



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Vilniaus dailės akademijos
**GRAFINIO DIZAINO PROGRAMOS (612W20002,
61202M108)**
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF GRAPHIC DESIGN (612W20002, 61202M108)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Vilnius Academy of Arts

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
2012

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	Grafinis dizainas
Valstybinis kodas	612W20002, 61202M108
Studijų sritis	menai
Studijų kryptis	dizainas
Studijų programos rūšis	universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinės (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	240
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	dizaino bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	Graphic design
State code	612W20002, 61202M108
Study area	arts
Study field	design
Kind of the study programme	university studies
Cycle of studies	first
Study mode (length in years)	full-time (4)
Scope of the study programme in credits	240
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	bachelor of design
Date of registration of the study programme	

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The external evaluation of the study programme was initiated by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania nominating the external assessment expert group formed by Professor Kieran Corcoran (DIT School Of Art, Ireland - team leader), Professor Bernhard E. Bürdek (Offenbach Art and Design University, Germany), Assoc. prof. dr. Virginija Daukantienė (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania), Professor Arvidz Endzins (Art Academy of Latvia, Latvia), Professor Pirjo Hirvonen (Aalto University School of Arts, Finland) and student representative Ms. Rasa Povilaitienė (Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania).

The evaluation of the study programme made use of the following documents: Law on Higher Education and Research; Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes; Order on External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes; Description of General Requirements for Bachelor's Study Programmes.

The basis for the evaluation of the study programme is the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), written in 2012, its annexes and the site visit of the expert group to Vilnius Academy of Arts (hereafter, VVA) on 30 April – 4 May, 2012. The visit incorporated all required meetings with different groups: the administrative staff, staff responsible for preparing the self-evaluation documents, teaching staff, students of all years of study, graduates, and employers. The expert group inspected various support services, examined students' final works and various other materials.

The previous evaluation of the programme BA in Design took place in 2008. At that time the programme allowed for specialisation in Graphic Design, Product Design and Environmental Design. The programme was designed to educate a graduate with a wide range of design and transferable knowledge and skills. Students followed a common curriculum until the end of Year 2 and then specialised in Graphic, Product or Environmental Design. The panel identified a problem with this structure in relation to the level of specialisation required by the industry and also identified a deficit of knowledge in the area of Design for Screen. In response to this report the VAA decided to set up a Dept of Graphic Design and develop a BA in Graphic Design with a single specialisation. The new programme began recruiting students in 2010 and will produce its first Graphic Design specialist graduates in 2014. The reformulation of the programme as a single specialisation will allow the programme to achieve the key aim of educating a graphic designer with a level of knowledge, competence and skill necessary to function as a professional graphic designer.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The aim of the BA in Graphic Design as defined in the SER is to educate highly qualified professional graphic designers with a broad range of skills and knowledge who can work as professionals in the design industry and the creative industries sector. The decision to offer a BA in Graphic Design with a single specialisation was taken in response to the recommendations of the previous evaluation panel and will allow graduates to work at a high professional level in the design for print sector and in e-publication and web design. Specifically, graduates of the programme will have knowledge of typography, illustration, photography, design for print and a wide range of skills in identity, web and publication design. They will also have a wide range of broader skills in the area of research, critical thinking and presentation and will have demonstrated an ability to work as a junior designer in a team environment.

The SER describes the General and Specific Learning Outcomes and competences in detail and also provides a grid which maps Programme Goals, Learning Outcomes with specific subjects or modules. This indicates that the Programme Team has a clear understanding of how aims, learning outcomes and academic requirements relate to each other. The programme aims

are very clearly stated and are well defined and are relevant to the professional world. The panel confirmed that the market demand for the new programme had been investigated and that the aims and learning outcomes are suitable and appropriate to the level of a BA in Graphic Design.

There are 3 specific observations about Aims and Learning Outcomes:

- There should be a reference to Digital Design or Design for Screen in the Aims and Learning Outcomes.
- There should be a reference to Sustainability and its importance for Graphic Design practice in the list of study outcomes.
- The Learning Outcome for printing techniques should be more specific and refer to screen printing, prepress etc.

2. Curriculum design

In response to the 2008 external evaluation report, the new programme has been launched as a single specialisation BA in Graphic Design. The first two years of the programme focus on the provision of fundamental design knowledge and skills such as Drawing, Composition and Colour but in Semester 3 and 4 students begin to take modules in Graphic Design and Digital Media. A special feature of the programme are 2 modules on Volumetric Design which gives the students a good grounding for packaging design and prepares them for the Exhibition Design module in semester 7. In Year 3 students focus more closely on multimedia and digital design as well as taking modules in Graphic Design. A wide range of Optional modules including Painting, Sculpture and Business Studies etc is available to students in semesters 5-8. The final year of the programme focuses on developing the practice of the student to a professional level and the final project is completed in the last semester.

The structure of the programme is much more relevant to the education of specialised graphic designers than the previous degree and the concentration on digital media in year 3 is to be welcomed. Data from the design industry has confirmed that graphic design graduates with additional knowledge of digital design have much better employment prospects.

In general the design of the curriculum in relation to the structure and sequencing of the core subjects is acceptable and the balance of core design subjects to general university subjects is good. The general foundation elements are limited to the first 3 semesters which means that students can begin to concentrate on the core graphic design subjects quite early on. This is a major improvement on the previous programme where students only began to study graphic design projects in Year 3. The types of modules offered as core are appropriate to a graphic design programme at this level and the linking of study subjects on an interdisciplinary principle is very positive innovation which certainly reflects recent professional developments.

Some observations about the curriculum:

- The relationship of Semester 7 to the final project may need to be reconsidered. The exhibition design module while valuable seems to be quite specific and prescriptive and may not be suitable for all students especially those who are interested in other areas such as Digital Design. It might also have an undue influence on the variety of themes chosen by students for their final project.
- It is not entirely clear in which semester Erasmus exchange can take place. This needs to be clearly indicated in the SER.
- It is important that students have an opportunity to explore the whole area of Design for Apps. This is important for the programme to reflect the latest technological and social developments.

- The briefs and projects in final year should be sufficiently challenging and complex and reflect the depth and complexity which is now possible because the programme is now a specialised BA in Graphic Design.

3. Teaching staff

The lecturing staff meets the necessary legal requirements and the qualifications of the staff are sufficient to ensure the learning outcomes are achieved. There are 6 core staff teaching on the programme including 2 professors, 1 associate professor and three lecturers. There are a number of vacancies at various levels in the VAA and it would be useful for the development of the programme if another specialist design lecturer was appointed. All lecturers have extensive professional experience in the design industry and are active in the Lithuanian Graphic Design Association at a leadership level. The Coordinator of the programme is a national delegate to ATYPI and has extensive experience as a manager in higher level education.

The visit of the panel confirmed that there is extensive support from the VAA for staff development and staff are supported in their research and participation in international conferences and design associations such as CUMULUS, ICOGRADA. A number of lecturers have been invited to teach and supervise creative workshops through the ERASMUS programme in Finland, Poland and France. A number of teachers also have an extensive exhibition practice and have participated in a number of group exhibitions in Finland, Germany and Korea.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The programme is based in the Centre for Design Innovation and has access to excellent facilities. There is dedicated studio space, workshops, exhibition areas and digital design facilities. Facilities include a layout studio, classrooms and methodological study room and office accommodation for the staff. Students have access to all facilities in the Centre for Design Innovation on a bookable basis. There are 2 digital design laboratories with 16 IMac computers, a number of scanners and the full range Adobe CS 5 software. This is sufficient to support the focus on Design for Screen in the new programme. In addition students have access to the facilities of the NIDA Art colony when they are working on their research-projecting project. The panel was informed of plans to develop the use of the NIDA Art colony by inviting foreign design lecturers and students to work with the students on the research projecting exercises. The programme also has access to all the other workshops in the main VAA building as required.

The visit confirmed that students and graduates were satisfied with how the facilities were managed and used. The students also have access to the superb library of the VAA. The visit confirmed that the library resources – books, journals and magazines – were adequate to the needs of a BA in Graphic Design. The investment by the VAA in these new facilities is to be highly commended.

5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The panel was informed about the changes to the Admission procedure which has resulted in a new unified Admission procedure. In the new procedure the process whereby individual skills and motivation for a particular programme were considered as important in determining admission to a programme have been downgraded. The panel supports the policy of the Academy whereby the portfolio of skills and the results of the interview should be counted when making an offer of a place to an applicant.

The department has a very active recruitment process and encourages applicants to visit various Open Days, public reviews of current students work and exhibitions organised by the department. These events provide intending students with an opportunity to meet staff and familiarise themselves with the type of activities and work which happens on the programme. The programme has also started to make extensive use of social media like Facebook as a recruitment tool. The department website is also used to promote the programme and all students can subscribe to the newsletter of the Centre for Design Innovation.

The SER provides good information on the retention rate for the new programme and notes that the dropout rate has been minimal and due to unforeseen circumstances. The SER provides some detail about students research and artistic activities but as the programme is only in its second year the range of activity is some what limited. During the visit the staff confirmed that this area of student activity would be encouraged and expanded and noted that the VAA can and does provide a high level of creative support to all its students on various programmes.

The SER provides a detailed breakdown of how students are assessed and the assignment of weightings to the 5 main assessment criteria. is very useful. It would be very useful if the programme team could look at how these criteria are mapped onto Learning Outcomes and they should ensure that assessment criteria are clearly indicated for each individual project brief.

The panel notes that as the new programme is only in its second year that there is no concrete information about graduates' performance. However in its meeting with graduates of the previous programme and with employers there was a very favourable reaction to the decision to create a specialised Graphic Design degree programme. This indicates that the graduates of the new programme will have the requisite knowledge and skills to allow them to find employment in the Lithuanian design industry.

A wide range of academic and social supports for students including important information about career possibilities, the Lithuanian Graphic Design Association, the Lithuanian Printers Association. There is also a formal process of consultation arranged by the Department for students about their academic progress and the success of these measures was confirmed during the visit when the panel met with current students.

The panel would like to make four observations about the assessment process:

- There should be a clearer explanation of how the accumulative grade relates to the final grade in the Final Project.
- There should be a clear description of the membership of the final assessment committee and their various roles.
- In the section on Requirements for the Final Project, there should be more detail on the procedure whereby it is decided that student may or may not submit and defend the final project.
- The arrangements for Erasmus exchange need to be detailed in the SER.

6. Programme management

The management of the programme is organised through the Programme Committee which at present has 7 members. The main functions of the Programme Committee are described in the SER as programme needs analysis, assessment of programme quality, renewal of the study programme, monitoring of relevant technological developments and dissemination of information about the programme. The Programme Committee accumulates data on the following areas: Students mobility, Academic Progress and Retention, compiles a list of Bachelor degree projects and defence projects, compiles a list of students' works in various public exhibitions and other events, data on graduates and statistical data on graduates' placement. The Programme Committee is also responsible for Internal Quality Assurance and the following measures are in place: regular discussions about methodological assignments,

evaluation of study goals and outcomes, use of lecturers from other programmes and other stakeholders to comment on degree projects and public exhibition of students work.

Other duties carried out by the Programme committee include the evaluation of teaching of general university subjects, monitoring the implementation of the study programme in general, discussing and monitoring quality improvement and looking at teaching quality and content of the programme.

All stakeholders – students, graduates and employers—confirmed during the visit that they are involved in the annual quality assessment of the programme in a formal way as outlined in the SER. During the visit some employers recommended that the programme team consider the introduction of an internship module.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Programme Committee should look at the development of new projects around Design for Apps and Interactive Media.
2. The Programme Committee should actively ensure that the briefs and projects in the final year are complex and challenging and reflect the depth and complexity which is now possible on a specialised Graphic Design programme.
3. The Programme Committee should examine the feasibility of introducing more projects which involve teamwork on to the programme.
4. The Programme Team should look at the possibility of introducing an Internship module.

IV. SUMMARY

The Programme Committee must look immediately at the development of new projects and briefs in the area of Design for Apps and Interactive Media.

The Programme Committee must ensure that the briefs and projects in the final year are complex, challenging and innovative and reflect the depth and complexity which is now possible to achieve on a specialised BA in Graphic Design.

The Self Evaluation Report and supporting documentation are very comprehensive and professionally produced. In particular, the mapping of Learning Outcomes with the content of individual modules is a very welcome addition to the programme documentation.

The response of the Programme Committee to the 2008 evaluation has been exemplary and all of the key recommendations have been implemented. The development of specialised BA in Graphic design is a very positive development.

There is clear evidence that the Programme Committee and Department are committed to a process of change and improvement and that the procedures and mechanisms for the development of the quality of the BA in Graphic Design are functioning properly.

The improvement to assessment procedures is a welcome development.

The recruitment policies of the Department are to be commended.

There is a good relationship between students and lecturers.

The involvement of graduates and alumni on the programme is commendable and should be further developed.

There is a good relationship with the social partners, employers and the Lithuanian design industry.

The facilities available to the programme are very good.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Graphic design* (state code – 612W20002, 61202M108) of Vilnius academy of arts is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation 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	4
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	19

*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.

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