



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINĖS POLITIKOS IR
VYSTYMO STUDIJOS* (valstybinis kodas – 612L20008)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT
STUDIES* (state code – 612L20008)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vytautas Magnus University**

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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2016

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

| | |
|--|---|
| Studijų programos pavadinimas | <i>Tarptautinės politikos ir vystymo studijos</i> |
| Valstybinis kodas | 612L20008 |
| Studijų sritis | Socialiniai mokslai |
| Studijų kryptis | Politikos mokslai |
| Studijų programos rūšis | Universitetinės studijos |
| Studijų pakopa | Pirmoji |
| Studijų forma (trukmė metais) | Nuolatinė (4) |
| Studijų programos apimtis kreditais | 240 |
| Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija | Politikos mokslų bakalauras |
| Studijų programos įregistravimo data | 20012 02 29 |

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|---|
| Title of the study programme | <i>International Politics and Development Studies</i> |
| State code | 612L20008 |
| Study area | Social Sciences |
| Study field | Political Science |
| Type of the study programme | University studies |
| Study cycle | First |
| Study mode (length in years) | Full-time (4) |
| Volume of the study programme in credits | 240 |
| Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded | Bachelor of Political Science |
| Date of registration of the study programme | 20012 02 29 |

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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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 | The number of students admitted to year 1 in autumn 2016 |
| 2 | Information on numbers of students who transferred their studies to "International Politics and Development studies" BA programme after initially entering other study programmes in VMU (for all the evaluation period) |

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

The Programme in International Politics and Development Studies is taught at the BA level at the Department of Regional Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter VMU) since 2012 as one of 5 English language programmes on the BA level.

VMU was re-established in 1989 and is a classical university of Liberal Arts based on the common beliefs and values of freedom, openness and dialogue, and orientated towards humanistic culture. The Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy is one of the largest faculties of VMU. It consists of 5 departments and 2 research centres. The faculty offers 6 bachelor degrees, 10 master degrees and a doctoral programme in the areas of political science, public administration and communication. Apart from International Politics and Development Studies there is also a second English language BA programme on World Politics and Economy taught at the same faculty.

The review team was very much impressed by the hospitality and the friendly atmosphere at VMU and in particular by the responsiveness and cooperation of the staff.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 16-17/11/2016.

- 1. Prof. Dr. Jörg Hackmann (team leader)** *Alfred Döblin Professor of East European History at the Institute of History and International Relations, University of Szczecin, Poland.*
- 2. Dr. Martin Hallik**, *Library Director, former Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, former Associate Professor of Contemporary History of Asian Countries at the University of Tartu, Estonia.*
- 3. Prof. Dr. Petra Schleiter**, *Professor of Comparative Politics at the Department of Politics and International Relations, St Hilda's College, University of Oxford, Great Britain.*
- 4. Ms Rūta Avulytė Jelagė**, *Executive Director, National Non-governmental Development Cooperation Organizations' Platform (NGDO PLATFORM), Lithuania.*
- 5. Ms Vitalija Viluckytė**, *student of Vilnius University Centre of Oriental Studies study programme Asian Studies.*

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

According to the materials provided, the International Politics and Development Studies programme “aims to prepare highly qualified professionals, who would be able to analyze, explain, compare and assess international, socio-political and economic processes of developing countries and regions, as well as its developmental tendencies both in theoretical and empirical approaches”. This aim is being accomplished by combining basics of political science with development studies and courses focusing on international relations and area studies. The regional focus of developing countries concentrates on Russia, the Eastern Europe (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova), Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan), and the Middle East and the North African countries.

The programme aims and learning outcomes thus are well defined, clear and publicly accessible, through the AIKOS system – open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education. Detailed information is also available on the VMU website. Learning outcomes aim at persons with a high competence in political science, who are able to analyse political, social and economic processes in developing regions and to carry out practical projects independently. They are thus based on the academic requirements, and possible fields of occupation outside of academia.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type of studies and the level of qualifications. The review team, however, discussed the name of the programme, as in the Lithuanian version of the programme the term “development” is translated as “vystymo” and not “vystymosi”. Also, the outline of curriculum on the VMU website slightly differs between Lithuanian and English versions. Discussions focussed on the question, whether the programme focusses on global development politics as pursued by the UN or on area studies of developing regions. The Self Evaluation Group explained that the programme’s main focus is on area studies, but for first cycle programme also classical Political Science had to be integrated into the programme.

2.2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets the legal requirements of a BA programme (240 ECTS, 4 years duration), and the content of the subjects and modules is consistent with type and level of the studies programme. The existence of a VMU Code of Academic Ethics is especially remarkable, as it shows the intention of VMU to make the study process honest and transparent in all programmes. The programme consists of a general part of “common subjects” (56 ECTS)

(so-called A, B, D subjects) and a specific part of “study field subjects”, divided into compulsory (109 ECTS) and elective courses (45 ECTS), and an internship and final thesis (15 ECTS each).

Among compulsory general study field subjects are introductions to political systems, international relations, and comparative politics as well as an introduction in quantitative research methods. Compulsory courses in development and regional studies comprise Development Politics, Colonialism and Post-Colonialism, NGOs and Philanthropy, and overviews of politics in the Post-Soviet states, the Middle East and North Africa. Elective courses comprise 6 out of 13 offered with various topics that generally enhance the study field. Due to varying ECTS, however, the choice seems to be somewhat limited. Compulsory language learning comprises three semesters of Arabic, French, Russian or Turkish, whereas the VMU online description mentions the opportunity to study one of the area languages for four semesters. The BA thesis is preceded by a compulsory term paper in the 7th semester.

The curriculum design is interdisciplinary and gives attention first to international politics, social transformation and politics of development and conflict regulation. Second, the development studies concentrate on developing regions with a specific focus on the countries of the post-Soviet space that are not part of the EU, and the Middle Eastern and North African regions. Such a limitation of the regional focus, which on first sight might contradict a conventional understanding of developing regions, appears to be an appropriate solution based on limited resources as well as the research focus of the teaching staff.

Course topics are spread evenly and are not repetitive. Students reported one case of doubled topics, which was then quickly changed by the Programme Committee. The scope of the programme is sufficient to ensure learning outcomes and it is capable to reflect recent scholarly as well as political developments. The course descriptions are up to date and refer to compulsory literature in English. However, they might more explicitly refer to the goals outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. The relation between more academic and practical subjects seems to be in flux. In general students seem to wish more practice beyond the compulsory internship. A closer involvement of social partners in the curriculum design could guarantee the adaptability of acquired skills for the labour market and thus meet the students’ expectations. Students also wish more topics on Africa, this is however limited by the staff expertise.

2.3. Teaching staff

The teaching staff of the International Politics and Development Studies programme meets the legal requirements, more than 80 per cent hold at least a PhD. Current academic staff include 8 professors, 6 associate professors, 10 lecturers or assistant professors with a PhD

degree and 4 lecturers without a PhD. The SER explains that not all of them are employed at the Department of Regional Studies. Although no detailed information is given about the ratio of full-time and part-time staff, number and qualifications of the staff are adequate to ensure learning outcomes. However, as not all teachers seem to be familiar with the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, internal training including experts from the social partners could better warrant the learning outcome.

Teaching staff are quite experienced and have a partially impressive international reputation (with many teachers holding degrees from universities in the US, UK and Northern Europe). Furthermore, the staff of the programme seem to be quite active in international conferences and research exchanges, three of them with Fulbright scholarships since 2011. SER states that c. 128 scientific events between 2012 and 2015 were attended by staff members, who on average presented 4.3 papers at international scientific events. Nevertheless, SER states that the teachers' participation in academic international exchange could be increased.

Whereas some of the staff members – not least Leonidas Donskis before his untimely death – are internationally highly visible, some of the teaching staff, however, do not list any publications in international journals or publications. This seems to be a result of the fact that normal teaching load encompasses 10-16 hours a week with individual teaching workloads partly even higher.

VMU is interested in providing good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff, although the observation from the last evaluation report that the general teaching workload seems to be relatively high (12-18 hours/week) has not changed. This situation definitely limits the staff's research ambitions and opportunities and should be altered by the VMU in future. As supporting researchers to produce high quality research that can be placed in internationally recognized journals is essential to their professional progression and to the reputation of the programme, it should be an important goal for the department.

The university recognizes the problem to a degree and has recently created research clusters, which receive a modest amount of funding. These are steps in the right direction, but efforts to support research should be strengthened. To deliver research-driven teaching, staff should be enabled to attend the most important international conferences in their field regularly (i.e., annually). At present major international conferences are only attended by some of academics in the department and the university should consider introducing a personal research allowance for each researcher. Similarly, only a minority of researchers hold personal research grants, and as a leading university in Lithuania, VMU should aspire to greater success in this area. The university could consider introducing a fund for pump-priming research funding (i.e., seed funding), which should be made available to VMU researchers on a competitive basis,

possibly via the research clusters or some other mechanism. Small pump-priming grants could be used to fund proof-of-concept and pilot research projects that will serve to launch much larger bids for national or international research grants. If it is well managed, pump-priming funding will repay the initial investment in terms of research overheads many times over.

Data on staff turnover were not given, but the core staff composition seems to be stable. However, staff qualification in the area studies part varies, as it is partially based on incoming experts (13 in 2014/15 and 6 in 2015/16). It is not quite clear, what has been their role in the programme, but SER states a need for more long term visiting professors. The review team agrees with this statement, as this would broaden and deepen the expertise of the students in specific regions, including final theses. Here, limits apply by the lack of financial resources and insufficient state money for ERASMUS+.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

The department is located in a brand new, purpose-built building of excellent quality. According to the self-evaluation report there are 75 classrooms, several large lecture halls with the latest projection equipment, and large seminar rooms. Wi-Fi is available in the main public areas. The buildings also offer spaces for group work. There are IT laboratory spaces, silent and non-silent work areas, a recreational space for table tennis and some vending machines. The lecture halls and their technical equipment are of high standard.

Some activities also take place in several other buildings. They and the facilities for language learning were not inspected by the evaluation team, as language courses in this programme are provided by other branches of VMU.

In general, library facilities are sufficient for the successful implementation of the study programme. The review team had the impression that space for group work could be enlarged and loud zones set up. The library offers a good range of electronic resources including e-journals and e-books. The SER, however, states that reference materials at the Department of Regional Studies are “occasionally updated with new textbooks and journals”, which implies that there still is a lack of copies of relevant textbooks. As with many other universities, VMU seemingly tries to compensate this deficit with a broad access to online databases, which allow the students to read research literature (in English, first of all) and to get access to relevant sources. Nevertheless, the general question remains, how competent students are to efficiently use the academic databases. Therefore, the review team suggests to make students familiar with reading books and not only compiling materials from online databases.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The International Politics and Development Studies as a 4-year BA programme started in 2012 and its first intake students have just graduated in 2016. The programme shows an impressively high proportion of international students, their number at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy fluctuates between 37 and 54, with international full time students in the programme between 7 and 19. The programme obviously has been very attractive with high application numbers at the beginning, starting with more than 500 in 2012, but they subsequently declined – following the general trend in Lithuania – to some 200 in 2015. C. 15 per cent of the applicants were admitted, since 2013 50 per cent or more without receiving state grants. which also reflects the attractiveness of the programme. Student numbers, thus, were high in the beginning (75, 64 and 57 in 2012, 2013 and 2014), but decreased during the two last years (34 in 2015 and 25 in 2016, respectively). Students include local state financed and self-paying students, as well as international full time students (the two latter groups each constituting roughly 25-35 per cent of the students in 2013-2015). The number of local students has been shrinking due to the demographic situation in the country, a sharp decrease of state-funded places, and the increasing competition for students country-wide, including even a newer BA programme on World Politics and Economy in English in the same faculty. The department informed about the plans to launch the programme in Vilnius in the near future, where they have identified a lack of BA programmes in English.

Admission requirements appear reasonable. The quality of the students admitted to the programme was very high on average at the start of the programme (18.84 out of 20.6 competition points in 2012), but has than seemingly declined (7.12 out of 10.0 competition points in 2015), although due a change in the scoring systems, figures are not fully comparable, as the SER states. International students' admission score also includes 0.3 (of 1) weight for motivation letter, their admissions are centralized and carried out by VMU International Office.

Against these impressive figures, however, dropout rates are relatively high with almost one third of first year students. Detailed reasons are not given, but it was explained that a considerable amount of dropped-out students in the first intake were foreign students with too little knowledge of English. Thus, now the admission representatives are checking the English proficiency more closely. Besides, the foreign language department of the university offers additional English courses in the beginning of the BA programme. A mismatch with students' expectations was mentioned as another possible reason. However, there also have been transfers of full time students into the programme from other Lithuanian and foreign universities (6 students in 2013 – 2015), which points to attractiveness and competitiveness of the programme.

Concerning the rate of dropouts, the university should further attempt to minimize them already at the students' admission stages, in particular regarding foreign students.

Mobility opportunities are available, and students have made use of ERASMUS+ and bilateral exchanges. The faculty has signed over 120 partnership agreements; in addition to Erasmus which covers Europe and Turkey, students have used bilateral agreements to study in Israel, Georgia and South Korea. The university has a special fund for mobility based on bilateral agreements. The students have been using exchange opportunities, however, the number of outgoing students could be expected to be higher in a programme focussing on area studies: SER reports 7, 18 and 13 exchanges in 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively (SER, pages 27-28), which is less than one third of the students (without dropped-out students). The faculty also received about 40-50 incoming exchange students in the last years (who mostly chose subjects of this programme). As students observed, this enriches the exchange of viewpoints in the class and the study experience. Students, however, noted that there are not enough options for exchange studies in the Middle-East, one of the target regions of the programme and of special interest to those who select Arabic as their foreign language. A lack of compatibility with study programmes abroad for study credits transfer seems to be a limiting issue, too. The university should further encourage students to take advantage of mobility programmes to gain international experience and develop their worldview. Also, the university should further work on expanding the exchange studies partnership network, especially in the Middle-East and other target regions covered by the programme.

Students are participating in related research and extracurricular activities. Students of the programme have established a number of clubs, for example, the "United Nations Student Club" and an "International Development Empowerment Association (IDEA)" organising events at the university and at schools (SER, page 24). During the visit the students confirmed their participation in international conferences. Some of the courses include guest lectures by practitioners.

The organisation of study process is generally good. The table of links between programme learning outcomes and courses learning outcomes as provided in SER, Annex 1, appears as a good tool to ensure a thorough integration of programme aims (study topics, analytical skills, practical skills). According to the teachers, students of the programme are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Both the lecturers and the fresh graduates emphasised the advantage of having such a mix of students that includes foreign students from the "target" regions (Arabic native speakers, students from Africa and post-soviet countries), as it provides valuable insights during the discussions at the class. The graduates now studying in master

programmes at other universities also confirmed that teacher-student contacts were closer at VMU. Also, they appreciated that foreign language teachers were native speakers.

On the other hand, offering a full programme in English in line with the VMU Artes liberales principle has been a challenge, as the programme representatives noted. Students mentioned that in one case only Philosophy and Astronomy were on offer as elective courses, because there were no other options available in English yet, whereas for the programmes run in Lithuanian language the choice is wider. Thus, the availability and the quality of university-wide courses in English language require further improvement. The level of English among parts of the teaching staff has also not been always satisfying. Further, responsibilities for student affairs in the administration has changed a few times during the study period and at times it was not clear whom to approach for information; information concerning e.g. internships or final theses were not yet available for students who aimed for early planning. Better and earlier availability of information for students should also be considered.

Assessment system appears adequate. Cumulative grade system is used in most of the courses, where exam's weight is 50 per cent, while the rest of the mark is composed of midterm exam, written assignments, presentations or other assignments; students are provided with this information at the beginning of the course by the lecturer. Topics of final theses generally meet the learning aims, although some of those defended in 2016 would also fit to classical political science. Students are free to choose the topic of their interest and a supervisor for their thesis. Usually up to 5 Bachelor students research projects are supervised by one programme teacher, but some lecturers supervise up to 10 students. The graduates explained that less development related topics were chosen because such topics are mostly taught by foreign visiting lecturers, while students tend to choose as thesis supervisors those lecturers they have been more in contact with, and consider the aspect of easier access to thesis consultations. Also, the graduates would have preferred more and earlier information during the programme on how to select a thesis topic. Moreover, the current students suggested that the academic writing course in 3rd year would have been useful earlier in studies for academic report writing skills.

The first intake of students of the programme has graduated in June 2016, therefore it is too early to have full information about their further professional activity, but the data available indicates favourable prospects. Most of the graduates met by the evaluation team during the visit were continuing their studies in political science at a master level at Lithuanian universities, including one graduate from Ukraine; we were informed that two alumni are working in development field abroad and a few have entered development master studies in Denmark. Conversely, one graduate switched to IT field. A continuation of related area studies at a Master level would be recommendable with regard to further qualification of students in the field of

development studies. The internship placement record of recent graduates is good: students trained at NGOs (including Turkey, Cambodia and Bolivia), International organisations, Lithuania's public institutions and embassies, etc. (SER, Annex 7). In 2014/15–2015/16 seven students took advantage of Erasmus+ internship (ibid). Most of the internships have taken place in Lithuania though; the university could consider ways for encouraging students to use more opportunities in the target regions and development field. The department informed that in spring 2016 internship presentations were held in a hall setting – younger students could learn about year 4 experiences and gather ideas for their future internships, while year 4 students practiced public speaking skills. It is a good practice to acquaint younger students with internship possibilities.

2.6. Programme management

Responsibilities for programme decisions, monitoring and implementation are clearly allocated. Regular internal and external procedures are in place for the programme's review, monitoring, quality assurance and implementation. These assessments are effective and efficient and ensure that data is regularly compiled on the implementation of the programme. The self-evaluation document, staff and student feedback made clear that the department uses the conclusions of such reviews to improve the programme. Social partners are expected to regularly contribute to this programme with examining theses, providing internships, contributing to joint conferences and public lectures, and serving on the programme committee.

The SER describes the formal procedures of quality ensuring, but the Evaluation Team had the impression that besides standardized measurements direct communication between the Programme Committee, students, academic staff and social partners plays an important role, which is understandable due to the not very large number of students and close personal ties between all persons involved in the programme. Teacher-students relationships on the programme are good, which seems to be a general feature of the faculty. Nevertheless, students expressed the observation changes in the programme were not always well communicated, at they were sometimes unsure how their suggestions have been used, whereas alumni conversely were happy with responsiveness of the programme administration and some prompt alterations of the courses based on their feedback. Involvement of social partners, especially NGOs and from related business sectors, could receive more emphasis. Furthermore, presentations by practitioners and social partners within in classrooms could be more frequent, especially when talking about the regions in focus.

The programme's alumni were generally very satisfied with programme. As the majority is continuing their studies, it is still too early to evaluate their role as potential programme

partners. The department could consider launching an alumni network that hosts alumni reunions every few years and involving alumni as mentors for current students. This would have a range of benefits for students, alumni and for the department. It would help alumni to develop their professional networks. It would also enable the alumni to remain engaged with the department. This may lead to opportunities to develop new internships; it would allow the alumni to become a source of advice and guidance to current students. Ultimately, the alumni should also become part of the donor base of the University.

2.7. Examples of excellence

The new faculty premises are exceptional. The building is modern and equipped with the latest IT and lecturing facilities. It offers a good number of work spaces for students and academics, seminar rooms and lecture theatres.

The relationship between students and teachers is outstanding. Students generally commented that the academic staff is very approachable and responsive.

The existence of a Code of Academic Ethics at VMU is especially remarkable.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Programme aims:** The students' request for a broader regional coverage of the programme might be considered by the Programme Committee.
2. **Curriculum:** (i) The choice of elective courses in English should be improved. (ii) Academic writing should be introduced as a subject earlier in the programme. (iii) The curriculum could be updated with regard to the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. (iv) The involvement of social partners in the curriculum design would improve up-to-date competence development of the students.
3. **Teaching staff:** (i) Teaching staff could benefit from internal information regarding the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. (ii) The department should put emphasis on internationalizing its staff, in particular with regard to the focus areas of the programme. (iii) The department is recommended to further strengthen its support for research driven teaching. The research clusters are welcome developments but more needs to be done and the department should consider the introduction of personal research allowance to which academics are contractually entitled. (iv) The department, jointly with the university, could also consider the introduction of seed funding for research projects. If it is well managed, such an investment in a fund for small pump-priming research grants will be repaid many times by the overheads from research grants that are won as a result of proof-of-concept and pilot studies which the research seed grants have enabled. (v) Involvement of practitioners and social partners as lecturers would enrich the practical aspects of the programme.
4. **Facilities and learning resources:** (i) The department is recommended to introduce a mechanism to ensure that reading lists are regularly updated and that reading lists make use of up to date journal articles and monographs. (ii) The faculty should continue in its efforts to increase library holdings of relevant textbooks.
5. **Study process:** (i) The programme might pay more attention to the skills and expectations, in particular of foreign full-time students, at admission stage. (ii) Given the challenging funding situation facing students, the department could make fund-raising for graduate scholarships from its alumni, social partners and donors one of its strategic priorities. (iii) The university could focus on expanding the exchange studies partnership network, especially with the Middle-East / Arabic region and other target regions covered by the programme.
6. **Programme management:** (i) The review team recommends that changes in the programme are communicated to the students on a timely and clear basis. (ii) The choice

of languages relevant for the programme could be broadened and should be offered on a predictable basis.

7. The department could consider launching an alumni network, regular alumni reunions and a mentorship programme to engage the alumni more with the programme and with the department generally. This would benefit the department, current students and the alumni.

IV. SUMMARY

The International Politics and Development Studies programme is enthusiastically supported by teachers, students and alumni alike, which without doubt indicates the success of the programme.

Given that this programme is a core component of the university's internationalization strategy as well as of the focus on regional and area studies, the evaluation team strongly recommends that the university guarantees future support to the programme with predictable numbers of state and university financed places. Also, measurements ensuring a constant covering of the developing regions in focus and development issues should be taken by the university.

The teaching staff are highly motivated experts in their areas. The student-staff ratios are very good, and students generally see their teachers as very accessible. The relationship between students and teachers is outstanding. The programme very much benefits from a high proportion of incoming exchange and full-time students. These are major strengths of the programme. The department and university value research-driven teaching. The evaluation team, however, thinks that career development for the teaching staff should receive more attention. Research activities should be supported also beyond the research cluster structures recently introduced by VMU, grant seed money or personal research allowance should be considered. A in-house training of the staff concerning the United Nations' Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and other recent developments would be advisable.

The new faculty premises are exceptional. The brand-new building is equipped to the highest standards, which is a major asset for the programme. The department can further complement its competitive advantage in this area by improving library holdings.

The programme builds upon the international links of the department. The internship seems to meet the expectations, although students might be stimulated to make more use of international internship opportunities.

The programme has good links with a range of high-profile social partners. They as well as students' organisations offer additional meetings and lectures. These are further strengths of the programme. The department can further strengthen its links with stakeholders by launching an alumni network that actively engages alumni with the department. Links with social partners, in particular NGOs and related business, could be expanded by including them into lecturing and updating the curriculum.

The evaluation team finally underlines that it was very much impressed by the hospitality and the friendly atmosphere at VMU and in particular by the responsiveness and cooperation of the staff. There seem to be no barriers between teachers and students, both are seemingly strongly committed to the studies programmes.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *International Politics and Development Studies* (state code – 612L20008) at Vytautas Magnus 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 | 3 |
| 2. | Curriculum design | 3 |
| 3. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 4. | Facilities and learning resources | 3 |
| 5. | Study process and students' performance assessment | 3 |
| 6. | Programme management | 3 |
| | Total: | 18 |

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

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

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

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

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Grupės vadovas: Team leader: | Prof. Dr. Jörg Hackmann |
| Grupės nariai: Team members: | Dr. Martin Hallik |
| | Prof. Dr. Petra Schleiter |
| | Ms Rūta Avulytė Jelagė |
| | Ms Vitalija Viluckytė |

**VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO PIRMOSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS *TARPTAUTINĖS POLITIKOS IR VYSTYMO STUDIJOS*
(VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 612L20008) 2017-01-03 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO
IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-2 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto studijų programa *Tarptautinės politikos ir vystymo studijos* (valstybinis kodas – 612L20008) vertinama **teigiamai**.

| Eil. Nr. | Vertinimo sritis | Srities įvertinimas, balais* |
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* 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)

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IV. SANTRAUKA

Studijų programą „Tarptautinės politikos ir vystymo studijos“ entuziastingai palaiko dėstytojai, studentai ir absolventai, o tai neabejotinai rodo, kad programa sėkminga.

Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad ši studijų programa yra pagrindinis universiteto tarptautiškumo strategijos bei regioninių ir srities studijų aspekto elementas, ekspertų grupė labai rekomenduoja universitetui užtikrinti šios programos paramą ateityje, nustatant stabilesnį valstybės ir universiteto finansuojamų vietų skaičių. Taip pat universitetas turėtų įvertinti ir užtikrinti, kad būtų nuolatos apimami besivystantys regionai ir nagrinėjami vystymosi klausimai.

Personalą sudaro ypač motyvuoti savo sričių ekspertai. Studentų ir dėstytojų santykis labai geras; studentai paprastai atsiliepią apie dėstytojus kaip apie lengvai pasiekiamus. Studentų ir dėstytojų tarpusavio santykiai puikūs. Studijų programai labai naudingas didelis atvykstančiųjų

mainų programos ir nuolatinių studijų studentų skaičius. Tai yra pagrindinės studijų programos stiprybės. Katedra ir universitetas vertina moksliniais tyrimais grindžiamą mokymą. Vis dėlto ekspertų grupei atrodo, kad reikėtų skirti daugiau dėmesio personalo profesiniam tobulėjimui. Mokslinė tiriamoji veikla turėtų būti remiama, neapsiribojant vien tik neseniai VDU įsteigtų tyrimų klasterių struktūromis; reikėtų apsvastyti stipendijų pradinio fondo ar asmeninės mokslinės stipendijos steigimą. Patartina surengti vidinius personalo mokymus apie Jungtinių Tautų Darnaus vystymosi darbotvarkę iki 2030 m. ir kitus naujausius pokyčius.

Naujosios fakulteto patalpos išskirtinės. Visiškai naujas pastatas įrengtas pagal aukščiausius standartus ir tai yra didelė studijų programos vertybė. Katedra gali toliau didinti savo konkurencinį pranašumą šioje srityje, pildydama bibliotekos fondą.

Studijų programa remiasi tarptautiniais katedros ryšiais. Praktika atitinka lūkesčius, nors studentus galima skatinti labiau naudotis tarptautinės praktikos galimybėmis.

Programos vykdytojai palaiko gerus ryšius su įvairiais aukšto lygio socialiniais partneriais. Jie ir studentų organizacijos siūlo papildomus susitikimus ir paskaitas. Tai irgi galima priskirti studijų programos stiprybėms. Katedra galėtų toliau stiprinti ryšius su socialiniais dalininkais, įsteigdama alumnų tinklą, kad absolventai galėtų aktyviai bendrauti su katedra. Galima plėtoti ryšius su socialiniais partneriais, ypač NVO ir susijusiomis verslo įmonėmis, kviečiant jų atstovus dėstyti paskaitas ir prisidėti atnaujinant programos turinį. Ekspertų grupė galiausiai pabrėžė, kad jai labai didelį įspūdį padarė svetingumas ir draugiška atmosfera VDU, ypač reaguojantis ir bendradarbiaujantis personalas. Tarp dėstytojų ir studentų nėra jokių barjerų; abi pusės atrodo itin atsidasvusios studijų programai.

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III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1. **Programos tikslai.** Studijų programos komitetas galėtų apsvastyti studentų pageidavimą, kad programa apimtų platesnį regioninį kontekstą.
2. **Programos sandara.** (i) Reikėtų didinti pasirenkamųjų dalykų anglų kalba skaičių. (ii) Akademinio rašymo dalyką reikėtų pradėti dėstyti anksčiau. (iii) Programos sandarą reikėtų atnaujinti atsižvelgiant į Jungtinių Tautų Darnaus vystymosi darbotvarkę. (iv) Įtraukus socialinius partnerius į programos rengimą, būtų geriau ugdomi šiuolaikiški studentų gebėjimai.
3. **Personalas.** (i) Personalui praverstų susipažinti su vidaus informacija, susijusia su Jungtinių Tautų Darnaus vystymosi darbotvarke. (ii) Katedra turėtų akcentuoti personalo tarptautiškumo didinimą, ypač atsižvelgiant į studijų programos tikslines sritis. (iii)

Katedrai rekomenduojame toliau stiprinti moksliniais tyrimais pagrįsto mokymo paramą. Mokslinių tyrimų klasteriai yra sveikintini, tačiau reikia dar padirbėti šiuo klausimu ir katedra turėtų apsvarstyti, ar įsteigti asmeninę mokslinių tyrimų stipendiją, skiriamą akademikams sutartiniu pagrindu. (iv) Katedra kartu su universitetu taip pat galėtų apsvarstyti pradinės finansinės paramos teikimą mokslinių tyrimų projektams. Jei tokia parama bus gerai valdoma, šios pradinės investicijos į koncepcijų pagrindimo ir bandomuosius tyrimus generuos mokslinius tyrimus skatinančių stipendijų fondo pajamas, kurios bus naudojamos tyrimams vystyti. (v) Praktikų ir socialinių partnerių dalyvavimas dėstant studijų programą papildytų praktinį studijų programos aspektą.

4. **Materialieji ištekliai.** (i) Katedrai rekomenduojame įdiegti mechanizmą, užtikrinantį, kad literatūros sąrašai būtų reguliariai atnaujinami ir į juos būtų įtraukiami naujausi žurnalų straipsniai ir monografijos. (ii) Fakultetas turėtų toliau stengtis pildyti bibliotekos fondą aktualiais vadovėliais.
5. **Studijų eiga.** (i) Priėmimo etape didesnis dėmesys galėtų būti kreipiamas į gebėjimus ir lūkesčius, ypač nuolatinį studijų studentų iš užsienio. (ii) Atsižvelgiant į studentų patiriamą studijų finansavimo iššūkį, vienas iš katedros strateginių prioritetų galėtų būti lėšų pritraukimas iš absolventų, socialinių partnerių ir paramos teikėjų absolventų stipendijoms steigti. (iii) Universitetas galėtų sutelkti dėmesį į mainų studijų partnersčių tinklo plėtimą, ypač Vidurio Rytų / Arabų regione ir kituose tiksliniuose regionuose, kuriuos apima studijų programa.
6. **Programos vadyba.** (i) Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja laiku ir aiškiai informuoti studentus apie studijų programos pokyčius. (ii) Aktualių programai kalbų pasirinkimas galėtų būti praplėstas ir prognozuojamas.
7. Katedra galėtų įkurti alumnų tinklą, rengti reguliarius absolventų susitikimus ir vykdyti mentorystės programą, kad absolventai aktyviau dalyvautų studijų programoje ir apskritai palaikytų ryšį su katedra. Tai būtų naudinga katedrai, dabartiniams studentams ir absolventams.

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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)