų ištaisyti neatitikimą tarp SS nurodytų studijų rezultatų ir AIKOS sistemoje nurodytų studijų rezultatų.
4. Reikėtų dar kartą peržiūrėti studijų turinį ir akcentuoti profilį. Atsižvelgiant į mažėjančių studentų skaičių ir turinio kartojimąsi, reikėtų rimtai apsvarstyti galimybę pakeisti dabartinės studijų programos orientaciją į „Verslo ekonomikos ir vadybos“ (ar administravimo) magistrantūros studijų programą.
5. Reikėtų dar kartą peržiūrėti studijų turinį ir akcentuoti profilį. Atsižvelgiant į mažėjančių studentų skaičių ir turinio kartojimąsi, galbūt reikėtų apsvarstyti galimybę sujungti magistrantūros studijų programas.
6. Tarptautinė studijų programos orientacija turėtų būti sustiprinta ir daugiau paskaitų dėstoma anglų kalba.
7. Kai kurių dalykų aprašus reikėtų peržiūrėti, atkreipiant dėmesį į numatomus studijų rezultatus ir literatūrą.
8. Reikėtų atnaujinti fakulteto biblioteką, siekiant suteikti studentams atvirą galimybę naudotis knygomis ir labiau ją orientuoti į studijų procesą.
9. Fakulteto patalpas reikėtų renovuoti.
10. Klaipėdos universitetas turėtų apsvarstyti priemones, kaip pritaikyti auditorijas kompetencija grindžiamam mokymuisi.
11. Materialioji bazė turėtų būti pagerinta, kad negalią turintys studentai turėtų galimybę studijuoti.
12. Reikėtų peržiūrėti vertinimo sistemą ir labiau ją orientuoti į studijų rezultatus, o ne į konkretų studijų dalyko turinį.
13. Klaipėdos universitetas turėtų įgyvendinti priemones, siekdamas padidinti studentų judumą.
14. Reikėtų patobulinti studentų apeliacijų teikimo tvarką.
15. Programos vadovybė turėtų reaguoti į mažėjančio studentų skaičiaus tendenciją – kandidatai turėtų pripažinti aukštesnę studijų kokybę, todėl studentų skaičius turėtų išaugti. Studijų programos vykdymas kas 2 metus nėra tinkamas mažo stojančiųjų skaičiaus problemos sprendimas.

16. Magistrantai turėtų būti labiau įtraukti į studijų programos tobulinimą.

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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)