



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Aleksandro Stulginskio universiteto

**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS**

***LAUKINIŲ GYVŪNŲ IŠTEKLIAI IR JŲ VALDYMAS (621D55001)***

**VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

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**EVALUATION REPORT**

***OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT (621D55001)***

**STUDY PROGRAMME**

at Aleksandras Stulginskis University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba  
Report language - English

### DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Laukinių gyvūnų ištekliai ir jų valdymas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621D55001
Studijų sritis	Biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Miškininkystė
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2), iššęstinė (3)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Laukinių gyvūnų populiacijų valdymo ir medžioklęstės magistro laipsnis
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2012

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### INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Wildlife resources and management</i>
State code	621D55001
Study area	Biomedical sciences
Study field	Forestry
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (2), Part time (3)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master's in Wildlife Population Management and Game Management
Date of registration of the study programme	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

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

The Aleksandras Stulginskis University (hereinafter referred as University) is currently the only university in Lithuania that holds modern inter-disciplinary researches, prepares and issues Doctoral, Master's and Bachelor's scientific degrees and qualifications for such vital fields as food security, agriculture and forestry, land and water resources and management, climate change and alternative bioenergy. The University is the only university in Lithuania that organizes II cycle wildlife resources and management study programme (hereinafter – Programme) is the only specialized II cycle study Programme in the field of forestry in Lithuania and was initiated due to the need for wildlife population management and hunting enterprise.

The analysed Programme is administrated by the Dean of Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology (hereinafter – Faculty), coordinated by the Faculty's Institute of Forest Biology and Silviculture, Institute of Forest Management and Wood Science, Institute of Environment and Ecology. During the programme, participating lecturers are also from Faculty of Economics and Management, Cultural Communication and Education and Mathematics, Physics and Information Technology Centre.

Programme was provided and first students were accepted for the Fall semester of 2012. Previously there has not been an external assessment of the analysed Programme. By the self-assessment of the Programme it is aimed to assess the strengths and the weaknesses of this, relatively new Programme, forecast potential challenges and actions for improvement.

#### ***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 25/10/2016.

- 1. Dr. José-Antonio Bonet (team leader)** Assistant professor at the Department of Crop Science and Forest Science (Spain);
- 2. Dr. Tapani Tasanen**, Senior lecturer and researcher at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. Retired since 1st of August 2016 (Finland);
- 3. Dr. Algis Gaižutis**, Chairman of Forest Owners Association of Lithuania (Lithuania);
- 4. Ms. Aiste Bikmanaite**, Student in Biology at Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Lithuania).

## **II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS**

### ***2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes***

The programme aims/objectives are expressed on three levels in the document *Descriptions of Study Subjects*. The main objective of the study programme is written as follows:

*To prepare the high qualified specialists, having theoretical knowledge in area of wildlife biology and ecology, population management, rational use of wildlife resources and protection in conditions of changing of anthropogenic factor; able to apply creatively new knowledge, methods and technologies in practice; able to carry out investigations independently, assess the results of investigations, determine their reliability and work in position required a high qualification in private or state sector.*

In addition, there is a partial objective defined for adapting the subjects/courses to the study programme:

*To gain knowledge about wildlife resources and contemporary theory of management, methods and technologies; to extend competences gained in a first study stage about wildlife; creatively apply knowledge in independent developing of scientific ideas, dealing with problems of sustainable environment.*

The third level consists of objectives for each study subject/course in the document.

The review team considers that the programme aims and learning outcomes are well defined and clearly explained, being publicly accessible on the University's website. The programme's title *Wildlife Resources and Management Programme* and the degree's name *Master's in Wildlife Population Management and Game Management* give a clear vision of the programme's content and are in coherence with each other.

After on site visit it appears that the programme designers are thoroughly acquainted with the corresponding study programmes in different countries. The aims and learning outcomes have been set in accordance with international models. Compared to Universities e.g. in Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and USA, the Programme is a comparable, well-developed and integrated entity, focusing on the essential aspects.

The programme aims and learning outcomes are well suited to the needs in the Lithuanian society and business life. *The employer survey* introduced in the self-evaluation report gives a good guideline how to meet the professional requirements and public / labour market needs. The results of the survey and the meeting with employers' representatives at the University gave the picture that the Programme is a harmonious whole, which corresponds to the expectations of stakeholders. ASU interacts with stakeholders and the information and feed-back processes introduced seem to be well established and well working.

The review team notices that relevant partners are involved in the design, updating and management of the programme. This guarantees that the required competences will be included in the programme. Later on in this report we make proposals how the *private sector's employers and other stakeholders* can be taken to account more effectively.

The review team found that there is a very positive attitude and strong support for the Programme in students', alumni, and stakeholders' fronts. This is a very positive factor for the programme's future development. The review team sees that there is a good balance between the aims and results this far.

Taken together, the programme aims and learning outcomes are clear and well-presented both for students and stakeholders. This is a good basis for continued doctoral studies in the discipline, too. The aims reflect and are in line with professional requirements. The programme name, aims and learning outcomes and content of the programme are all compatible. The

learning outcomes are well integrated in the programme contents. The learning outcomes give a broad knowledge in wildlife management science and practise, and at the same time provide graduates with important generic, methodological and transferable skills. The programme aim and learning outcomes has a good balance between scientific and practical skills as it was also confirmed in the interviews with different target groups. The education gives competence to the public sector's wildlife management tasks and with some improvements also for tasks and entrepreneurship in the private sector.

The learning outcomes of the programme are modern and harmonise with the Bologna process and give good opportunity for internationalisation. Graduates reach the same level of competence as in other European universities. There exist good international links to universities and research organisations (especially educational co-operation with SLU in Sweden and research / educational co-operation with a University in Kazakhstan have given encouraging results). Students from the programme can successfully participate in international study programmes of wildlife management. There is a strong support for the programme from both students and alumni and a good interaction with other stakeholders, and this is strength for the programme. The review team is very satisfied with the aims and learning outcomes of the programme. The aims and learning outcomes are clear, well formulated and represent a very good balance between scientific knowledge in core subject areas and generic and methodological skills. On the other hand, the review team recommends more weight on the following areas of expertise and skills that are needed in the labour market: Commercial expertise, e.g. bookkeeping, business orientation, entrepreneurship, marketing etc. should have a stronger position in the curriculum. Leadership is not visible enough in the curriculum. It is a very important skill in organization management and hunting operations. In this kind of programme it should be studied as well in theory as in practice.

## ***2.2. Curriculum design***

The curriculum meets the legal requirements (120 ECTS Master programme), and it represents today's most popular international practice, which includes separate bachelor and master degrees. This enables participation to the programme for students who have bachelor degree from some other university, and under certain conditions from different disciplines. Bridging studies are organized when necessary.

There is also an alternative for extended studies with a longer (6 semesters) duration. This possibility has been welcomed and chosen by the Programme's students because most of them have families and go to work during the semesters. Earned income are important for students because the government-funded study places are limited. The drawback of this extended study time system is that it consumes a lot of staff resources and leads to complex teaching and learning arrangements. There is a countrywide economic problem behind this fact. That's why we can only encourage the teaching staff to plan and implement the time schedules, division of labor and allocation of other resources in good co-operation and by organizing regular planning sessions.

The subjects and courses (subjects) are distributed evenly. No more than 5 subjects can be studied per one semester, and in the extended studies model the number of subjects can be 3 – 4 (tables 4 and 5 in the self-evaluation report). Unnecessary repetition has been avoided.

Mandatory and elective studies have been chosen reasonably and they have a functional timing.

The details of the curriculum and teaching/study methods are well selected and organized. The individual studies' percentage is high, 84,7 % in the extended programme, and the final works (available in national internet database) are of high quality.

The review group sees that the curriculum offers the students good knowledge and sufficient skills for their future tasks, when compared to international practice and stakeholders' expectations (presented in the self-evaluation report and the meeting at ASU).

The deepening and specialization built on the former bachelor studies should be synchronized more specifically with the courses/subjects of bachelor programmes in ASU and KMAIK (Kaunas Forestry and Environmental Engineering University of Applied Sciences). The students whom we met at ASU took this matter up at our meeting. They emphasized that there was found repetition between the bachelor programmes mentioned and this Master programme.

The review team considers curriculum as a strong part of the programme, however some improvements leading towards excellence could be suggested. More emphasis is needed especially in the following study areas and skills:

- Entrepreneurship, leadership, marketing, bookkeeping, economics, and other commercial courses/modules, which may improve the competitiveness of the students' future enterprises and give the graduates better competence for private sector tasks.
- Language skills: especially English, German and Russian languages seem to be good to know, especially for running a successful hunting and fishing tourism in Lithuania, and for many jobs/tasks with international contacts. The share of international studies shall be added for the same reasons.
- The EU's role in harmonizing the usage and management of natural resources in member countries and elsewhere seems to strengthen also in the future. That's why the thorough knowledge of EU's directives, programs, strategies/policies and practical measures, which are guiding the wildlife management in Lithuania, shall be emphasized in this study programme. This need can be taken into account in the context of the present courses. Another alternative is to establish a new course for this purpose.

This 120 ECTS scope is the upper limit for second cycle Master degrees, and that's why there is no possibility to extend the programme with the studies recommended above. Optional/elective courses can be added to the programme. Scholarships and paid thesis works may attract the students to take courses, research activities and internships organised abroad.

Numerous modern innovations from different disciplines, up-to-date IT applications, new technologies and working methods are emphasized in the self-evaluation report. These were introduced during the visit to the University, too. The review team looks that compared to the global situation, the University and the Programme seem to be on the cutting edge.

In summary the curriculum follows the international practice. The academic structure is logical, combining mandatory and elective subjects based on specializations. Its content and teaching/study methods are well selected and organized. It offers the students good knowledge and sufficient skills for their future tasks, when compared to international practice and stakeholders' expectations. Synchronization between this curriculum and those of bachelor programmes' in ASU and KMAIK should be refined. Knowledge on EU programmes, strategies and directives, language skills, leadership/management skills and entrepreneurship/commercial know-how are not included in the curriculum to the extent as in some corresponding programmes in other countries. These study areas shall be developed. Teaching of modern



working methods, new technology and up-to-date IT applications are sufficiently included in the curriculum.

### ***2.3. Teaching staff***

On the basis of the self-evaluation report, its annexes and the visit to the University the review team sees that the teaching staff's legal requirements are well achieved. Compared to practices in other European countries, the high quality of the Programme staff is guaranteed by many ways: there are several quarters on different organization levels following the staff (Ministry of Education, SKVC, University's own institutions and boards); the qualifications of teachers are carefully determined; the filling of teacher posts is a thorough process; University evaluations are done frequently, in shorter intervals compared to other countries

The CVs and the statement given in the self-evaluation report show that the teaching staff is experienced and qualified for their posts and tasks. In 2015 - 2016 the percentage of professors, associate professors and other PhD-level lecturers was 98,8 % of the whole teaching staff. The number of Programme lecturers was 14. The work experience of different teacher levels varied between 9,5 and 10,6 years. The discussion with the teachers showed that they are exceptionally enthusiastic about their work. Also they are actively developing their skills and scientific qualifications. There are also many guest teachers who represent important areas of knowledge and skills.

The number of teaching staff presented in self-evaluation report is bigger than usual compared to most European countries' and US universities. Many of these have less than five (5) permanent lecturers, who are assisted with time teachers and guest teachers. In this regard the exact comparison is difficult. Based on the introduction of teachers and their division of labour in ASU, there is no immediate need for more teachers at the moment. Increasing the teacher exchange with foreign universities is recommended, by using e.g. Erasmus funding opportunities. This was proposed by the students, too.

Aging of the permanent lecturers shall be followed in the future. Age distribution presented in SER is now good: 21-30 years 1, 31-40 years 6, 41-50 years 5, 51-60 years 1 and 61-70 years 1. But the situation may change, e.g. if there will come such budget cuts that we have had recently in many European countries. This means, for example, that the posts of retired teachers can't be filled.

The professional development of the teachers is in order according to the self-evaluation report and discussions with the teachers on the visit day. What shall be developed, are especially increment of lectures in English and other foreign languages and teachers' post graduate studies and scientific work abroad.

In the self-evaluation report and its annexes there are thorough explanations of the teachers' research activities and publications. On the visit day, several teachers introduced their research activities and equipment in the laboratories. As a whole, the review team looks that the teaching staff's scientific activity is very wide and gives a sufficient basis for the Programme's educational tasks. The students are involved in the projects and they are heavily supported by the teachers when doing their final works.

Teachers' participation in European educational and research programs (e.g. Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020) shall be supported. This promotes the internationalization process of the

Programme and helps the development of the wildlife management sector in many countries. Probably there is a national agency in Lithuania and personnel at the University for advisory and support of international project activities.

In summary the high quality of the Programme staff is guaranteed by many ways, e.g. by the co-operation of several organizations, comprehensive teacher qualifications, careful process of filling teacher posts and frequent University evaluations. Teachers scientific activity is wide and gives a sufficient basis for the Programme's educational tasks and the students' training to RDI (Research, Development and Innovation) activities. The teaching staff is well balanced in terms of academic positions, age and research, teaching and professional experience. It may guarantee the stability and success of the Programme in the future. The teaching staff benefit from their experience in teaching in other Master Programmes in the same University. The review team recommends the University to start a Programme of incentives that motivates the academic staff for moving forward in strategic actions such as the wide use of e-learning techniques and lectures in English. The review team encourages the Faculty to be internationally active, expanding the teacher exchange programme with foreign universities. Both shorter and longer visits, for foreign teachers visiting Lithuania and for teachers going abroad, shall be continued and increased. The staff should be encouraged and helped to participate in European educational and research programmes.

#### ***2.4. Facilities and learning resources***

The buildings where the Programme is located are new or renovated and therefore in good condition. The classrooms and laboratories are sufficiently broad and of high quality. The structures and arrangements to help the disabled people to move in the university building should be improved.

The educational facilities and equipment at the University are of high quality and they are sufficient for the present number of students. Internet connection is accessible in the classrooms, laboratories and common facilities. Many of the equipment are in common use with the other study programmes of the faculty. The Programme's collection of stuffed game animals is complete and of high quality. Some other equipment used for special laboratory analyses within this Programme were introduced, too. At the meeting with teachers they expressed their concerns, e.g. that most investments are made into hardware/software, but there are very limited (or not at all) resources available for purchasing materials to use in teaching process and teachers have to pay for these themselves in order to ensure the course aims. Although the materials for this programme are more the enough, such arrangements should be avoided in the future. More financial support should also be given for teaching the staff members to use the modern equipment and software available. Also students and alumni of the Programme expressed the wish to have at least one organized study tour to a foreign country to learn more about the wildlife resources management practices. The review team understand such recommendations are difficult to implement but they do shape future improvement plans towards the excellence.

Necessary structures and equipment needed for field exercises, hunting events and thesis preparation are presented in brief in the self-evaluation report. Because of the short time reserved for our access to the University and the Programme, we did not have the opportunity to visit the terrain teaching sites. The University arboretum was introduced us during our visit. It is well-kept and consists of 900 taxons. There are no older trees yet, their identification shall be practiced elsewhere.

According to the self-evaluation report, the hunting territories, state forest areas and national/regional parks give good opportunities for field studies and practical exercises. In addition to these sites that are very well equipped and organized, the review team encourages the teachers to pay attention also to private landowners and wildlife management on their lands. These are often smaller areas with special problems and opportunities. Use of the municipalities' land and water areas for the Programme's teaching and study purposes is recommended, too.

The electronic study material is introduced in the self-evaluation report and some examples were shown us in connection of the University visit, too. Moodle electronic platform is in common use. As a whole, the e-material looks sufficient and up to date. However, regular updating of e-material and continuous monitoring of its production is recommended.

The library where the review team visited looked well organized and has a wide collection of literature, both printed and electronic material. Students and teachers have possibility to use virtual library, Lithuanian and international databases. In self-evaluation report there are mentioned two textbooks published by the local lecturers for the Programme. We recommend the addition of textbooks in English or other foreign languages (e.g. German and Russian) to the study requirements, and encourage the experts of the Programme to produce this material themselves. Because there are many students making remote studies at home, e-materials that are available via the Internet are preferred.

In summary, the University offers very good facilities and learning resources for students. The classrooms and laboratories are in good condition and there is enough space, but the structures and arrangements to help the disabled people to move in the university building shall be improved. The educational facilities and equipment at the University are of high quality and they are sufficient for the present number of students. Computers and Internet connection are accessible in the classrooms, laboratories and common facilities. Students have access to well-equipped and modern laboratories and specialized software. The University arboretum, hunting territories, state forests and national/regional parks give good opportunities for field studies, practical exercises and hunting events. In addition to state owned areas, the private land owners' and municipalities' land and water areas shall be used as training targets to guarantee that the graduates know the special opportunities and problems of these areas, too. Printed and electronic study material was found sufficient and appropriate.

## ***2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment***

The rules for Programme admission is prepared by the Senate of Aleksandras Stulginskis University which approves annually the admission procedure based on the sum of competitive scores of the students. Similar procedure applies for both full-time and part-time students. This represents an objective, clear and evaluable system for the student admittance.

The number of students accepted to the Programme has been low, 4 – 8 per year during 2012 - 2015. The optimal annual number of students, which meets the need of high quality specialists, is defined as eight (8) in the self-evaluation report. Compared to wildlife management education in other countries' universities, the continuous low number of students is a normal situation. E.g. in the University of Helsinki in Finland, the number of starting students of the corresponding Master studies has been permanently 4 - 5 annually. This number has been sufficient to meet the need of academic wildlife management professionals in the country for tens of years. Usually 1 - 2 of these Masters have published a doctoral thesis annually.

In review team experience, there are rise and fall periods in education like in other businesses. That's why we take to discussion the possibility that the continuity of the Programme can be questioned sooner or later for financial reasons due to the low number of students that leads to high personnel costs. Options are important to consider, for example continuing this education as a specialization line of some other programme of the faculty.

Bachelors from other HEIs are represented as applicants to the ASU Programme. For example, there have been professional bachelors from the Kaunas Forestry and Environmental Engineering University of Applied Sciences (KMAIK) among applicants. Also bachelors of veterinary sciences were seen as desired students at the discussions. The diversity of bachelor studies among the applicants is seen as a positive factor.

The students of Wildlife Resources and Management Programme are usually going to work during their studies, and that's why they prefer to choose the extended (part time) study time. In addition, the Programme has offered some individual arrangements to many of them. The small group sizes have led to special teaching arrangements, too. These special arrangements represent a good service from the students' point of view, but they are time consuming and costly for the University. Few university gives so far-reaching personal services for the students, mainly because the human resources are scarce and continuously reduced in most institutions.

Remote learning is organized by the Moodle system. The students who were interviewed during the visit to the University were mainly satisfied with their study process. A few international student exchange activities have been organized this far. The Programme has received three student groups with 15 students in each, from The National Agrarian University of Kazakhstan. There has been also a common research project with this university. The foreign students were taught in English and Russian languages. Educational co-operation has been done also with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). The leader and teachers of the Programme emphasized that the results from these contacts have been encouraging.

More efforts are needed to develop and increase the international activities. The students told at our session that they usually can't go to study abroad for economic reasons. Most students have full time work and families. At the meeting there were presented also opinions about lack of financial support for living abroad. Some of the students see also that their inadequate language skills make a barrier to participate in international student exchange. The review team recommends that internationalization shall be promoted and supported in all possible ways, e.g. by adding lectures and exam literature in English and other foreign languages, increased production of e-material and e-learning courses in English, searching for new scholarships and funding sources from the enterprises, foundations etc., systematic increasing of contacts with different kinds of foreign partners.

The organisation of the study process seems efficient and is not an obstacle for part time students. They are able to take practical courses in different regions where they are living and working, which is important for expanding competences and wider professional knowledge.

During 2012 – 2015, eight (8) students presented their final works. A doctoral thesis handling Lithuanian wolf populations, was accepted in the faculty 2012. The topic was emphasized to belong to the scope of the new Programme. These theses are available on the Internet, in the national theses database ETD (<http://etd.library.lt>).

After analyzing these available Master theses, it is recommended that more attention is paid in future to the thesis part Conclusions (results and recommendations). Even if in methodical

requirements for Master thesis is rather clearly stated [source: [http://mef.asu.lt/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/nurodymai\\_i\\_s\\_pakopos\\_baigiamajam\\_darbui\\_rengti.pdf](http://mef.asu.lt/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/12/nurodymai_i_s_pakopos_baigiamajam_darbui_rengti.pdf)], that this part of the thesis should present most important results of whole Master thesis, based on research findings and to provide recommendations, but so far in this part rather general statements are written. Such statements look too general and can be formulated without writing the Master thesis on selected topics. Much more attention shall be given to this important part of thesis work. Conclusions shall be stated in a manner that there is no room for a doubt that objectives, and consequently, the goal were reached.

Surprisingly, students and supervisors must get permission to write the full thesis in English. It would be good practise to analyse how it might affect the research part (or future if students proceed to PhD). In this case, the review team strongly encourage the Programme Committee to support the idea of writing the theses also in English.

Concerning the artistic and cultural activities, ASU has a folk dance group, folk music group and theatre, coordinated by the Department of Public Relations and Marketing. Students may also use the sport facilities of the campus.

The review team found that ASU ensures a good level of social support for students. University administration have the position that all students can apply for financial support - scholarships regarding study grades. Surprisingly the students were telling at the meeting that they have no information about this opportunity.

The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. The University has established a monitoring system of the student progress that affects all the Programmes of the University. Internal meetings evaluating the results and personal interviews with the less advanced students are the next steps of this process. Measures for correcting the detected problems are established as the final step of this process. The grading system (0-10 points) is similar in all the study subjects, publishing the results in the University website.

The exam schedules (exam season) are also approved by the Faculty Dean, scheduling exams with at least 2 days of difference. The exams are taken in an oral or written form. The student who fails an exam has a second opportunity no later than three weeks after the exam season. The exam assessment procedure is very well documented including the procedure of the teacher in the exam correction and the student revision. Student's appeals against the examination procedure are also regulated. Final thesis is expected to be defended by the student in front of a Committee headed by a scientist of another institution and with the participation of teachers from the programme and social stakeholders.

A review of the study process and the students' performance assessment show that this element of the Programme is well structured. The admission requirements are well-founded. To improve the attractiveness of the Programme, the review team recommends to increase and develop the dissemination activities. As well, increasing of the cooperation with the potential employers is recommended. Scholarships and other forms of support available are not very well known by the students. This information needs to be improved. The review team sees very positively that ASU is offering the students many artistic and social activities. There exist already good international links to several universities and research organisations within the discipline. However, more internalization is needed, and the student exchange shall be developed so that students from other countries get interested in wildlife management studies in Kaunas.

## ***2.6. Programme management***

The Wildlife Resources and Management Programme benefits from the very well-structured organization of the University. The Programme is managed according with the regulations provided by the University and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The responsibilities are clearly divided between the Programme Committee, the directors of institutes/centres, the Faculty Dean, the Faculty Board, the Centre for Study Quality and Innovations, the Department of International Relations, the Career Centre and the Senate of the University.

The Programme Committee is in charge of the coordination, assessment and monitoring of the master programme and carries out its evaluations. The Committee is the central body responsible for the collection and analysis of the data provided by the surveys and other sources of information. In the committee, teachers, students, graduates and social stakeholders participate in the submission to the Council of Faculty for final consideration and the Senate for approval. The committee makes decisions as a collegiate body, and work in liaison with the academic community members. The Institute approves reorganisation and descriptions of study subjects. It is responsible for quality of teaching. To secure the quality of teaching a pre-review system exists. Textbooks and students' books are approved by the central commission of the University. The faculty council is responsible for the composition of studies, and for obtaining the opinion of the academic community. The Faculty holds meeting with target groups of teachers involved in the programme. The sociological surveys, and e.g. students' surveys are standardised and the Centre for Quality and Innovations is responsible. The Senate is the highest body of the University

There is a systematic collection of data that has been established in the University for the different Programmes. The analysis and monitoring of the programme will feed from several databases: student admission, student mobility and student learning outcomes. It is expected that other sources of information such as graduate employment monitoring and contacting data of the graduates will be also collected in the future. Other sources of information are the annual reports of the departments and faculties. Other data are also used for programme analysis.

The self-evaluation reports reflect the involvement of all the teachers in all the process of collecting information, analysing the data and enhancing the programme solutions. The Committee is the central body responsible for the collection and analysis of the data providing information to directors of institutes/centres, Faculty Dean or Faculty Board. The stakeholders participate in several teaching activities including practices.

The programme quality is guaranteed by the Vice Rector for Studies and the Centre for Study Quality and Innovations (hereinafter the Centre). The assurance of the quality focuses both on the teaching and the learning materials, which are peer-reviewed and approved by the Institute. The Committee of Disputes is the body that mediates between the University Administration and the Students in the case of Student's appeal. The Centre has also introduced a systemic system of sociological surveys aiming to collect the opinions and evaluations of teachers, students and employers.

The internal monitoring of the programme and of the students is very good. The programme is reviewed at least once a year and sometimes twice a year. The programme analysis feeds from several databases and surveys. Other sources of information are annual reports of the departments and faculties and other data. Hence the monitoring of the programme seems to be

very rigorous. During the meetings with students the review team concluded that the students considered that the management and administration of the programme were functioning very well. They did not have major problems with the management of the programme and the students reported that they were assisted by the Dean's office.

The programme management described above follows the national legislation and an established practice. This system looks to work properly as far as it is economically feasible. The review team expects that in near future the administration of the Programme, Faculty and University must think seriously what to do for the low number of students and its impact on expenses. It will be questioned soon, how to ensure the operation and continuity of the Programme under strong cost pressures.

The Wildlife Resources and Management Programme is heavily dependent on, and receives remarkable support from the established study programmes of the Faculty of Forest Science and Ecology. The same dependency concerns also the Urban and Recreational Forestry Programme, which we are evaluating simultaneously. Hopefully the Wildlife Resources and Management Programme can continue as independent study programme, but alternatives must be thought. The number of applicants may keep on a low level permanently.

*In summary, the **programme management** runs on a systematic basis and is on a good level. Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation of the programme are clearly allocated. The students are generally satisfied with the management of the study process and its rules, and are satisfied with the assessments. They do not report significant complaints. The review team recommend to revise the management system in the future, because the rules and structures sound very heavy and time consuming for both staff and students. The programme management follows the national legislation and an established practice. This system looks to work properly as far as it is economically feasible. For the administration of the Programme, Faculty and University it is necessary to seriously think about the low number of students, as well as its impact on expenses. It will be questioned soon, how to ensure the operation and continuity of the Programme under strong cost pressures.*

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The aims and learning outcomes of the Programme are clear, well formulated and represent a good balance between scientific knowledge in core subject areas and generic and methodological skills. However, the review team recommends more weight on the following areas of expertise and skills that are needed in the labour market: Commercial expertise, e.g. bookkeeping, business orientation, entrepreneurship, marketing etc. should have a stronger position in the curriculum. Leadership is not visible enough in the curriculum. It is a very important skill in organization management and hunting operations. In this kind of programme it should be studied as well in theory as in practice.
2. The most important EU strategies, programs and directives, which are guiding and controlling wildlife management, land use and nature protection, should have a clearer position in the study programme (perhaps a special course including the national applications, too). Many EU programs etc. are mentioned in certain course descriptions, but not comprehensive. Important EU publications should be mentioned in exam literature lists.
3. The review team encourages the teachers to pay attention also to private landowners and the wildlife management on their lands. These are often smaller areas with special problems and opportunities. Similar co-operation with municipalities is recommended, too.
4. Systematic training for the teachers in e-learning, use of IT-applications, speaking and writing foreign languages, use of statistical methods and other important skills are recommended to be organized regularly. The review team recommends that teachers should be further encouraged to increase their participation in international scientific and development projects. RDI helpdesk and/or contact person on faculty level is needed.
5. The review team encourages the Programme and Faculty to increase the international activities, expanding the staff and student exchange programs with new foreign universities and other organisations, and inviting more guest teachers. Language courses for the staff may strongly support this activity.



#### IV. SUMMARY

*The programme **aims and learning outcomes** are well presented both for students and stakeholders. The aims reflect and are in line with professional requirements. The programme name, aim and learning outcomes and content of the programme are all compatible. The learning outcomes are well integrated in the programme contents. The learning outcomes give a broad knowledge in wildlife management science and practise, and at the same time provide graduates with important generic, methodological and transferable skills. The education gives competence to the public sector's wildlife management tasks, and with some improvements also for tasks and entrepreneurship in the private sector. There exist good international links to universities and research organisations (especially educational co-operation with SLU in Sweden and research / educational co-operation with a University in Kazakhstan have given encouraging results). There is a strong support for the programme from both students and alumni and a good interaction with other stakeholders, and this is strength for the programme.*

*The **curriculum design** meets the legal requirements. The study subjects are in line with required knowledge in the Wildlife Resources and Management discipline. The curriculum design generally meets expected demands for generic and methodological skills. The curriculum follows the international practice. Its content and teaching/study methods are well selected and organized. It offers the students good knowledge and sufficient skills for their future tasks, when compared to international practice and stakeholders' expectations. Knowledge on EU programs, strategies and directives, language skills, leadership/management skills and entrepreneurship/commercial know-how are not included in the curriculum to the extent as in some corresponding programmes in other countries. These study areas shall be developed.*

*The programme has in general a qualified **teaching staff**, which meets all legal requirements. Teachers scientific activity is wide and gives a sufficient basis for the Programme's educational tasks and the students' training to RDI (Research, Development and Innovation) activities. The teaching staff is well balanced in terms of academic positions, age and research, teaching and professional experience. The teaching staff benefit from their experience in teaching in other Master Programmes in the same University. The review team encourages the Faculty to be internationally active, expanding the exchange programme with foreign universities. Both shorter and longer visits, for visiting teachers and for teachers to go abroad, should be continued and increased.*

*The University offers good **facilities and learning resources** for students and staff. The classrooms and laboratories are in good condition and there is enough space, but the structures and arrangements to help the disabled people to move in the university building shall be improved. The educational facilities and equipment at the University are of high quality and they are sufficient for the present number of students. Computers and Internet connection are accessible in the classrooms. The review team encourages the University to take care of all facilities, equipment and tools needed in field exercises and research activities organized in terrain circumstances. The University arboretum, hunting territories, state forests and national/regional parks give good opportunities for field studies, practical exercises and hunting events. In addition to state owned areas, the private land owners' and municipalities' land and water areas shall be used as training targets to guarantee that the graduates know the special opportunities and problems of these areas, too.*

*A review of **the study process and the students' performance assessment** show that this element of the Programme is well structured. To improve the attractiveness of the Programme, the*

*review team recommends to increase and develop the dissemination activities. As well, increasing of the cooperation with the potential employers is recommended. Admission to the programme requires completion of bachelor studies or college/professional bachelor studies by bridging courses, which are individually organized for students from KMAIK and students who have finished Bachelor studies in other study fields. Scholarships and other forms of support available are not very well known by the students. This information needs to be improved. There exist already good international links to several universities and research organisations within the discipline. However, more internalization is needed, and the student exchange shall be developed so that students from other countries get interested in wildlife management studies in Kaunas. The assessment system of students' performance is clear, adequate and publicly available. The assessment of master theses is mainly based on a sound and factual system, but the review team urges the directors of thesis works to diligence.*

***The programme management*** runs on a systematic basis and is on a good level. The quality is monitored regularly and the data are analysed and used for improvements of the programme. The students are generally satisfied with the management of the study process and its rules, and are satisfied with the assessments. They do not report significant complaints. The review team recommend revising the management system in the future, because the rules and structures sound very heavy and time consuming for both staff and students. The programme management follows the national legislation and an established practice. This system looks to work properly as far as it is economically feasible. For the administration of the Programme, Faculty and University it is necessary to seriously think about the low number of students, as well as its impact on expenses. It will be questioned soon, how to ensure the operation and continuity of the Programme under strong cost pressures.

## V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Wildlife resources and management* (state code – 621D55001) at Aleksandras Stulginskis University is given **positive/negative** evaluation.

*Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>19</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:

Dr. José-Antonio Bonet (team leader)

Grupės nariai:

Team members:

Dr. Tapani Tasanen

Dr. Algis Gaižutis

Ms. Aiste Bikmanaite

&lt;...&gt;

**V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS**

Aleksandro Stulginskio universiteto studijų programa *Laukinių gyvūnų ištekliai ir jų valdymas* (valstybinis kodas – 621D55001) vertinama **teigiamai**.

<b>Eil. Nr.</b>	<b>Vertinimo sritis</b>	<b>Srities įvertinimas, balais*</b>
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	<b>Iš viso:</b>	<b>19</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)

&lt;...&gt;

**IV. SANTRAUKA**

Programos tikslai ir studijų rezultatai yra puikiai pristatyti ir studentams, ir socialiniams dalininkams. Tikslai atspindi ir atitinka profesinius poreikius. Programos pavadinimas, tikslas, studijų rezultatai bei programos turinys yra tarpusavyje suderinami. Studijų rezultatai yra gerai integruoti į programos turinį. Jie suteikia gilių mokslo ir praktinių žinių laukinių gyvūnų valdymo srityje, o kartu ir svarbių bendrųjų, metodinių ir pritaikomų absolventų įgūdžių. Išsilavinimas suteikia kompetenciją vykdyti viešojo sektoriaus laukinių gyvūnų valdymo užduotis, o ją pagerinus, spręsti užduotis ir imtis verslo privačiame sektoriuje. Palaikomi geri tarptautiniai ryšiai su universitetais ir mokslinių tyrimų organizacijomis (ypač paminėtinas bendradarbiavimas su Švedijos SLU švietimo srityje ir bendradarbiavimas su Kazachstano universitetu mokslinių tyrimų ir švietimo srityje, kuris davė džiuginančių rezultatų). Tvirta palaikymo programa susilaukia iš studentų ir absolventų, egzistuoja geras ryšys su kitais socialiniais dalininkais, o tai programai suteikia privalumų.

Programos sandara tenkina visus teisinius reikalavimus. Dalykai atitinka laukinių gyvūnų išteklių ir jų valdymo srities žinių poreikį. Programos sandara iš esmės atitinka numatytus

bendrųjų ir metodinių įgūdžių poreikius. Studijų turinys atitinka tarptautinę praktiką. Programos turinys ir mokymo(si) metodika yra tinkamai parinkti ir organizuoti. Palyginti su tarptautine praktika ir socialinių dalininkų lūkesčiais, studentams suteikiamos geros žinios ir pakankamų įgūdžių būsimoms užduotims vykdyti. Žinios apie ES programas, strategijas ir direktyvas, kalbiniai įgūdžiai, lyderystės ir vadybos įgūdžiai, praktinės žinios verslumo bei komercijos srityse į studijų turinį neįtrauktos tiek, kiek jas apima kai kurios atitinkamos programos, vykdomos kitose šalyse. Šias studijų sritis reikėtų plėtoti toliau.

Programą vykdo iš esmės kvalifikuotas akademinis personalas, kuris tenkina visus teisinius reikalavimus. Dėstytojai vykdo plataus masto mokslinę veiklą, kuri sudaro pakankamą pagrindą programos studijų užduotims ir studentų mokymui mokslinių tyrimų, technologinės plėtros ir inovacijų (angl. RDI) srityse. Akademinių pareigų, amžiaus, tyrimų, dėstymo ir profesinės patirties požiūriu akademinis personalas yra puikiai suderintas. Akademinis personalas remiasi savo patirtimi, įgyta tame pačiame universitete vykdant kitas magistrantūros programas. Ekspertų grupė ragina fakultetą aktyviai veikti tarptautiniu mastu, plečiant mainų programą su užsienio šalių universitetais. Ir toliau turėtų būti rengiami trumpesni ir ilgesni atvykstančių ir į užsienio šalis išvykstančių kviestinių dėstytojų vizitai bei didinamas jų skaičius.

Universitetas studentams ir personalui suteikia gerą materialiąją bazę ir metodinius išteklius. Auditorijos ir laboratorijos geros būklės, yra pakankamai vietos, tačiau reikia patobulinti struktūras ir tvarką, kuri padėtų neįgaliesiems judėti universiteto pastate. Studijoms skirtos patalpos ir įranga universitete aukštos kokybės ir pakankamos atsižvelgiant į esamą studentų skaičių. Kompiuteriai ir interneto ryšys prieinami auditorijose. Ekspertų grupė ragina universitetą pasirūpinti visomis patalpomis, įranga ir priemonėmis, kurių reikia lauko pratyboms ir mokslinių tyrimų veiklai organizuoti lauko sąlygomis. Universiteto medžių parkai, medžioklės teritorijos, valstybiniai miškai ir nacionaliniai (regioniniai) parkai suteikia puikias galimybes lauko tyrimams, praktiniams užsiėmimams ir medžioklei rengti. Be valstybinės žemės, privačių savininkų ir savivaldybių žemė bei vandens telkinių teritorijos naudojamos kaip mokymo objektai užtikrinant, kad absolventai išmanytų ir šių teritorijų teikiamas ypatingas galimybes ir jų keliamas problemas.

Studijų proceso ir studentų mokymosi vertinimo patikrinimas rodo, kad šis programos elementas yra tinkamos struktūros. Siekiant didesnio programos patrauklumo, ekspertų grupė siūlo intensyvinti ir kurti sklaidos veiklą. Taip pat rekomenduojama stiprinti bendradarbiavimą su

potencialiais darbdaviais. Į programos studijas priimami bakalauro laipsnį įgiję studentai arba kolegines ar profesinio bakalauro studijas baigę studentai, išklause išlyginamuosius kursus, kurie atskirai organizuojami KMAIK studentams ir studentams, baigusiems kitų kryptių bakalauro studijas. Studentai nėra gerai informuoti apie skiriamas stipendijas ir kitas paramos formas. Šiuo klausimu reikia didinti jų informuotumą. Dalyko lygmenyje jau yra užmegzti tvirti tarptautiniai ryšiai su keliais universitetais ir mokslinių tyrimų organizacijomis. Tačiau reikia plėsti tarptautiškumo aspektą, skatinti studentų mainus ir kitų šalių studentus sudominti laukinių gyvūnų valdymo studijomis Kaune. Studentų mokymosi vertinimo sistema yra aiški, tinkama ir viešai skelbiama. Taikoma patikima faktinė magistro darbų vertinimo sistema, tačiau ekspertų grupė skatina baigiamųjų darbų vadovus užtikrinti darbų atlikimo kruopštumą.

Programos vadyba yra sisteminga ir tinkama. Kokybė reguliariai stebima, o duomenys analizuojami ir naudojami programai tobulinti. Studentai iš esmės yra patenkinti studijų proceso vadyba, jos taisyklėmis ir vertinimu. Didesnių nusiskundimų jie neturi. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja ateityje patikslinti vadybos sistemą, kadangi taisyklės ir struktūros ir personalui, ir studentams atrodo labai sudėtingos ir reikalaujančios laiko. Programos vadyba yra pagrįsta nacionaliniais teisės aktais ir nusistovėjusia praktika. Ši sistema funkcionuoja tinkamai tiek, kiek ji yra įmanoma ekonominiu požiūriu. Programos, fakulteto ir universiteto administracija turi rimtai susirūpinti mažu studentų skaičiumi ir jo poveikiu išlaidoms. Netrukus teks spręsti klausimą, kaip užtikrinti programos vykdymą ir tęstinumą patiriant spaudimą dėl didelių sąnaudų.

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### **III. REKOMENDACIJOS**

1. Programos studijų tikslai ir rezultatai yra aiškūs, gerai suformuluoti ir užtikrina tinkamą pagrindinių dalykų sričių mokslinių žinių bei bendrųjų ir metodinių įgūdžių pusiausvyrą. Tačiau ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja didesnę dėmesį skirti šiems darbo rinkoje paklausiems įgūdžiams ir kompetencijoms: komercinei kompetencijai, pvz., buhalterijai, verslo orientavimui, verslumui, rinkodarai ir pan., kuriems studijų turinyje turėtų būti suteiktos tvirtesnės pozicijos. Svarbus įgūdis yra organizacijų valdymas ir medžioklė. Tokio pobūdžio programoje turėtų vykti ir teorinės, ir praktinės studijos.
2. Svarbiausios ES strategijos, programos ir direktyvos, kuriomis reguliuojamas ir kontroliuojamas laukinių gyvūnų valdymas, žemės panaudojimas ir gamtos apsauga, studijų programoje turėtų būti aiškiau atspindimos (galbūt įtraukiant ir specialų kursą, skirtą jų taikymui nacionaliniu mastu). Daugelis ES programų ir kt. yra paminėtos tam tikruose kursų aprašuose, bet joms trūksta išsamumo. Egzaminų literatūros sąrašuose derėtų paminėti svarbius ES leidinius.

3. Ekspertų grupė ragina dėstytojus dėmesį skirti ir privatiems žemės savininkams, laukinių gyvūnų valdymui jų žemėse. Šios sritys dažnai būna siauresnės, kelia specifinių problemų ir suteikia ypatingų galimybių. Taip pat rekomenduojama bendradarbiauti su savivaldybėmis.
4. Rekomenduojama reguliariai organizuoti sistemingus mokytojų mokymus, susijusius su e. mokymusi, IT programų naudojimu, kalbėjimu ir rašymu užsienio kalbomis, statistinių metodų naudojimu ir kitais svarbiais įgūdžiais. Ekspertų grupė rekomenduoja dėstytojus ir toliau skatinti aktyviau dalyvauti tarptautiniuose moksliniuose ir plėtros projektuose. Fakultetui reikalinga pagalbos tarnyba arba kontaktinis asmuo mokslinių tyrimų, technologinės plėtros ir inovacijų klausimais.
5. Ekspertų grupė skatina fakultetą programoje aktyvinti tarptautinę veiklą, plėtojant dėstytojų ir studentų mainų programas su naujais užsienio šalių universitetais ir kitomis organizacijomis ir kviečiant atvykti daugiau kviestinių dėstytojų. Prie šios veiklos galėtų labai prisidėti užsienio kalbų kursai personalui.

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