



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

V. A. GRAIČIŪNO AUKŠTOSIOS VADYBOS MOKYKLOS
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TURIZMAS IR SVETINGUMAS*
(653N83002)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF STUDY PROGRAMME
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY (653N83002)
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	<i>Turizmas ir svetingumas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	653N83002
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Turizmas ir poilsis
Studijų programos rūšis	Koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3), Iššęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Turizmo profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2003-05-29

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Tourism and Hospitality</i>
State code	653N83002
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Tourism and leisure
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 in Tourism
Date of registration of the study programme	29/05/2003

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I. INTRODUCTION

V.A.Graiciunas School of Management (hereinafter AVM) is a higher education college established in Kaunas in 1993. The college has two campuses, one in Kaunas established in 1993 and a second campus established in Vilnius in 2010. AVM offers Professional Bachelor degrees in Tourism and Hospitality in both Kaunas and Vilnius, the former commencing in 1993 and the latter in 2010. While there are features which are shared between campuses, this review panel will largely treat the two campuses as separate entities. The offering in Kaunas is a Professional Bachelor degree in Tourism and Hospitality while the programme in Vilnius is also a Professional Bachelor degree in Tourism and Hospitality. While the two programmes are very similar, the panel will evaluate the programmes separately and will provide two separate reports on the programmes.

Evaluation Team

The chairman of the team: Prof. Frank McMahon, former Director of Academic Affairs and Director of the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland); Zita Krukonyte, Head of Human Resources at Holiday Inn and Ecotel, Vilnius (representative of the social partners); Alina Katunian, Professor, Tourism Department, Vilnius College/University of Applied Sciences; Ass. Prof. Claudia Moessenlechner, Head of the Language Center at Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) (Austria); Detlev Remy, Programme Manager, Les Roches International School of Hotel Management, (Switzerland) and Darius Vizbaras, Vilnius College (student representative).

The procedure of the evaluation

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) of the first cycle programme Tourism and Hospitality was made available to the expert team in February 2014, a month before the planned visit to the College. All the members of the team examined the SAR individually and contributed to the preparation of a preliminary report which indicated strengths and weaknesses and discussion points. The team obtained further information during the site visit on 19 March, 2014 when members met senior management, programme coordinators, teachers, students, graduates and social partners and viewed the facilities available to the programme. After the visit the panel held a meeting to discuss the contents of the evaluation report and agreed upon a numerical evaluation of every section of the evaluation. The expert team amended a draft report and their comments were integrated into one document by the chairman of the team.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The programme aims and learning outcomes are clear and publicly accessible, however more visibility is needed, in the interest of both the institution and society, to have the strong identity of this particular study programme further developed.

Competences up to requirements are divided in the rational way into Generic competences, Business Management competences and Tourism professional competences. The weakness of the programme is that the programme doesn't suitably meet the needs of the labour market. It should be noted that social partners are not aware of the learning outcomes. Stronger relations with Tourism field social partners (business and governmental) are needed, getting the feedback about the changes in the international and internal tourism markets, and changes in the needs of employers.

Generally, the aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the Professional Bachelor degree which is the qualification offered.

In 2012 the previous Tourism programme was re-designed to the Tourism and Hospitality programme with the learning outcomes and the competences formed accordingly. It should be noted that not enough attention in the programme is paid to hospitality subjects, which makes it not fully compatible with name of the programme. A possible solution for this case can be found by dividing the programme into specializations, where one can be devoted to hospitality.

2. Curriculum design

The curriculum design meets the legal requirements for a Professional Bachelor degree e.g. 180 ECTS credits, study field subjects amount to 165 credits, 15 credits for the final thesis (not less than 9 required), not more than 7 subjects per semester.

Study subjects appear to be spread evenly and are not repetitive.

The content of the subjects is consistent with the Professional Bachelor's Degree. However it is important to emphasize that English language skills are a weak point. In the study programme it is not clear what steps are taken to change the mentioned situation, and accordingly a suggestion would be to pay more attention to foreign languages, especially before internship, as well as

establish more foreign languages as elective subjects for those, who would like to develop their language skills. A lack of language skills as well is one of the reasons why students' mobility statistics do not show good results.

Because of the relatively small student numbers, it has been found to be necessary to merge classes of different study programmes. This has caused difficulties in respect of some subjects, for example in the case of EU Law. It appears to the Review Team that Tourism and Hospitality study programme students are not provided with enough examples from the tourism field.

Although in the programme name features "hospitality", not enough hospitality subjects are included in the programme. It would be rational to add to the programme specific specialization subjects, as Food and Beverage Management, Accommodation Services, etc. That would be helpful in creating a deeper understanding of the field among the Tourism and Hospitality programme students. But that is not the case.

The content and methods of subjects and modules are almost appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Not enough attention has been paid for the communication in foreign languages and for creation of professional skills. More hours have to be given for practicum of professional subjects (for example, working with such systems as GDS, Fidelio etc.)

There are possibilities for graduates of the programme to progress to a Master's degree at various universities provided they successfully complete a bridging programme.

The scope of the programme (3 years full-time study or 4 years part-time) seems sufficient to allow the achievement of the learning outcomes. Recommendations can be given on the possibility to prolong the internship, undertake some industrial experience during summer vacation time, free time after lectures (for example, once, twice per week), etc. Such additions would strengthen the programme and improve the profile of the graduates.

There is an alarming lack of IT aspects, crucial for modern tourism companies (reservation engines, systems which tourism companies are working with: GDS, Fidelio, Tourvisio etc.). Regarding the organization of the study process, one of recommendations would be to create distance learning possibilities for part time students, using the latest achievements in science, in

such a way as to make the study process more available. Implementation of this recommendation could also help to increase the number of students.

3. Staff

The study programme is provided by staff members who meet the legal requirements in terms of qualifications, experience and professional development. However, the level of knowledge of English among staff is not satisfactory. There was also concern at the readiness to admit foreign students without adequate provision of modules offered in the English language and at the plans to introduce joint and double degree programmes (which were presented during the meeting with administration).

As it is required, all staff members teaching the programme have at least a Master's degree and 16% have a doctoral degree (the requirement is 10%). However there are a few weak points regarding the teaching staff:

1. The lack of the lecturers who are linked to the tourism business (mentioned as well by students and graduates). This could be addressed by arranging short placements of lecturers in the industry with the cooperation of the social partners.
2. There is also a lack of lecturers working on research in tourism and hospitality which needs to be addressed. One action that would help would be the support of more lecturers to attend international conferences on relevant topics
3. There is a lack of tourism and hospitality subject lecturers who are employed full time, which influences the weak communication between lecturers in creating the one direction going study programme.
4. Links with the Tourism/Hospitality industry could be strengthened by inviting industry professionals to give guest lectures to students

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure the learning outcomes. Important to notice, there are few lecturers who teach a big portion of all specialization subjects, which seems unsatisfactory in terms of giving the proper experience and knowledge.

Teaching staff turnover isn't a problematic issue in respect of this programme and does not adversely affect the delivery of the programme.

There was no evidence that the college provides training for its teachers in pedagogy and assessment. The institution does not create enough conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff. There was one massive mobility programme whereby many staff members

went to Belgium, Northern Ireland and Finland. Since then there has been very little mobility and thus the mobility of the lecturers is a weak point to be improved.

There is a lack of both national and international research projects in the tourism and hospitality field. Stronger relations with social partners and academic partners on research have to be established. As a first step, the college should create a space on its website to list the various student final year theses, as the publication of thesis topics on the website or by newsletter to hotel/tourism organisations might create a positive beginning of a stronger link between college and industry.

The ability of the staff to teach through the medium of the English language needs to be further developed.

4. Facilities and learning resources

The capacity of AVM facilities is: general area is 2050 square meters and it is used for auditoriums, open learning centres, computer classes, administration offices and general social areas. It satisfies the needs considering the average AVM number of students.

The teaching and learning equipment are adequate both in size and quality. However, it would be very useful for the Tourism and Management study programme to establish more practical training places such as: business simulation company, food service room, hotel services simulation room, etc.

The social partners during the meeting declared the arrangements for the students' practice to be adequate; most of them are happy with the created system, however the social partners would appreciate a greater flexibility on the part of the college in the timing of periods of practice sessions and it is recommended that the college explores such possibilities with the social partners.

There are not enough copies of textbooks for some study subjects (for example *Tourism Marketing*), and not enough books provided in English. A large part of the provided literature is at least 10 years old and thus there is a need for updated information. There are some databases available: World EBSCO and Lithuania Academic Library Network resources however, there are other databases that would be very useful to support staff and student research.

5. Study process and student assessment

Admission requirements are clear and up to date. The number of students admitted to the full-time programme went down sharply in 2012 and 2013, comparing with 2010 and 2011, causing serious concern about the viability of the programme. This is a problem that needs to be addressed urgently by the college management.

Within the variety of possible internships and based on the employability rate the requirement is met. On the other hand it's not quite clear from the study process structure and methods how all these results were achieved. It is recommended that a Programme Committee be established, which would be responsible for the monitoring of the study process and achieving of the learning outcomes.

Currently, students are not sufficiently encouraged to participate in applied research projects, other than the final thesis and internships which is a part of the minimum requirement of their status. During the meeting with students, they expressed a strong wish to be more active in artistic and applied researches. This activity needs to be developed in conjunction with the social partners.

There are themes for the final year theses which are agreed with the Social Partners and students must choose an agreed aspect of the theme for their thesis.

The college has achieved the Erasmus University Charter and students have opportunities to go abroad but the programme does not yet involve foreign students coming to Lithuania. Therefore internationalization only goes one way which gives a threat that already existing partners will quit the partnership. For the last few years, the percentage of the students involved in mobility programmes has not been growing, although those students who travelled appreciated the experience gained during the studies abroad. One of the reasons for students not participating has been their weakness in English which needs to be addressed.

Student mobility, for which there is an agreed European target of 20% of all students to have studied or worked outside their home country, can involve students undertaking their placements abroad. The College should seek to develop this possibility.

The tuition fee is clear and up to date. There are support schemes in place for all students including those with disabilities and students can get social support as well as academic support (grants, scholarships etc.).

The college has developed an e-learning platform (Moodle) which assists communication with students as well as supporting learning. Most lecturers of the programme are currently using Moodle, which fact is appreciated by students. The cost of developing good resources for Moodle is expensive and since many universities and colleges in Lithuania are using Moodle it would be sensible to investigate the feasibility of sharing Moodle resources. This could be very beneficial for students and could effect savings.

There is a strong need for a wider range of suitable social and sports activities.

Study process rules (students support forms) are clear and publicly available. Students expressed themselves satisfied with the clarity of the information provided.

During the meeting with alumni it was noticed, that there is no active alumni club and that the college is not regularly gathering data and feedback from the alumni, although it would be very helpful. Professional integration was seen, many of the graduates are employed, however not a big part in the tourism and hospitality sector – for what graduates see as a number of reasons: lack of knowledge of English language and lack of experience. These deficiencies can be resolved by giving more hours for foreign languages (or even by teaching some subjects in English after proper preparation of the students) and by giving more hours for internship / possibilities to get work experience in the Tourism/Hospitality industry.

6. Programme management

Responsibilities for decisions and monitoring of the implementation are clearly allocated, however they need to be developed, part of the divisions may be overworked as there is no institutional body separately responsible for the Tourism and Hospitality study programme, its monitoring, data gathering, analysis and decision making. It is recommended that a Programme Committee which includes teachers, student members and social partners, is established at an early date. Such a committee should meet at least once every semester.

Information and data on the implementation of the programme are not collected regularly, especially not enough attention is paid to the feedback from social partners and graduates, even though it would be very helpful for the study programme. It is important to state that the collection of data after the internship from both students and internship employers is very well organised.

The college made some changes after previous evaluations: the programme has been harmonized and AVM students continue their academic career at universities. Some data bases of scientific journals in Tourism and Business field were established. However, some recommendations were not implemented: the level of knowledge of foreign language (both students and lecturers) was not adequately addressed and the number of copies of textbooks was not sufficiently increased and the numbers of mobility (both students and lecturers) were not improved.

Representatives from Student Council participate in the main processes of programme delivery and development. The panel recommends that there should be a more systematic and more regular involvement of the social partners, graduates, student representative in advising the college on the definition of programme aims and learning outcomes, on curriculum developments, on arrangements for practical experience for students.

There is an internal QA programme in place and it is being implemented. As part of this system, the college has identified procedures for admission, for internships, etc. All these procedures are documented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. College has to take steps to make the Tourism and Hospitality study programme more visible, create an identity of this particular study programme.
2. Stronger relations with Tourism field social partners should be established. The College should collect data from tourism field, social partners regularly.
3. Feedback from graduates (alumni) and students should be collected regularly to be used for rational improvement of programme.
4. Lack of specializations makes the programme not focused on any particular tourism field. It is recommended that the college establishes specializations within the programme, with one concentrated particularly on the hospitality sector.
5. Knowledge of foreign languages should be improved (both teachers and students).
6. It is recommended to add to the study programme specific specialization subjects, such as Food and Beverage Management, Accommodations Services etc. That would be helpful in creating deeper understanding of the field among the Tourism and Hospitality programme students.
7. More attention has to be paid to the communication in foreign languages and for creating of professional skills. More hours have to be given for practicum of professional subjects (i.e. working with such systems as GDS, Fidelio etc.)
8. It is recommended to work and discuss with social partners the possibility to prolong the internship, undertake some industrial experience during summer vacation time and during the free time after lectures (e.g. once, twice per week), etc.
9. Regarding the organization of the study process, recommend to create distance learning possibilities for part time students, using the latest achievements in science, in such a way making the study process more available. Implementation of this recommendation can help to increase the number of students.
10. Increase the number of lecturers working on research projects in tourism and hospitality.
11. Increase the number of tourism and hospitality subjects lecturers who are employed full-time, which will influence the better communication between lecturers in creating the one direction going study programme.
12. Increase the international mobility of lecturers.
13. Increase the international mobility of students (both for studies and for internships).
14. Stronger relations with social partners and academic partners on research have to be established.

15. It would be very useful for the Tourism and Hospitality study programme to establish more practical training places as: business simulation company, food service room, hotel services simulation room, etc.
16. The social partners would appreciate a greater flexibility on the part of the college in the timing of periods of practice sessions and it is recommended that the college explores such possibilities with the social partners.
17. Electronic data bases, scientific and professional journals should be added to the library resources and used more to support study process and self-independent work.
18. It is strongly recommended that the College establishes a Programme Study Committee, which would be responsible for the monitoring of the study process and achieving of the learning outcomes.
19. There is a strong need for a wider range of suitable social and sports activities for students.

IV. SUMMARY

In the following, a summary of comments regarding the Tourism and Hospitality programme V.A. Graiciunas School of Management, Kaunas (AVM) is given. The process of evaluation follows the SKVC system for the evaluation of degree programmes and is based on the Self-Assessment Report provided by the College and the assessment agreed upon by the Review Team during its visit on the premises and following discussions.

The programme was registered in 2003 as a Tourism Administration programme but its scope and title was widened following the 2007 review of the programme and from 2011 it has been offered as a programme in Tourism and Hospitality offered in both full-time and part-time modes; it is the only programme in the field of tourism or hospitality offered at the College. Use is made of distance learning techniques (Moodle) to support the delivery of the programme and its administration. The programme prepares graduates for careers in two specialisations, namely Tourism and Hospitality. The Review Team formed the opinion that not enough attention is paid to the subjects that would support a specialisation in Hospitality. This could be remedied by the introduction of modules on subjects such as Food & Beverage Management and Accommodation Studies.

Whilst the learning outcomes of the programme are well developed and are appropriate, they have failed in two respects: they have not attracted students in sufficient numbers (only 23 new first years registered last year, down from 68 two years previously) and the learning outcomes are not understood by the social partners. So this is an area that requires urgent action by the College management. Accordingly, it is recommended that the College discuss the programme learning outcomes with all the stakeholders, but especially the Social Partners. Such a discussion could lead to both improved learning outcomes and an improved appreciation of the work of the college among the social partner and prospective students. Therefore, the College needs to take more proactive steps to clearly communicate programme aims to the industry.

The combination of theory and practice is an important and strong component of the programme. This is reflected in the curriculum, didactics, compulsory practical work and the fact that a large portion of the faculty does have (some) work experience in the field of tourism. Indeed, both students and social partners felt that practical training should even be extended, if possible. The Review Team feels that this could offer added value for the students and can have a positive effect on students' future careers and development as professionals. The College should

investigate the possibilities of adding more industry practice in the early years of the programme and by utilising summer vacation periods for paid summer work by students.

The curriculum of the programme must meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education as well as the requirements of the labour market. The curriculum design meets the legal requirements for a Professional Bachelor degree e.g. 180 ECTS credits, study field subjects amount to 155 credits, 15 credits for the final thesis (not less than 9 required), not more than 7 subjects per semester. The Review Team is satisfied that the programme meets the regulatory requirements but it recommends that the timing of the industrial placement should consider tourism seasons and allocate longer periods of practice.

There is a strongly-felt desire for a greater competence in foreign languages, in particular English and Russian as these are the languages most needed by staff who interact with tourists to Lithuanian. The College should address this desire.

The staff members of the College are enthusiastic and meet all the legal requirements for their appointment as teachers. They are also respected by their students and by graduates who expressed themselves happy with the good student/staff relations in the College. However there are some weaknesses that need to be addressed. Most staff need to improve their competence in the English language, specially as the College has plans to teach programmes through English, more staff with direct experience of the Tourism/Hospitality industry are needed and more staff undertaking research relevant to the themes of the programme are needed. It is also recommended that staff members attend more conferences and that they interact more with the industry professionals in Lithuania. One way in which interaction with the industry could be enhanced is that staff members could undertake brief placements in industry in conjunction with the Social Partners. The College should invite more industry professionals to come to the College as guest lecturers.

One way to encourage more research would be create a space on the College website to list the various student final year theses. The publication of thesis topics on the website or by newsletter to hotel/tourism organisations might prompt wider industry interest.

The College premises contain a well-organised library but more books are needed including books in the English language and modern editions of books (some of the book stock is dated). Whilst there are some databases available for staff and students, some more should be acquired

as funding permits as such databases are vital for research activities. The College has invested in the development of teaching materials and maintains a Moodle e-learning platform. The development of good resources for e-learning is expensive so it would be worthwhile the College and other colleges investigating the feasibility of sharing resources by the establishment of a resource repository. This could be a win-win arrangement.

The admission requirements are well founded, based on Ministry of Education regulations but there has been an alarming drop in student numbers in the recent past and this is a cause of concern. There is a student mobility programme but the number participating has not been growing so this needs further attention. An option to increase student mobility could be to increase work placements abroad.

During their visit the Review Team found that there is adequate academic and social support for students available including scholarships, counselling services and social programmes.

Whilst there is an attempt at gathering data on the operation of the programme with a view to analysing the data and making improvements to the programme, this process is not sufficiently formalised. The Review Team recommends a more structured and formalised approach which includes a Programme Committee with staff, student and social partners as members.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Tourism and Hospitality* (state code – 653N83002) at V. A. Graiciunas School of Management, Kaunas 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	2
2.	Curriculum design	2
3.	Staff	2
4.	Material resources	3
5.	Study process and 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.

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