STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

VILNIAUS KOLEGIJOS (aukštosios mokyklos pavadinimas)
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS "*AGROVERSLO TECHNOLOGIJOS*"
(valstybinis kodas – 6531IX004, 653D70003)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF "*AGRIBUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES*"
(*state code – 6531IX004, 653D70003*)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at VILNIUS COLLEGE (higher education institution)

Review' team:

1. **Mr. Michael Pearson (team leader)** *academic,*
2. **Prof. dr. Dietrich Darr,** *academic,*
3. **Prof. dr. Endla Reintam,** *academic,*
4. **Mr. Povilas Drulis,** *representative of social partners'*
5. **Mr. Gabrielius Jakutis,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator -

Ms. Natalja Bogdanova

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language – English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	*Agroverslo technologijos*
Valstybinis kodas	6531IX004, 653D70003
Studijų sritis	Biomedicinos mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Žemės ūkio mokslai
Studijų programos rūšis	Koleginės
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji (profesinio bakalauro)
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė – 3 metai, ištęstinė – 4 metai
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180 ECTS
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Žemės ūkio mokslų profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2015.04.29

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	*Agribusiness Technologies*
State code	6531IX004, 653D70003
Study area	Biomedical Sciences
Study field	Agricultural Sciences
Type of the study programme	College studies
Study cycle	First (professional Bachelor)
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time – 3 years, part-time – 4 years
Volume of the study programme in credits	180 ECTS
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences
Date of registration of the study programme	29.04.2015

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes,** approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: *1) self-evaluation and self-evaluation report prepared by Higher Education Institution (hereafter – HEI); 2) visit of the review team at the higher education institution; 3) production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication; 4) follow-up activities.*

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as "very good" (4 points) or "good" (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as "satisfactory" (2 points).

The programme **is not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as "unsatisfactory" (1 point).

1.2. General

The Application documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by the SKVC. Along with the self-evaluation report and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site-visit:

No.	Name of the document
1	Examples of exams
2	Visual material on remotely located premises used in the Programme

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

Vilnius College (hereinafter called VK) was established in the year 2000 by amalgamating several institutions, resulting in one of the largest colleges of its type in Lithuania.

The course evaluated by the Expert Team (hereinafter ET) is part of the Faculty of Agribusiness Technologies. The clear English version of the website allowed the ET to ascertain

that a total of 5 study programmes are run by the faculty in areas such as Food Technology and Landscape Design in addition to the course studied in this report, namely Agribusiness Technology.

What was not apparent however from either the Self Evaluation Report (hereinafter SER) or the information available online that Vilnius College (as mentioned by the Dean of Faculty in the Management meeting) has been involved in Agricultural Education since 1961. ET would have appreciated this fact to have been included in the SER as it would have given a better insight into the reasoning behind the development of this new course.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. V-41 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 13th April 2017.

1. **Mr. Michael Pearson (team leader)** *principal of Gurteen College, Ireland.*
2. **Prof. Dr. Dietrich Darr,** *professor of Agribusiness at the Faculty of Life Sciences, Hochschule Rhein-Waal, Germany***.**
3. **Assoc. Prof. dr. Endla Reintam,** *professor at Institute of Agricultural and Environmental sciences, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Estonia.*
4. **Mr. Povilas Drulis,** *Managing director at JSC Agrotikslas, Lithuania.*
5. **Mr. Gabrielius Jakutis,** *student of Vilnius University Faculty of Medicine, Lithuania*.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The Programme learning outcomes are clearly defined and understandable and well documented in the SER. An example of a clear study programme learning outcome is "Will evaluate crop yield formation principles and patterns" which is then covered by subject learning outcomes in 5 subjects including Soil Science and Plant Nutrition. The subject learning outcomes are clearly mapped to the study outcomes presented in a comprehensive appendix in the SER.

Teachers and students in their meetings indicated that a variety of and the teaching/learning methods facilitate the process of learning and the achievement of Programme and subjects learning outcomes. These include lectures, demonstrations, videos and computer technologies.

Whilst this level of detail is clearly visible in the SER the English version of the website is at a more basic level, but does tell prospective students what they will learn, such as 'rationally use resources'. There is also a list of subjects taught and the duration of the course available online.

Considerable consultation has taken place prior to the introduction of this course with the 2012 Ministry survey producing a report that showed the need for 66 animal husbandry specialists. Learning outcomes such as "Will be able to work independently and as a team…" and "Will analyse the results of plant and Animal production…" show that this course is responding to the needs of the state and labour market needs. Social partners also indicated that this course better suits their needs as Technological subjects essential to modern farming such as Genetics and Biotechnology are included. The course has been designed in consultation with the Ministry and social partners to supply graduates capable of working in Lithuanian and European Agricultural businesses and Industries. However, the interviews revealed that students are mostly taught to analyze foreign markets, but not to become European market hands-on professionals.

VK appears fully committed to the commencement and success of this course and it has integrated it well into the structure of the organisation. Meetings with Management, SER group, staff and social partners confirmed this fact.

The course is using significant numbers of lecturers within VK who are involved in and have experience of teaching this level of qualification in related subject areas.

Programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are appropriate to this level of study and from all documentation the title of the qualification of Professional Bachelor is appropriate.

The title of the Programme is appropriate for the course. ET feel however that the college will have to more clearly define its strategy as to which sector of farming the course is targeting. Most of the course subjects are targeting conventional agriculture. Subjects such as Agricultural Machinery include subject themes on Fertilising and Crop Protection and subjects such as Plant Pathology and Protection including subject themes on chemical pesticides. Optional subjects are available on Organic Farming and Biodynamic Farming, yet the social partner meeting was dominated by farmers from these sectors. This area will be discussed in more detail in future sections of this report.

2.2. Curriculum design

The Programme is in line with the legislative arrangements in Lithuania, with 180 credits achieved throughout the course. There are the requisite number of 18 general credits (minimum 15) study field credits of 162(minimum 135) including 32 practice credits. The course is taught over a period of 6 semesters to full time students and 8 semesters to part time students. Part time students

at the meeting indicated that they felt the contact time with lecturers was sufficient, although it is typically 40% to 50% less than in the full time course. Full time students felt they gained a better understanding of the subjects by having more contact time so the college must ensure that both groups are fulfilling their educational needs and achieving all learning outcomes. ET felt on talking to students that part time students in particular need either more contact time or more support in their self-study to enable them to fully achieve learning outcomes. There also was a recurring theme through all meetings that timetable for P/T was too heavily weighted to suit the needs of students and not necessarily when best learning could take place in college.

The subjects appear in the documentation as being taught in a consistent, logical manner with basic subjects such as soil science early in the course, leading to more specific subjects such as Plant Selection in semester 2 and production subjects in Semester 3 and 4. Professional practice and Final Practice are then in semesters 4, 5 and 6 where taught knowledge can be put into practice.

The balance of taught time to self-study is appropriate throughout the full time course.

There is a variety of options within the course to allow a degree of specialisation to each student. Each subject has the requisite number of total hours associated with it, but wide variety of credits available for subjects are present. These include 3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 credits. Whilst staff had a clear understanding that to achieve learning outcomes that are broad and complex need more time than simpler subjects students were not as clear on this issue. Whilst they understood that more time was given to the taught elements of the subject they indicated that the self-study time was not as clearly allocated by themselves. In order to address this apparent deficiency in the curriculum the college could either reduce the variation in credit numbers by combining subjects to give clearer understanding of time allocation to students, or alternatively spending more time ensuring that students understand the concept of self-study and have appropriate amounts of tasks to do in this time. These tasks should be closely monitored by staff to ensure learning is taking place through methods such as projects, discussions and other informal learning assessment techniques. In any case, more time should be allocated to assisting students in time management, particularly the P/T group.

The methods of delivery for various subjects are applicable to the subject content. Subjects such as foreign language use a predominantly practical method of delivery whereas subjects such as soil science, a fundamental science subject, use much more lecture content (62%). Students particularly felt that the English classes where they learned appropriate language for the agricultural industry were very good. Use of foreign language skills in courses other than foreign language course itself could be used as at present this is limited. If this were to happen, future graduates would be better equipped to work in the European market. This also may help facilitate foreign

students studying in Vilnius which at present would be difficult, unless they were fluent in the Lithuanian language.

As the longest serving students are just over half way through the course on a full time basis and just over a third of the way through the part time course, feedback at this stage is missing as the critical input of final year students and especially graduates.

The scope of the Programme, including both animals and crops ensures that learning outcomes are covered by a variety of subjects. When it comes to the practice subjects, however the college must ensure that a sufficiently broad spread of conventional farmers and industries are available as well as organic/ecological/biodynamic operators. The ET was informed by students that college-organised practice takes place not in the most innovative farms in Lithuania. It is a concern of ET that farms with the latest technologies are not always being used for practice and visits as college based work needs to be of at least the same standard and ideally better than their own to further develop the students' knowledge, competency and skills. Senior management has to take all measures to contact broader spectrum of social partners to place students in the most technologically advanced farms in Lithuania for their practice blocks.

As this is a new programme with no graduates yet it is not possible from results to say that it is modern, up to date and producing graduates that have all necessary skills. The structure of the course and amount of consultation with industry that has gone on however indicate that graduates will be well equipped to enter the industry with skills necessary to succeed. The concept of students having an understanding of their products from 'farm to plate' is a good one. As students have not yet reached semester 5(full time) when Meat Product Technology will be taught feedback is not yet possible. It is critical however that students perceive this as a progression from the subject of Agricultural Product Quality, storage and Processing Simulations.

2.3. Teaching staff

The course is taught by a group of staff that meet the legal requirements for this type of course. This is evidenced by the fact that the SER indicates that all teachers hold a masters degree in relevant subjects and 20% hold a doctorate qualification.

Management indicated that a robust system is in place to ensure teaching quality. All teachers are certified every 5 years and any failing to meet the required standards do not have their contracts renewed.

21 staff are involved, to varying degrees in delivering this course to the current students. This ensures a range of subject areas and expertise is more than sufficient for a course of this type. As 5 of these staff spent at least 30% of their contact hours on this course there is a core group of

staff that should have ownership of the course. These hours will grow as semesters 5 and 6 (plus 7 and 8 on the p/t course) come on stream. It is also an advantage to have 24% of the teachers on the course invited from industry. These people should be well acquainted with the up to date situation in Agriculture and its associated industries and ensure that teaching on the course uses knowledge and information that reaches the highest academic and technological achievements. Evidence of links with industry were evident with the teachers. Examples of this include a food technology teacher working part time in a food processing factory and a recently appointed agricultural technology lecturer who is an organic/ecological farmer and also had experience of working with Litagro on minimum tillage technology.

The SER indicates that teacher student ratio in the faculty is 14:1 which is below the VK average of 19.4:1. As part time and full time students do not share classes and group sizes are between 9 and 15 once dropouts have been taken into account this course is operating below the faculty averages which should ensure excellent contact time with staff for each student, sufficient for their needs.

As the Programme is only in its second year, evidence is not available on turnover of staff. Indications from the SER however are that as there is a wide range of ages in the staff, retirements over the years will enable a turnover of staff sufficient to bring in new lecturers. The meeting with staff indicated that there reasonable technological experience amongst the group and this was confirmed by the students. Their opinion was that teachers' technological information was at least as good as that in the industry.

SER has significant evidence of staff development in both Pedagogy and subject matter. This includes specialist training workshops and attendance at scientific and practical conferences in Lithuanian and foreign institutions. Throughout the series of meetings with staff on the day of the ET visit most of the meetings used the facilities of the translator for both question and answer. The students were more willing to speak in English. Whilst recognised in the SER that language skills of staff are important, it is essential that the teaching staff actively seek opportunities to develop their foreign language skills.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

As this is one course in a large institution with over 6000 students, the list of facilities and premises described in the SER is large and impressive. General facilities for students including the canteen area and library were good and students indicated that leisure facilities for sports and recreation are adequate at the college. The college website mentions Lithuanian Folk and sporting activities but as this is a multi-campus college it was not possible to visit all facilities.

The local riding school was visited however and the owner indicated that some students visit her facility for leisure activities as well as during the optional Horse Breeding subject. The college has a suite of chemistry laboratories equipped to deal pure science aspects of the course. Laboratory 1 is equipped to teach basic principles such as pH, Laboratory 2 the Agricultural Chemical Practice topics such as water quality and animal food analysis and a further laboratory with computer based equipment such as an infrared Analyser and a spectrophotometer as used in industry. The Veterinary Clinic has the tools such as models and skeletons of animals to teach the animal anatomy sections of the course to adequate levels, although the facility itself is mainly used to teach veterinary assistants small animal and domestic animal skills. The landscape design building and area has good resources for teaching landscape design, plant nutrition and horticulture with a small greenhouse, garden and commercial horticulture section. The college has well equipped meat technology and bread making laboratories which will be used by students of this course in the coming semesters.

Computer facilities are in several locations in the college and are particularly used by this course for farm management software, horticultural planning, livestock breeding and accountancy. As computer technology is continually developing the college should ensure that students are using relevant up to date computers and software.

All the resources seen are adequate, but seem to exist as a main function for other courses (such as Veterinary facility and Landscape design). Very few core Agriculture facilities such as machinery workshop (although mentioned as a social partner), large animal handling or crop growing were in evidence. Enhancing this area however would have capital investment implications.

Students also indicated that they feel the need to visit more innovative farms to see best practice.

At present none of the students have commenced their practice periods, so comments are based on observation and not fact at the moment. ET have a concern that at present the balance of social partners who can be used for practice between conventional farmers and alternative methods of farming such as organic/biodynamic is too heavily weighted towards the latter. This is unless the management of the course makes it clear in documentation and subjects that this type of farming is what the course is aimed at.

Students also felt in the meeting that the social partners available are not the most innovative and at least one student has found his own placement. The college is however encouraging full time students to do their practice on farms other than their own. This is not the case with part time

students due to work commitments. As practice has not yet happened it was difficult to ascertain how the college will ensure that part time students achieve learning outcomes on their own farm.

The faculty library observed on the visit was satisfactory for the purpose of teaching Agricultural Technology. This library is one of several faculty libraries within Vilnius College as the college operates on several campuses around Vilnius. Evidence was from librarian that students can visit any library, but students indicated that their focus was mainly on the library in the location they are taught in.

It was evident from the subject descriptions within the SER that some subjects such as Plant Pathology and Genetics & Breeding of Farm animals have English language texts referenced. If students are using these, this is an excellent way of embedding the foreign language subject in the core of the course. The student meeting indicated that in the Foreign Language subject English text was used, but less evident in other subjects. It is important to ensure that this resource is used throughout the course.

The SER indicates extensive use of databases and eBooks and statistics given by the librarian indicate that the vast majority of students use the library resources. The average number of books (or eBooks) per user per year is currently 26. The college was reviewed by international experts in 2015 and a review of the library took place and spending on resources became more focussed on current courses.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

The requirements to join the course are clearly stated with a clear fair method of offering places. This is achieved using the competitive mark process. This has led to a reasonable enrolment in the first 2 years of the course (although lower in 2016 than 2015). It is a concern however that not all students that enrol actually turn up and dropout rates are high. Early indications, since no one has graduated yet, is that only a small percentage (7%) of students are underachieving on the full time course. This indicates that the study process is ensuring proper implementation of the Programme.

The balance of lectures, practicals, consultation and self-study gives students the potential to achieve the learning outcomes in all the subjects taught.

Part time students are expected to achieve the learning outcomes with less contact time. As there are no graduates yet and the course is only in its second year the number of students achieving the final qualification as a percentage of the number recruited will be a definite indicator of this. Early indications in the SER however indicate that dropout rates are higher and underachievement also higher on the part time course. In addition, during the interviews, part-time students explained

that they feel to be learning faster and that they are provided with more basic knowledge, while full-time students are more in-depth with various subjects. It raises a few issues for the ET: first, although P/T students are expected to achieve the learning outcomes with less contact time, they should have equality in the study opportunities available and equal opportunity to achieve learning outcomes. Second, if P/T students are learning a more basic programme, why are their achievements at a lower level compared to full-time students? The college needs to resolve these issues, as equal study quality is an essential privilege for both P/T and F/T students. Until graduates are available however from both delivery methods and a full analysis can be done then comments above based on impressions are the best evidence available.

As a large institution, students have the opportunity to participate in numerous activities outside the core course subjects including various sport and dance activities. There was however little indication from students however of their active participation.

As the course is still 'young' there has been limited uptake of the mobility type programmes, but conditions exist in the study programme to allow this. One second year is currently studying in Finland and two further second years are availing of the Erasmus programme to do their practice in Portugal. The students consulted are all aware of the programmes, but had no clear reason why uptake is not greater. Part time students, due to their work commitments felt that this was not appropriate to them.

The SER indicates that as the course matures incoming students will be accommodated on a variety of subjects.

The students have a variety of social support mechanisms including scholarships (sponsored and incentive), social benefits and Government supported loans. SER indicates that academic support is provided by teachers during set consulting hours. Each student has been appointed a teacher as their tutor, although SER indicates that weaker students do not always avail of this service. Students informed that they were aware of this process and knew the name of the teacher who was their tutor.

The clear Learning Outcomes and Assessment Procedure from Academic council (ATN-6 of 9 July 2016) has been developed to ensure a clear and transparent system for student achievement is present and used.

The written exams ET were shown consisted of a practical and a theoretical part; while the practical part was appropriate and aimed to test the students' transfer of concepts/ knowledge to practical applications, the theoretical part merely tested the reproduction of knowledge items. It would be more appropriate and in line with the learning outcomes if the questions would be phrased in such a way to test the students' ability to apply and transfer their knowledge to other situations

and contexts rather than to reproduce. It is accepted however by ET that very limited amounts of assessment material were seen at this early stage of the course and obviously no final thesis evidence.

As there are no graduates yet ET are unable to comment on whether the majority of graduates correspond to the expectations of the industry.

Considerable work has gone into developing this new course as the old course in agriculture management run by Vilnius College was not supplying the industry with its need for graduates with a training in technology. More consultation will be needed in the future to ensure this course is delivering the calibre of students to the industry that it requires.

VK has a students code of ethics to ensure that a fair learning environment is encouraged and issues such as plagiarism and fraud are actively discouraged and dealt with under this policy.

The students were aware that initially they should contact the relevant staff member, the student association and ultimately the Dean are available if any course issues arise such as perceived unfair marking.

2.6. Programme management

There is a clear structure of responsibility for the course from Rector to the Programme Committee. This committee has student, staff and management representation and its function is clearly listed in the SER.

Whilst recruitment in the first year was reasonable, and ET accept that social conditions and government policy can influence recruitment, it is felt by ET that all levels of management in the college should take responsibility for ensuring adequate numbers of students. It was also felt that clearer advice could be given to prospective students as to the requirements and expectations on the course. Recruiting 19 students onto a course (P/T 2015 intake) is acceptable, but for only 9 to sit examinations in the first year of four and 2 of these underachieve indicates students are either not happy with the course or made the wrong choice. Management should have a clear understanding that the college needs to have clear information for future prospective students so that when they enrol for the course few if any students drop out due to being enrolled on the wrong course. Students indicated that a significant proportion of the dropouts were from a none agricultural background. It is critical in future that these students are helped in every way possible to settle into a course as it definitely should not be a prerequisite to be a farmers son/daughter to enter agricultural education. Enhanced foreign language skills would be of particular benefit to this type of student as they are less likely to be tied to family businesses in Lithuania therefore freer to travel abroad for employment after graduation.

Annual surveys of students, teachers and employers are carried out. There are no graduates yet, but their feedback in future is critical to the development of the course. Current students have been surveyed and indicated satisfaction with the course, but felt that practice was the area that needed most attention in the type and mix of places available. No evidence was presented to ET about surveys of dropouts but this would provide useful information to try and reduce this worrying statistic.

A comprehensive internal quality assurance programme is in evidence in SER. This feeds information to the Programme Committee who then are able to feed information into the strategic and annual operations plans. The aim of this process is to help reduce deficiencies and improve programmes. ET hope that this mechanism can be used to help address recruitment/retention deficiencies and that this evaluation report is of assistance to the college in developing this course further.

Social partners indicated that they had played a part in the design of this new course changing it from a previous management course to one with a technology base. Although, ET did not find any reference in the SER to the fact that VK used to run agricultural courses for many years prior to the introduction of this course. It would have been very beneficial to have known this prior to the visit to aid ET in their understanding of the college and course.

Whilst as mentioned earlier that the curriculum design is good, ET felt that throughout the series of meetings the course does not have a clear direction in terms of the type of farming it is providing graduates for. If this is for the organic/biodynamic niche then alter the subject structure to suit, and if this is not the case and conventional farming is the main target then develop the social partner network of farmers to reflect this. Both can be possible but clarity is needed.

As this course is part of a faculty that is one of several in a large college, standard quality assurance measures are used which are effective as shown in the SER reference to the Internal Study Programme Quality Assessment Procedure, approved by the academic council, ATN-7 of 5 June 2013.

Information in English is available on the website and is easily located and accessible for this course. It is at a level acceptable for recruitment, giving a flavour of the course, its subjects and possible careers. It does not provide information on learning outcomes and other detailed course information. The Lithuanian site, on the other hand, is more informative. There is a short description about the Programme, potential student is introduced to learning outcomes, subjects of the Programme, alternative courses, practice subjects and elective courses. These courses are listed only by name, not providing more detailed information about their content. There is a short description of career possibilities, which should be improved to be more elaborate.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Management need to develop a clear vision as to which direction they want the course to go and alter the relevant parts of the course documentation to reflect this. This will involve expanding the social partner network to reflect this and possibly the structure of some subjects.
2. As recruitment and retention of students is a concern then strategies should be put in place by management to address this. All levels of staff within the college however need to accept this, take responsibility for actions including recruitment and ensure that marketing the course to prospective students is accurate. This should both increase recruitment and reduce dropout.
3. Develop more and better links with social partners to ensure all aspects of the course are adequately covered and resourced with best businesses possible.
4. Continue to develop the language skills of teaching staff and students so that they can all avail of agricultural opportunities in Europe and the wider world. This will enhance mobility on the course.
5. Part time students should either be given more contact time or more support on their self-study to ensure that they achieve learning outcomes in the same manner as full time students.
6. The college should investigate the possibility of rationalising credit values of subjects to a lesser number to assist students in their time allocation to each course.
7. The college should ensure that the technological base of practice farms and the college itself is on par with the best levels in Lithuania.
8. Although ET recognise that this is capital dependant, increasing the level of facilities specific to agriculture, such as machinery workshops, would be beneficial to the course.
9. The college should ensure that exams are phrased in such a way that students can demonstrate how to apply their knowledge.
10. Management should ensure that any future SER documents give future ET groups full relevant knowledge of courses run prior to the one being evaluated so that the rationale for the course is fully understood prior to meetings.

IV. SUMMARY

Following many years of delivering other agricultural programmes, Vilnius College commenced this new Agribusiness Technologies programme in September 2015 and at the time of this report only has first and second year students. The course is well designed and Programme aims are well covered and achieved within the curriculum.

The curriculum design and management of the teaching process needs more clarity to ensure that prospective students clearly understand the course they are signing up to and what is expected of them. This will help to address the concerns expressed within the main text of this report regarding recruitment and retention. A simplified credit structure would assist the students in allocating self-study time to each subject. The college should also ensure that all farms and businesses used throughout the course including Practice are of the highest technological standards.

The college has a committed group of teachers well qualified to deliver this course with adequate technical knowledge. Language skill development within the main of the teaching staff would enhance the course as some sections of subjects delivered in a foreign language would help students also develop in this area. There is reasonable mobility of staff in terms of staff development opportunities.

Facilities at the college are adequate for course delivery, although more agriculture focussed resources would be beneficial. This does have capital implications however. Access to more innovative and leading farms would be beneficial both for practice and teaching. Library and computer facilities that the students use are good.

Whilst the study process is acceptable care must be taken to ensure that full time and part time students are offered the same learning opportunities. Erasmus and other ways of accessing mobility should also be encouraged across all groups of students as opportunities in the agricultural industry exist across Europe and the rest of the world. Agriculture is a global business.

Management need to give all other parties a clear vision as to the direction the course will take under the new agribusiness technologies structure. They will need to ensure that recruitment and retention strategies ensure a viable course and encourage all staff, students and social partners to play an active role in this. Numbers, types and level of expertise amongst social partners will be a key point here. Adequate information should be provided to prospective students prior to enrolment so that they are clear about what the course is and are less likely to drop out.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Agribusiness Technologies* (state code – 6531IX004, 653D70003) at Vilnius College is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

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

Grupės nariai:
Team members: Dietrich Darr

Endla Reintam

Povilas Drulis

Gabrielius Jakutis