STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

V. A. GRAIČIŪNO AUKŠTOSIOS VADYBOS MOKYKLOS

STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *LOGISTIKOS VERSLO VADYBA* (653N18004)

VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

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EVALUATION REPORT

OF STUDY PROGRAMME

***LOGISTICS BUSINESS MANAGEMENT* (653N18004)**

at V. A. GRAICIUNAS SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

Vilnius
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	*Logistikos verslo vadyba*
Valstybinis kodas	653N18004
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Verslas
Studijų programos rūšis	Koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3), Ištęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Verslo profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2011-06-22

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INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	*Logistics Business Management*
State code	653N18004
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Business
Kind of the study programme	College Studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3), Part-time (4)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Business
Date of registration of the study programme	2011-06-22

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I. INTRODUCTION

V. A. Graičiūnas School of Management (AVM) is a- type, non-profit higher education institution established in 1993 for the purpose of providing 3-year education programmes in the disciplines of Business, Tourism and Office Administration, under the regulations of the Law of Professional Education and Training in Lithuania. The most recent international evaluation of the institution took place in October 2012, whereby AVM was granted full accreditation until the year 2018. The College has campuses in two major cities in Lithuania - Kaunas (since 1993) and Vilnius (since 2010). AVM provides higher education programmes, including seven at Professional Bachelor degree level, and a wide range of professional lifelong learning opportunities in business, logistics, administration, marketing, tourism and law-related areas. Courses to enhance the knowledge and update the skills of professional civil servants also form part of the portfolio on offer. The College Council, Academic Council and Student Council form part of the governance of the institution, with the Director having overall responsibility for management in terms of implementing strategic aims based on the mission, vision and values.

The duration of the Professional Bachelor in Logistics Business Management degree is 3 years for full-time students (and 4 years for part-time students in the Kaunas centre). The programme, which attracts a total of 180 ECTS, corresponds to and is delivered in accordance with all regulatory requirements. As the commencement date coincided with the 2010/2011 academic year, the first cohort of graduates will not be conferred until summer 2014. Enrolment in the 2013-2014 academic year consisted of 71 full-time and an equal number of part-time students in the Kaunas campus, with a total of 66 students registered in the Vilnius campus. The programme is offered only on a full-time basis in the Vilnius Centre.

Prior to the programme evaluation by the external panel, a review group was selected by the College to produce a Self-Assessment Report (SAR). In addition to its official membership, other Faculty staff, students and social partners also took part in the internal process which involved group discussions, surveys and other mechanisms seeking to explore views on programme implementation and development issues. The programme, as delivered in Vilnius is the subject of this report. A visit to the Vilnius campus was undertaken by the panel on 23 April 2014.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims are based on academic and professional requirements, including the needs of the labour market in terms of providing support towards the development of the region. This undergraduate degree has been designed in accordance with the requirements of the Lithuanian National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The programme title, learning outcomes, curriculum content, and qualification award of professional Bachelor of Business correspond with the Level 6 standard in higher education. Based on the latest developments within the programme, as well as the labour market demand for logistics business graduates, the original Logistics Management degree was re-titled as a Logistics Business Management programme in 2012, with the learning outcomes and curriculum amended accordingly.

While the overall aims of the programme are geared towards educating and training logistics business management specialists, there is a need for greater clarity regarding the focus of this degree. Alternative interpretations of its purpose present themselves. Is it designed to produce graduates with specialist logistics knowledge and competencies or graduates with general business competencies which include knowledge and skills in logistics? Different views regarding its main focus would appear to exist amongst stakeholders. The learning outcomes have been formulated in accordance with legal and methodological recommendations which define both academic and professional qualification requirements for study opportunities of this nature. Labour market needs were taken into account in the determination of the learning outcomes, which were discussed internally and externally before finalisation. The views of curriculum working groups, as well as expert opinion from representatives of EU-partner higher education institutions, were considered as part of the developmental process. The learning outcomes are communicated to students during their first lectures with academic staff and are also publicly accessible on the College website. The SAR contains more learning outcomes than appear on the website. Consistency in the presentation of such information to all audiences is recommended.

Although the learning outcomes have been designed on the basis of well-established methodology, there is scope for refinement and improvement. The programme, and some subjects within the curriculum (e.g. Business to Business has a total of 18 learning outcomes), would benefit from a reduction in the number of learning outcomes. The 15 competencies listed

for student attainment are associated with a total of 54 learning outcomes. This aspect should be revised in order to build a more coherent curriculum and reflect best practice in the formulation of learning goals. An excessive number of learning outcomes can lead to a situation where it becomes difficult for both staff and students to identify priorities.

Learning outcomes at subject level could be defined more effectively. The use of terminology such as "to know" should be amended to reference what the student can do with this knowledge, e.g. analyse, assess, discuss, demonstrate, and evaluate. Some learning goals, as currently presented, could be regarded as too ambitious. For example, the expectation that the student will be capable of achieving an objective such "to identify key EU economic problems and their solutions" or "to analyse, evaluate, model and manage the supply chain and logistics system" seems overambitious, particularly when considered in the context of the time available for teaching the related subject material. Other samples along similar lines can be identified within subjects across the curriculum. The high-level learning outcomes for the complete programme are well written, but the correlation between these and the learning outcomes for the subjects/modules is not always readily apparent. The views of social partners would be important in any revision of learning outcomes along the lines indicated in this report. On a similar theme, benchmarking of best international practices in the field of programme design would help to inform decision making in this area.

2. Curriculum design

The Logistics Business Management programme under review encompasses the three main competence domains of a Professional Bachelor degree, i.e. generic, business management, and programme specific competencies. The curriculum has been designed to meet legal requirements in this and other respects. The content is structured around modules, each attracting 15 ECTS on the basis of containing 3 subjects. This approach is aimed at ensuring links between subjects, a dimension which the College recognises can be strengthened still further. This approach is commendable, as it opens up greater opportunities for interdisciplinary tasks, projects, and other forms of cooperation in the acquisition and application of knowledge and skills. An ECTS 'Competence Matrix' has been developed to illustrate connections between curriculum content and those student competencies which are in the process of being developed. However, it is noted that the division of modules into individual subjects places a burden on the student, in terms of workload, learning outcomes and, particularly, the assessment process. Movement towards formulating learning outcomes and the associated assessment at modular level could be

considered. In this context, academic staff recognise the need for more integrative assignments to enrich the learning process. This approach should be encouraged. It is also apparent that in many instances members of the teaching staff team have insufficient time to cover syllabus content to the level and depth required. There is also scope for greater vigilance in monitoring the self-learning activities of students throughout the programme.

The curriculum is extensive and capable of ensuring that programme learning outcomes are achieved. However, its scope and content are open to further improvement in order to reflect factors such as: trends and changes in the business environment; the demands of the labour market for graduates with a good knowledge of foreign languages; and, the ability of graduates to recognise the need for, and the implications of, change and innovation management within companies and other organisations. A stronger and more relevant curriculum content could be achieved by replacing some general subjects with those which relate directly to areas such as business strategy, management and administration, the logistics sector, and logistics management specifics. It is surprising that subjects such as Management, Business Law, and Entrepreneurship have been assigned only 3 credits each. The curriculum includes subjects which are deemed to be mandatory, alternative, or elective. A strong case can be made to have alternative modules such as Business Ethics and Quality Management re-classified as compulsory, while similar-type arguments could be used in relation to a desirable mandatory status for certain elective subjects such as Export/Import and EU Economics.

The current sequencing of subjects and their location within modules should also be reviewed. Some subjects regarded as prerequisites need to be repositioned instead of being delivered in the same semester as the subject for which they are expected to provide the foundation. Evidence in this respect references the Economics and Entrepreneurship courses/subjects, both of which form part of the Fundamentals of Business module. The subject Entrepreneurship would probably have a greater impact on the learning process if it were to be delivered after the student has acquired knowledge and developed skills related to general aspects of business management and logistics. Another example of the need for a re-sequencing of subjects is the Course Project (second semester) which requires the student to produce a financial plan even though the Accounting and Finance module is not taught until the fourth semester. There appears to be some discrepancies between the information as provided in the academic calendar and the course descriptors regarding when certain subjects are delivered. In terms of the location of courses/subjects within modules, Business to Business (B2B) is currently under the Trade Logistics module, while its content is more closely related to Marketing. The content of subjects

and/or modules is not always consistent with the type/level of studies and the learning outcomes which have been determined e. g. the course in Finance Management covers an excessive number of topics in a very limited time and the syllabus is not fully in harmony with the prescribed learning outcomes. The volume of topics in this and other subjects should be reduced to ensure a more in-depth study of each, thereby enhancing the development of students' analytical, evaluative, problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Study subject themes and content are seen to be partly repetitive. The subject Fundamentals of Marketing includes the topic 'marketing research', but an entire syllabus on Marketing Research is offered to students within the same Marketing module; the Business to Business syllabus is aimed mainly at covering business to business marketing, and some topics such as pricing, market segmentation, marketing research, and marketing communication, overlap with the content of the Fundamentals of Marketing subject. A reference to repetitive coverage of supply-chain related topics in curriculum delivery was made to the panel and the validity of this student perception might be explored in future reviews of the programme. Students expressed the wish to have some subjects delivered through English, and they also reinforced the relevance of other foreign languages, including Russian / German / Spanish / French. Such an initiative would help in promoting employment prospects and career progression possibilities for the graduates and facilitate the internationalisation of the programme.

Work placements and internships are offered to students during the second and third years, respectively. This experience is valued by them for the opportunities which it presents to integrate theory and practice. However, in certain cases, the quality of practical placements could be improved by assigning to the student specific company-based tasks and problems requiring solutions. This would help to confirm the specific learning outcomes associated with this practical dimension of the curriculum. Further links with social partners could be developed by inviting employers to present real-life projects into the classroom. This would enrich the learning process and strengthen connections between the future graduate and potential employers. 'Career Days' with a strong employer presence would help to serve the same purpose, as would the greater involvement of external practitioners in both delivering selected subject topics and telling about their experience and expectations when recruiting graduates.

The subject Business Law is delivered under the Logistics Management and IT umbrella; while it would appear that the study courses in Freight Transportation and Passenger Transportation are

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presented jointly as a single subject, thereby reducing the academic hours assigned. Subjects such as Economics, can be regarded as somewhat theoretical in nature and lacking the requisite more applied character, in accordance with study field and professional degree requirements. A stronger emphasis on 'Selling' is suggested for inclusion in the marketing-related content, as is a greater focus on hazard analysis and the transportation of dangerous substances within the freight transportation segment of the curriculum.

Alternatives and elective courses/subjects, sometimes with a variation in credit weightings, form part of the curriculum. However, the range is limited and it would appear that decisions regarding what will be offered are at the discretion of programme management. As already indicated, certain subjects currently defined as electives or alternatives should be given mandatory status within study field modules. The list of elective courses might be revised to reflect and relate more closely to the programme learning outcomes. Some elective content, including Customs Procedures, Export and Import Operations, Transport and Fair Trade Law, might be re-designated for delivery as part of study field modules or included amongst topics within subjects belonging to the particular study field. In this respect, it is advisable to consider the importance of Green Logistics, Reverse Logistics, After-Sales Logistics and Disposal Logistics.

The curriculum generally and the quality of studies could be improved if students were given more assignments requiring real-life problem analysis and solution, thereby enabling them to gain a greater insight into the external business environment. There is a necessity to ensure that the (excessive) volume of self-study hours identified for students as part of the ECTS process are monitored so that progress within this dimension of the learning experience is connected to learning outcomes. The College is commended for introducing blended learning opportunities to facilitate those students who are unable to attend classes for different reasons, sometimes connected to changes in the economic and social environment of Lithuania. The existence of a blended learning system enhances the flexible approach towards the learning process promoted by the College, thereby helping to meet the needs of adult learners and of those who study in conjunction with their work. Returning briefly to programme content, consideration might be given to providing an extended coverage of business strategy, services marketing, and contract law. The inclusion of a subject such as 'Learning to Learn' can be of great benefit in helping the student to make the transition to higher education.

3. Teaching staff

The programme is provided by staff whose qualifications meet all Lithuanian legal requirements. The number of teachers and their qualifications are deemed adequate for the purpose of ensuring that the learning outcomes are achieved. Teaching staff structures and personnel are in compliance with the formal requirements of the Ministry of Education: 21% of lecturers have Doctoral degrees (the minimum requirement is 10%); and 83% of the Faculty have at least three years' practical experience in the relevant subject area (the requirement is 50%). Teachers involved in curriculum delivery hold positions of: Lecturer (79%); and Associate Professor (21%). Practitioners are involved in teaching aspects of the curriculum. The average experience of the lecturers in pedagogical work and their willingness to implement new teaching/learning methods was apparent in discussions with the panel. Changes in Faculty composition take place mainly in relation to factors such as: qualification requirements in the context of curriculum revisions; internationalisation and professional development issues; amended quality assurance procedures; and feedback obtained from programme delivery and performance evaluation surveys which discover the student perspective. As part of the internal self-assessment of the programme, the College has identified the need for a greater volume of survey feedback data.

AVM promotes teachers' professional progress by encouraging participation in various developmental initiatives and involvement in project activities, curriculum enhancement and internationalisation, assessment of attainments, and the modernisation of teaching/learning methods. Teaching staff mobility (under Erasmus), as well as participation in professional and business events (conferences, seminars, meetings, and discussions), and involvement with innovative academic and education management projects represent further opportunities for the ongoing professional development of academic staff. However, there is no clear evidence of personal development plans having been devised for individual teachers, or of formal collaboration amongst them for the purpose of ensuring a more integrated approach to programme design and delivery. In order to further enhance teaching quality, there is scope for formally coordinated activities between members of the academic staff team. This should result in cross-disciplinary links between modules and help to avoid any potential repetition of topics under different subject headings. The introduction of integrated assignments involving the measurement of learning outcomes across more than one subject, within or between modules, would enable staff to enrich the assessment component of the learning process for students. A

greater emphasis on communication between teachers from the Kaunas and Vilnius centres should be encouraged. Taking into consideration the fact that internationalisation of studies is given a high priority by the College, academic staff are strongly advised to develop the ability to prepare materials in English and to enhance their linguistic competence so as to facilitate teaching through the medium of the language. As a positive factor in this overall context, it is noted that AVM has been involved in two ESF projects on the modernisation and internationalisation of programmes over the period 2011-2013. In the context of this degree, a wider staff usage of available resources, such as Moodle, is recommended. In general terms, the levels of staff and teacher qualifications are open to further enhancement in line with curriculum modernisation and efforts geared towards the internationalisation of studies.

AVM is engaged in three types of research activities: academic research; applied research; and, pedagogical development and innovation. Academic staff research activities could be extended and expanded as part of a planned strategy involving a commitment towards the personal and professional development of each teacher. The realm of additional research should encompass a fuller participation by lecturers in events such as national and international conferences, the delivery of scientific papers, and the production of articles for publication in journals related to particular fields of expertise. Support and incentives provided by the College are essential in attempts to strengthen research capacity and related outcomes within the institution.

4. Facilities and learning resources

As mentioned above, the College has campuses in both Kaunas and Vilnius. It would appear that collaboration between both branches could be developed further, as part of overall programme development strategy. The study premises in Vilnius consists of rented, historic buildings, and there is scope for improvement in the provision of WiFi and faster internet connections, as well as photocopying facilities for students. A social area for students is also required. It is understood that amenities and resources generally will be enhanced significantly as a result of management plans to establish a new campus building in the city in the near future. Facilities are generally adequate and fit-for-purpose, considering the average number of students enrolled on the programme. The infrastructure for studies is satisfactory, with the education process being supported by the necessary equipment. The quantity of computers is sufficient for the student population, and new IT solutions have been introduced (an N-computing system has been integrated into computer classes in both Kaunas and Vilnius). There is a need for the provision

and integration of the most up-to-date and 'best practice' training software related to the logistics study field.

The College has relevant databases of academic literature for this Logistics Business Management programme, as well as access to the Lithuania Academic Library Network resources and services. Ensuring the necessary financial support to sustain a database for use in logistics and to develop learning resources and the library has to be a priority for academic management. Reading lists for some subjects contain outdated publications e.g. in the subject Logistics Business IT, the textbook 'Management Information' was published in 1991, while some reading material linked to the study of Entrepreneurship dates back to the years 1991 and 1995. For the benefit of students, the latest sources of literature and information resources should be included on reading lists as part of course/subject descriptions. The book resources related to logistics could be strengthened in the library.

As a general comment, it can be stated that teaching materials, such as textbooks, periodical publications and databases are adequate and readily accessible. While the Virtual Learning Environment 'Moodle' has been introduced as the platform for teaching, learning, and programme content management, this resource is not utilised to the fullest capacity by students, teachers and programme administration. The availability of Moodle is much appreciated by the students, and its features should be exploited to the maximum possible extent in order to enhance the learning process and compensate for the limited amount of teaching hours available for curriculum delivery. To facilitate the learning process, teachers deploy a range of pedagogical approaches, including class discussions, case study analyses, individual and group projects, and student presentations. The College has appropriate arrangements in place for students to gain practical work experience. Placements are organised in logistics companies, business enterprises, and business-related organisations, in accordance with cooperation agreements signed with Chambers of Commerce, The Lithuanian Employers Confederation, The Lithuanian SME Association and other relevant bodies. In this context, ongoing vigilance on the part of programme management is required to ensure that each internship meets the required standards and that the learning outcomes associated with this element of the programme are achieved.

5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The student admission procedures are well founded. The programme is open to applicants who have graduated from secondary school and are at least 18 years old. Student entry is organised by

the Lithuanian General Admissions Organisation (LAMA BPO) as a single channel admissions system. AVM approves the admission regulations for each academic year and these are registered on the online national system. Institutional regulations are harmonised to accord with national admission requirements and procedures and also with institutional policy and specific programme requirements. Prospective students can find information regarding the admission policy on the AVM website.

The administration of the study process ensures that programme provision is adequate for the achievement of the stated learning outcomes. The Department of Academic Affairs is responsible for all aspects of study process implementation, associated processes and procedures, and the maintenance of quality assurance. Curriculum delivery is organised on the basis of an academic calendar each year, and details related to the implementation of studies are outlined in a main document entitled 'AVM Academic Regulations'. Software for the management of academic affairs is deployed by the College. An academic year consists of an Autumn semester (16 weeks) and a Spring semester (16 weeks). For full-time studies, the total duration is six semesters. As indicated, practice placements are undertaken in both second year (15 ECTS) and third year (15 ECTS) of the full-time programme. Studies are completed after the student's performance has been deemed satisfactory across all subjects/courses and following his/her successful defence of the final thesis. As final-year students were engaged in external practical work experience at the time of the site visit by the panel, it was not possible to obtain their views in relation to the preparation of the thesis element of the programme, within which the inclusion of a self-reflection section for completion by the student is recommended.

The development of basic research skills is one of the significant competencies within Professional Bachelor degree studies, and this feature is regarded as an integral part of the curriculum. Research competence is expected in students' academic papers, project work, examinations, practice placement and internship reports, the final thesis and other assignments. The nature and level of research demonstrated by students throughout the assessment process is a key factor in determining the marks to be allocated by the teacher. However, based on the sample of work presented to the panel, students do not always demonstrate the research competence needed at this level of studies. Some completed assignments reviewed suggest that students are not fully utilising the academic resources available. In such cases, the granting of a mark of 9 out of a maximum of 10 is difficult to defend. The undertaking of the requisite academic research would strengthen the analytical nature of student work and help to justify the awarding of high marks. Individual projects and assignments should demand that students use

and analyse a range of reference materials, as well as acknowledging the sources in the work produced. Students need a greater incentive to consult more academic references, and the extent of such initiative ought to be reflected in the marks allocated.

The Department for Studies Development and International Relations has responsibility for internationalisation activities, with a main focus on: internationalisation of the curriculum; mobility of students; and Faculty and staff participation in international networks. There have been no incoming students or visiting academic staff involvement in this programme over recent years. During the panel meeting with management it was stated that strategic steps are under way towards further internationalisation of studies for the purpose of significantly increasing student and staff mobility, as well as internship possibilities abroad. The College is advised to implement increased efforts to attract international students by providing study opportunities in English and organising internships for them in foreign or Lithuanian companies. Clear goals and associated key performance indicators (KPIs) should form an integral part of the future development of all aspects of this programme, including an enhanced emphasis on the internationalisation process.

The College delivers academic support across many forums, including the provision of a 'Student Guide', the availability of student counselling on a daily basis, and the organisation of consultation time to enable students to meet teachers outside of timetabled class hours. Financial assistance is available for disadvantaged students via the provision of social security grants. Depending on academic achievement, those who are eligible may receive scholarships after each semester results and a refund of the tuition fee after a full year of studies. There are particular grants available on entry to studies; it is possible to apply for loans for education purposes; while students with disabilities (working capacity of up to 45%) may apply for financial benefit. The student enrolment in AVM Vilnius has been as follows: 2011- 51 students; 2012- 47 students; and 2013- 42 students. As already stated, the number of registered students is 66, the majority (60%) of whom are female.

The assessment system used to measure student performance is clear and unambiguous, with cumulative assessment forming the methodological basis for the scoring of achievement. Students have practicums, assignments and project work evaluated as part of the course/subject, and the other element is a theoretical or practical examination. The assessment criteria vary in both volume and depth at the level of different subjects, and best practice would suggest that a uniform and integrated policy should be adopted towards the overall assessment process. For some subjects the assessment system is not detailed, and the testing of students' knowledge,

skills and competencies does not seem to be linked to subject learning outcomes (e.g. Distribution Channels). By way of contrast, subjects such as International Law evidence assessment criteria which are linked to the expected learning outcomes. Attendance is obligatory for full-time students, with the approved exception of those in employment who may be assigned an individual study schedule. There is a trend towards more students opting for blended learning, thus limiting their opportunity to benefit from class discussions. Devising ways to overcome this deficit is a matter for academic management.

AVM fosters and encourages integrity, academic ethics and professional behaviour as an integral part of student development, with particular reference to conduct within the assessment process and overall preparation for careers as future professionals. Academic fraud or any form of cheating during studies is not tolerated. Information about policy and procedures in the promotion of ethical behaviour is published in the Student Code of Conduct and is also available for students and the wider community via the Moodle platform. The anti-plagiarism policy emphasis by the College helps to reinforce the behaviour expected of future specialists in the area of business and logistics management.

Based on ESF funding (2012-2014), five higher education institutions in Lithuania have commenced the dissemination of methodological and procedural guidelines for the introduction of a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy. The objective is to acknowledge the student/prospective student who has already met learning outcomes associated with a particular subject(s) by granting an exemption(s) based upon a comprehensive and objective evaluation of each individual case. In this context, AVM is currently leading a network of seven higher education institutions from three different regions (Kaunas, Vilnius and Klaipėda). This approach can be helpful in attracting new students with professional experience, thereby contributing towards an improved learning environment by bringing diverse experience into the classroom for the benefit of the entire study process.

6. Programme management

Responsibilities for decision making and the implementation and monitoring of the study process have been allocated. There is a division of responsibilities for decision-making, implementation, monitoring and development under Statute, as well as in accordance with the College's Development Plan, Quality Manual and Academic Regulations documentation. Information and data on the implementation of the programme are collected and analysed. For example, statistics

related to students leaving the Logistics Business Management programme over the last three years (2011-2013) are collected and assessed. The most frequent reasons for dropping out are academic failure, financial difficulties, emigration and other personal reasons. To compensate for student attrition, a stronger marketing and promotional campaign focus is needed. The use of intensive public relations approaches and related technologies to reach a larger number of potential students is advocated.

The effective management and administration of the programme would be enhanced by the adoption of suggestions and recommendations contained in this report. It is highly advisable that the outcomes of internal and external evaluations of the programme are used for improvement, and that the review process is complemented by benchmarking the degree against other internationally recognised Professional Bachelor opportunities in this field of studies. College administration is planning the development of joint/triple degree programmes with foreign partners. This initiative will help to ensure further internationalisation of curricula and may result in the recruitment of additional students. At the same time, it could facilitate the implementation of an 'internationalisation at home' process for those students who, for different reasons, cannot afford to study abroad for a period. The internationalisation of studies can be reinforced by inviting foreign academics, motivating students to take part in Erasmus exchange schemes, and inviting business professionals working in Lithuania to become guest lecturers.

Programme administration organises and monitors the teaching/learning process, in addition to making recommendations to the Academic Board on study performance and the general quality of education and training provided. Representatives from the Student Council participate in the main processes of programme delivery and development. However, there is insufficient formal communication among academic staff to achieve a more integrated approach to programme delivery. There is also a need, as already identified by programme management, for closer cooperation with students and teachers in the best interests of continuous improvement. The clear determination of terms of reference and membership criteria for the proposed Study Programme Committee is essential towards maintaining and developing the quality of studies. Ensuring the effective working of such a committee should be a priority for academic management. The College's plans in this respect deserve maximum support.
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Social partners were involved in programme design and the availability of their feedback on a regular basis is particularly important in any assessment of service quality. The potential for cooperation with social partner representatives needs to be fully realised, thus supporting

management in the ongoing development of studies. Management could also provide further assistance in finding practical placements for students and in offering career guidance services, such as Career Days, to help the future graduates in finding employment related to the qualification. Programme delivery processes are defined in the documents relating to the quality assurance system. The areas covered include curriculum development, admissions, programme implementation processes, practical training, final evaluation and career development. In the future, staff development plans should become part of the total quality assurance system as well.

As members of the external evaluation panel, we wish to thank all concerned for the welcoming manner in which we were received by the College. We are also grateful for the positive and participative approach adopted by stakeholders in the various discussions conducted on the occasion of the site visit.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

As the degree programme is provided in both Kaunas and Vilnius centres, two separate external evaluation reports are being produced by the panel. The content of both reports is similar, although not identical. Consequently, any suggestion or recommendation not repeated in both documents should be considered in the context of overall programme quality at both venues. The objective of the panel has been to provide a constructive review which will serve to add value to the ongoing developmental process associated with this professional Bachelor degree opportunity. Each report should be regarded as a unified document containing proposals and recommendations under the different headings, without these being confined exclusively to the current section entitled 'Recommendations'. The following is a summary of earlier suggestions:

1. Learning outcomes at programme and subject levels should be reviewed in order to clarify what students can achieve and to guarantee consistency and integration between programme aims, subject learning outcomes and curriculum content. Benchmarking of the programme against the best internationally recognised degrees in this field of studies would be highly advisable, as would an initiative to strengthen learning outcomes on a modular basis, thereby resulting in a more integrated learning experience for students.

2. Programme management is encouraged to reduce the overall number of learning outcomes and to place an increased emphasis on the determination of higher-level learning outcomes, thereby encouraging critical thinking inherent in the use of terminology such as 'evaluate', 'decide', 'recommend' etc. Cases where the individual subject assessment system is not detailed or linked with the particular syllabus learning outcomes should be avoided.

3. As stated already, scope exists for the redesign of aspects of the curriculum whereby some subjects currently listed as alternatives/electives would be granted mandatory status. In terms of syllabus content, fewer topics and a more in-depth coverage of each would enhance the learning process and the development of students' analytical skills. Each subject could be reviewed in order to ensure the appropriate balance between theory and practice. A wider range of electives linked to the study field should be provided. The list of recommended/suggested literature evidences a need for some updating, while the utilisation of the latest logistics software would enrich curriculum delivery.

4. Further internationalisation of studies can be achieved by increasing student and academic staff mobility, as well as through the provision of internships abroad. Exploring opportunities for 'internationalisation at home' via the involvement of foreign students who would elaborate on business cultures and practices in their native countries could be considered in this context. An expanded use of international languages, especially

English, for programme delivery (and throughout the education process) would increase employment prospects and career development opportunities for graduates.

5. The planned role and functioning of the proposed Study Programme Committee needs particular attention in order to strengthen its contribution and impact on programme management and the quality of studies.

6. Social partners can make a vital contribution in higher education provision, and this resource can be availed of more effectively in different ways to be determined by academic management. Examples of potential involvement could include employers providing real-life projects/problems for students who would then be assigned the relevant tasks for completion, under teacher supervision, thereby expanding their participation in research and increasing their capacity to relate theory and practice. 'Career Days' with participation from employers, consultants, labour market representatives and social partners could be organised by the College to foster and facilitate employment prospects for graduates.

7. A long-term development plan for this degree needs to be drawn up by setting clear goals and key performance indicators. All stakeholders have a role to play in this process, thereby ensuring the alignment of the planned strategy with the vision and mission of the institution, the expectations of the students/graduates, and the realities of the labour market.

8. The ongoing maintenance of programme quality necessitates some additional resources, as referenced earlier, while a formal staff development plan based on the College's identification of individual training needs would help to ensure that teachers remain up to date in their specialist areas. The acquisition of new premises is expected to enhance learning facilities and resources.

9. Further marketing of the programme, in line with existing plans, is also recommended. In this respect, the promotion of its unique selling point will be significant, as will the impact of the first cohort of graduates arriving on the labour market later this year. As ambassadors for the programme and the first holders of the qualification, these graduates can make a significant contribution towards influencing perceptions regarding this study programme.

IV. SUMMARY

Amongst the positive feature of this degree programme are the following:

- A comprehensive, relevant curriculum delivered by teaching staff with enthusiasm for ongoing professional development;

- The use of the Moodle virtual learning environment, together with a move towards module integration. In this context, a blended learning approach is being implemented as a response to the changing trend for more individual studies;

- Ongoing efforts to promote honesty and integrity amongst students and to support ethical behaviour. An anti-plagiarism policy is in place, as well as study content such as business ethics and social responsibility for the purpose of preparing responsible professionals and citizens;

- The goodwill of social partners. This is readily apparent and links in this area should be formalised to enable such key representatives to make a significant contribution to student learning.

- The recognition by academic administration that the programme is comparatively new and that efforts to embed quality can be enhanced still further.

Included in areas recommended for further improvement are the following:

- The number of learning outcomes associated with the curriculum is excessive and the link between learning outcomes and programme content is not always apparent.

- There is no evidence of benchmarking this programme against similar degree opportunities offered by international peers, while the potential for the internationalisation of the degree has yet to be fully realised.

- There are limited alternative and elective courses/subjects available for students.

- The administration of the study programme is expected to be enhanced by the establishment of the Study Programme Committee and a greater level of participation from social partners.

- The long-term development plan for this degree, including the establishment of key performance indicators, has not yet been fully implemented. It is anticipated that this plan will include a formal staff development policy and increased marketing efforts to promote the programme.

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V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Logistics Business Management* (state code – 653N18004) at V. A. Graiciunas School of Management, Vilnius Department 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	2
3.	Teaching staff	2
4.	Facilities and learning resources	2
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment (student admission, study process student support, achievement assessment)	3
6.	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	2
	Total:	**14**

*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:
John Cusack

Grupės nariai:
Team members:
John Davis

Prof. dr. Tatjana Volkova

Marius Pukelis

Darius Vizbaras

Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras