



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

LIETUVOS AUKŠTOSIOS JŪREIVYSTĖS MOKYKLOS
***UOSTO IR LAIVYBOS VALDYMO* STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS (65303S138, 653N25002)**

EVALUATION REPORT
of *PORT AND SHIPPING MANAGEMENT* (65303S138, 653N25002)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Lithuanian Maritime Academy

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Dr. Michael Emery

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Volker Gehmlich

Dr. Maik Huettinger

Dr. Brian O'Connor

Mr. Saulius Olencevicius

Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
Report language - English

DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Uosto ir laivybos valdymas</i>
Valstybiniai kodai	65303S138, 653N25002
Studijų sritis	socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	vadyba
Studijų programos rūšis	koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	nuolatinė (3,5), iššęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais ¹	140
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	vadybos profesinis bakalauras, vadybos ir verslo administravimo profesinis bakalauras, vadybininkas
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2002-06-25

¹ – vienas kreditas laikomas lygiu 40 studento darbo valandų

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Name of the study programme	<i>Port and Shipping Management</i>
State code	65303S138, 653N25002
Study area	social sciences
Study field	management
Kind of the study programme	college studies
Level of studies	first
Study mode (length in years)	full-time (3,5), part-time (4)
Scope of the study programme in national credits ¹	140
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	professional bachelor in management, professional bachelor in management and business administration, manager
Date of registration of the study programme	2002-06-25

¹ – one credit is equal to 40 hours of student work

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	4
II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS	5
1. Programme aims and learning outcomes	5
1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims	5
1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme	6
2. Curriculum design	6
2.1. Programme structure	6
2.2. Programme content	7
3. Staff	8
3.1. Staff composition and turnover	8
3.2. Staff competence	9
4. Facilities and learning resources	9
4.1. Facilities	9
4.2. Learning resources	10
5. Study process and student assessment	10
5.1. Student admission	10
5.2. Study process	11
5.3. Student support	11
5.4. Student achievement assessment	12
5.5. Graduate placement	12
6. Programme management	12
6.1. Programme administration	12
6.2. Internal quality assurance	13
III. RECOMMENDATIONS	13
IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	14

I. INTRODUCTION

The LMA was established in Klaipėda, the only Lithuanian port, in 1948 as a Maritime School which finally became - after some further changes - the Lithuanian Maritime Academy (LMA) in 2008. It used to have a wider range of programmes related to port engineering but presently runs five programmes according to the needs of the region and the industry in particular. Regular contacts and studies assure that the programmes are continuously updated and reflect state-of-the art knowledge, skills and competences. Port and Shipping Management (PSM) - the programme evaluated - was developed with the support of Dutch, Latvian and Estonian maritime academies, and the college prides itself for being the only one with this focus. They claim that their curriculum oriented towards this USP prepares students "to take on leadership roles, encourages rigorous self-discipline, and provides graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the global economy" (www.lmc.lt). Their processes have also been quality assured according to ISO 9001:2000.

The governance system of LMA is focused on a Governing Board, being superior to the director of the academy who is supported by an Academic Board and the Students' Union. There are three Deputy Directors, for academic affairs, practical training, and infrastructure, and to whom the Personnel and Quality System Managers report. With the exception of the latter all deputy directors chair departments, i.e. Marine Navigation, Engineering, Port Economics and Management (PEMD - within which the PSM-programme is offered) as well as the General Education Department on the one hand, Seafarers' Training Centre and various administrative areas on the other. Horizontally, the departments cooperate as regards internal and external opportunities, exploiting them jointly e.g. the resources of the college.

According to order No. V-76 (April 13 2010) a working group was established to prepare and finalise a self-evaluation report. The report lists seventeen different tasks which were mainly distributed among five colleagues, partly supported by two others who assured the writing and compilation of the material worked out individually and in group meetings.

On the occasion of the site visit these colleagues were available for interview. Their motivation became very evident though sometimes their readiness to speak was partly hampered by the use of English as language of conversation. However, a translator tried best to obtain the answers to the questions raised and the opinions of staff transferred to the evaluators. It seems that staff should have more opportunities to practice their English language skills. Though typically the language spoken in this industry is English and respectively most of the material is written in the English language, the LMA does not yet teach subjects of the programme in English - most likely because of the lack of practice.

The site visit was in October 2010. The expert evaluation team was led by Dr. Michael Emery and the other expert team members were Professor Volker Gehmlich, Dr. Maik Huettinger, Brian O'Connor, and Saulius Olencevicius. A further meeting took place later and the draft report produced.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

1.1. Programme demand, purpose and aims

1.1.1. Uniqueness and rationale of the need for the programme

As the only Lithuanian college situated in the only port and running a unique programme, the LMA definitely has a competitive advantage. It is very helpful indeed that the programme was not only designed by the LMA itself but that they had involved colleagues from respective colleges in the European Union. To this extent the studies reflect the needs of the region and prepare the students at the same time for the global maritime industry. Regular updates seem to guarantee that the regional and industrial requirements are continuously respected and corrective actions taken when adjustments seem to be necessary. The involvement with the regional industry, demonstrated in the meeting of students, graduates and employers with the evaluation team, stressed this impression. The LMA seems to have successfully developed a culture in which the awareness of the environment has become a part of day-to-day business.

To a certain extent the expectations of the LMA about the reactions and interest of its stakeholders might be too high. Though the turnover of questionnaires sent out annually was assumingly quite high (50 respondents) they felt disappointed that 12% of respondents did not react to the proposal of a further interaction with social partners. Overall, it appears that the evaluation staff interpreted very critically the various findings. This is on the one hand very useful indeed but staff should also be aware of their strengths and always be eager to realise that there will never ever be the perfect match as the environment is not stable at all and so the LMA cannot be either. Their close contact and their own research should allow them to identify trends so that they could anticipate respective changes and become pro-active rather than re-active, considering in particular the relatively long lead-time necessary within education and training to get adaptations and innovations implemented.

The admission procedures are outlined in detail in the self-evaluation report. They respect the regulations established in Lithuania. In the past the marks of admitted students for part-time studies were lower than those for the full-time mode. In 2009, however, a change became noticeable: the marks and the average of the admitted students to part-time studies became higher than those of full-timers. It will be interesting to follow-up to what extent this will have an impact on drop-outs, study-attitude and even an improvement of the quality of the graduates and the future demand for them in the labour market.

1.1.2. Conformity of the programme purpose with institutional, state and international directives

The programme obviously is in line with the strategic intention of the LMA. Having had the support of foreign institutions the programme is competitive within the international environment. It also fulfills the requirements of the Lithuanian rules and regulations and respects the EU Directive. This is supported by their ISO-conformity of their business processes. Most likely, being the only academy with this type of programme, the academy itself can develop the programme further and also in line with the new regulations of the Lithuanian Ministry. The stakeholder analyses are extremely helpful in highlighting the extent that the programme still fulfills the needs.

The self-evaluation report provides evidence by quoting expert understanding of the particular design of the various forces of this industry, both at national and international level. Also the employers who graduated at this college confirmed their sincere satisfaction by stating they would choose the institution again if they had the opportunity to do so. They definitely recommend the academy and the programme to the interested society.

1.1.3. Relevance of the programme aims

The evaluation on-site and the self-evaluation report underline that the programme aims are relevant to port and shipping management as a unique selling point in the region and beyond. The programme clearly aims at first-cycle students with an adequate educational and/ or professional background to furnish them with knowledge, skills and competences needed in the industry. Students at the same time receive a general knowledge about management and a more specialist view in the particular needs of port and shipping management. Therefore, graduates could also be employed outside the borders of the industry if need be.

1.2. Learning outcomes of the programme

1.2.1. Comprehensibility and attainability of the learning outcomes

There is a wide range of subjects available which on the one hand goes beyond the narrow background of the employment field focused on but also - on the other hand - gives the student ample opportunities to focus and specialise on Port / Shipping Management. It seems to be feasible for the student to achieve the learning outcomes within the timeframe. However, the institution should narrowly follow the various student cohorts and find out whether this is true to the same extent for all students, both in full-time and part-time mode. As outlined above, the academy has noted some deviations which might need further consideration.

1.2.2. Consistency of the learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of the programme are reflected in the learning outcomes of the various subject areas as recommended by the Bologna Accord. In some modules they could be a bit more specific, trying to use active verbs only so that they are clear and not ambiguous. The outcomes are very much applied oriented - which fit the overall objectives. However, in some areas - such as Economic Theory - the scientific background might be stressed a bit more. A mapping of programme and subject learning outcomes with an application of the Dublin Descriptors (or Lithuanian) would be helpful. This is difficult to judge on the basis of the material available and also did not become clearer in the various discussion rounds.

Related to this is the consistency of the learning outcomes with the syllabi, teaching methods and assessment forms. Neither in the documents nor in the meetings was this relationship identified clearly. The academy should look into the matter to safely say that they have evidence - through the various assessment forms - that the students have acquired the learning outcomes. In the Lithuanian and English language subjects, for example, learning outcomes are clearly stipulated (..to lead negotiations...to evaluate communication..). However, neither the "Subject programme structure" nor the "Study result evaluation methods" reveal these relationships clearly. They look like a list of possible outcomes, and teaching and assessment options, instead.

1.2.3. Transformation of learning outcomes

During the site visit the statements in the self-evaluation report as regards the employability of students were confirmed. The graduates and employers congratulated the academy on the close cooperation and the way they responded to their needs – as was referred to above. The college evaluates the learning outcomes regularly through their „Study Programme Monitoring Committee“. Terms of Reference of this committee is „to set a conformity of the study programme with the needs of labour market“. On this committee all stakeholders are involved, including the social partners, representatives of the students and the partner institutions abroad. The meetings are also structured elements in the form of the School and Academic Boards. Also important is that with part-time teachers from industry – quite a considerable number - a regular exchange is carried out as regards the learning outcomes and the programme's procedures and structures.

Regardless of this close cooperation, the academy should always bear in mind that some of their graduates might also find employment outside the industry and its region – for whatever the reason. A first cycle degree in management should always assure the student to be employable in other industries as well, obviously in transport and logistics, but also in marketing, human resources and finance functions anywhere else. Also, the academy should make sure where the student might be able to link with other programmes, e.g. at master level, but also at bachelor level, looking for different, perhaps complementary, options. In other words, the transformation of learning outcomes has to be looked at from three different viewpoints: from the viewpoints of the stakeholders, of the institution's research work as regards the future development of their industry and of the future opportunities and interests of students. The institution seems to cover the first two but should be encouraged also to consider the third perspective.

2. Curriculum design

2.1. Programme structure

2.1.1. Sufficiency of the study volume

The programme can be studied in a full-time and in a part-time mode. In each case 140 national credits (210 ECTS – European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) can be achieved in 3,5 and 4 years respectively. Normally a student can achieve 40 national and 60 ECTS per academic year. For the part-time

mode no detailed information has been given how a student can operate successfully with this work-load. It appears to be high as this type of student is fully employed and still has to find time to achieve only just a little smaller number of credits than a full-time student. The high drop-out rate might not only be linked to the lower entry profile of these students in the past but might also be linked to the workload. The academy should investigate into this matter and also identify potential overlaps between work and study in the sense of workbased study-programmes, so that the practical experience helps the students to finish their programme faster.

Having to achieve 210 credits in 4 years means for the student an annual workload corresponding to 52,5 credits a year on top of a – possible – full-time job. Accepting that one credit corresponds to 25-30 working-hours (according to the ECTS User's Guide of 2009) the student is assumed to spend between 1.312 -1.5750 on his/her studies, plus about 40 weeks of work with about 40 hours per week, amounting to 1600 hrs per year. The academy should be aware of this immense workload – about twice as much as a “normal“ employee/worker has to cope with, and therefore also consider their responsibility for the student also in terms of health care. On the other hand they should critically evaluate how it is possible that a part-time student can finish such a programme in about the same time as a full-time one. May be that this is also a question of definition: who is counted as part-time student? Normally speaking this is a student who is fully employed and studies additionally in his/her spare time.

Overall the credit allocation should be looked at closely. From the description in the self-evaluation report it appears that credits are – may be not only – allocated on the basis of importance, disregarding the workload in the definition of the ECTS User's Guide. The academy is reminded that ECTS credits are purely worked out on the basis of the student's effort in terms of workload disregarding any aspects of “agreed“ importance, prestige or power. It goes without saying that this is independent of the national requirements and regulations which have to be respected.

2.1.2. Consistency of the study subjects

The number and type of study subjects are in line with the overall programme objectives, taking into account the more general orientation of first cycle degrees within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They also seem to progress adequately from the level of school leavers in Lithuania and respect the rules and regulations in the country. The subjects studied are in sequential order.

2.2. Programme content

2.2.1. Compliance of the contents of the studies with legal acts

The programme outline lists the various subjects, such of general education, subject foundations and those with professional orientation (Special), practical sessions, complemented by specialisation in Port or Shipping Management and a final thesis, thus fulfilling the legal requirements of the country. With the exception of the latter – perhaps also as regards the foreign languages Russian or German - students do not seem to have choices in the form of various options. The academy might consider to widen the choice for the students. They may involve the students in particular as regards the design of those areas. It is stated that in July this year a realignment should have taken place, designing options for students, but no evidence was given to the experts to confirm this intention during the site visit. But the experts have since been informed that the choice is widened by offering the specialisation for the students which is 16% of the study-programme.

On the basis of the self-evaluation report and the various meetings on-site it can be said that these subjects also respect the needs of the labour market. The representatives of industry and graduates in particular were asked this question but the answers were unanimously positive and no subject was mentioned which should be dropped or added. The full reference to legal acts is given in the self-evaluation report, covering both, sequential university and non-university studies. The experts confirm this legality.

2.2.2. Comprehensiveness and rationality of programme content

The self-evaluation report details the extent to which the subject studies are adjusted to learning outcomes, both subject-specific and generic (transferable). In the various meetings during the site-visit the logical context was confirmed. In teaching, a variety of teaching methods are applied to make sure that the intended learning outcomes can actually be achieved. A great emphasis is put on the application of knowledge, putting theories into practice, supported by a wide range of forms of teaching, such as seminars, discussions and reflections. It is important to realise that the achievement of the intended learning outcomes require a much more individualised form of teaching in small groups of students. Nevertheless, where

appropriate, students are also taught in larger groups. Throughout all various forms the academy stresses the importance of actively involving the students, motivating them and prepare the ground for effective independent learning as well, as recommended in the Bologna Accord.

3. Staff

3.1. Staff composition and turnover

3.1.1. Rationality of the staff composition

Six of the 19 regular and 10 other staff who hold doctorate degrees teach in major subject areas, Chemistry, Economics, Port and Shipping Management, Philosophy, European Culture, Applied Research Methodology, Business Ethics, Project Management, Cargo Handling Technology, Port Management, Professional Activity Practice, and Logistics. Half of the staff holding a doctorate degree are regular staff. The age distribution of all doctorates is adequate in the sense that the academy can keep them for a longer period: the oldest one is in the mid-fifties, three in the mid-forties and two in the mid-thirties. However, half of them, being in the forties and fifties are listed under “other staff“. As they teach core subject areas, the academy should make sure that they will not lose these colleagues. It should be checked to which extent it might be wise to contractually make sure that these staff do not leave at short notice.

Of the other 10 regular staff, 7 hold a Master degree, covering the subject areas Law, Management, Marketing, Information Technologies and Quality Management. Of the 9 “other staff“, two have graduated at Master level, teaching in specialist areas like Environmental Protection and Port and Shipping Management Basics. As both areas appear to be essential for the study-programme – Environmental Protection most likely getting more importance in future – the academy should again consider how to make sure that these staff can be bound to the study-programme and academy long-term on the assumption that they fulfill their teaching and research obligations very well.

Among the regular teachers holding a masters, only one is approaching the age of retirement. It is expected that the academy has already taken actions to replace the colleague in time as there is only one additional staff teaching Engineering and Computer Graphics but does not hold an academic degree. A third group of staff is mainly made up by qualified teachers, qualified mechanical engineers and lecturers. They are mainly involved in the teaching of languages and mathematics.

All regular staff have long experience in teaching; with the exception of one at least five years, most of them much longer. However, having said this and taking into account the various age groups as outlined above, the academy is advised to design a “life-cycle“ of their staff according to the subject areas to plan ahead the requirements of this programme. The college might have done this already but it is not clear on the basis of the material available. Also, the relationship between full-time (probably regular) and part-time (probably “other“) should not be deteriorated. For the time being 62% of the teaching staff are regarded as full-time. It should be assured that they keep teaching the majority of the core areas and that “other staff“ should in particular be called in for very specific, narrow, subject areas. In terms of the full-timers it should be assured that their teaching contribution can be kept as they all have other teaching obligations inside or outside the academy. Otherwise the staff seems to be well-equipped to deliver the programme according to the objectives outlined.

Whereas in the past the relationship between teacher and student was according to the national guidelines, right now the situation is not too acceptable and has to be improved. The academy is very much aware of the situation. The self-evaluation explains logically the reasons for the present situation – both for full-time and part-time students – but as regards the proposals to improve it, the report is rather vague. The academy has to find ways how to overcome the bottleneck at short notice and has to find a stable solution long-term. They should not wait and see to which extent this imperfect situation impacts on students learning as it might be extremely difficult to keep the required quality standards, and it might be too late when they learn from evaluations to what extent they might have missed the target.

The relationship between teachers and students in terms of monitoring thesis work seems to be alright right now. However, it is obvious, given the present student intake number the situation may get worse. Also in this regard the academy should act now. The descriptions in the self-evaluation report might not be sufficient in future.

The academy has IT technicians and specialists, support staff for physics and chemistry laboratories and other technical areas, and instructors helping out in the maritime training centre. The library and administration also appears to be sufficiently equipped and teachers are supported when using multimedia in

their classroom work. Overall, 36 employees are counted as service personnel for the tasks outlined above. Additionally, students can ask for respective service when needed.

3.1.2. Turnover of teachers

The self-evaluation report states that there is nothing but a normal turnover because of staff development / research or parental leave. The misleading expression used in the report – teachers were “dismissed” – was clarified in the discussions with the experts. They were not dismissed in the proper sense of the word but they left for reasons mentioned above. Care with English terminology should be taken in this regard.

3.2. Staff competence

3.2.1. Compliance of staff experience with the study programme

Reference was made earlier as regards the age distribution of particular groups of teachers, in particular for the purpose of safeguarding key personnel. When analysing all staff 60% of the teachers in the Port and Shipping Management programme belong to the age group 30-44, 40% to 45-59. This statement in the self-evaluation is not quite correct as it neglects four colleagues – one part-timer - who are 60 and beyond (In the meantime the college submitted a revised list of teaching staff in which the PEMD teachers are indicated. The comment of the experts referred to the whole staff).

Overall, however, this is a balanced age distribution. As outlined above, the academy has to make sure that this balance is kept and refers as well to those holding academic degrees and being fully employed in the core subject areas. The pedagogical and research experience of the staff is well documented, accepted by the experts, and fulfills the requirements of staff experience with this programme adequately.

3.2.2. Consistency of teachers' professional development

The academy does not seem to provide a formal development plan. However, the staff are encouraged to participate actively and directly in the pedagogical process. The self-evaluation report lists five publications, mainly from Klaipeda University, where 20% of the teachers work as well. These publications focus on the major subject areas like Shipping Economics, Philosophy, Management Psychology, Business Economics and in particular also the Methodology of Professional Bachelor Final Thesis. The engagement, in particular in research activities, contributions to scientific papers and participation in subject related conferences appears to be adequate considering the number of teachers and the size of the academy. The academy might consider the idea of formalising a staff development plan on the one hand and focusing on strategically important areas as preferable fields of research. This should not stop staff to go into any other area but might help the academy to communicate their focus beyond teaching their subjects. As some of the overall activities were performed with students, it might be worthwhile to consider whether students could be involved in these initiatives – while writing their thesis or pursuing internships.

4. Facilities and learning resources

4.1. Facilities

4.1.1. Sufficiency and suitability of premises for studies

The experts took the opportunity to look at the various facilities available to staff and students. With the exception of the library all facilities appear to be sufficient in number and suitable for the respective teaching and learning experience. 42 classrooms are available, 3.16 square meters per student. Students may use the classrooms for individual and group learning. This is coordinated by the departmental secretary. It is assumed that during the weekdays, the availability of the rooms is rather restricted. However, the academy keeps the Friday free from lectures so that all premises and facilities could be used by the students for individual learning. Teachers are around on those days for individual consultancy. While this may be sufficient for full-time students and those who live nearby, the situation may be more difficult for part-timers and the academy should find ways and means to care for this group equally as well. Though all premises fulfill the safety and hygiene standards, maintenance plays an important role and the academy itself states that some rooms have to be renovated.

4.1.2. Suitability and sufficiency of equipment for studies

However, not all rooms are yet fully equipped with multimedia devices. The academy is aware of this and tries to equip every room with such up-to-date equipment, some may be stationary, some portable. This

should have happened by the end of next year. One classroom is reserved for distance learning. It therefore has the necessary technical equipment. Not quite clear seems to be the equipment for language learning and to what extent is IT used and is the present capacity sufficient for language learning, in particular because of the increase of students and the increase of language options. Currently, the academy participates in a European Social Fund project through which the equipment for imitating real port and shipping management situations is being purchased. Some of the very good equipment was shown to the experts.

4.1.3. Suitability and accessibility of the resources for practical training

Due to the success of practical training both for students, companies and the academy, the institution tries to increase the number of available places, also through ERASMUS to increase international mobility. These initiatives are very useful and effective. In particular, the mobility of staff and students needs further development to bring a more international aspect to this programme.

4.2. Learning resources

4.2.1. Suitability and accessibility of books, textbooks and periodical publications

The library has 3476 publications on stock. Given the size of the institution and the number of students the volume of material seems to be sufficient. But this is not really the case. The library clearly lacks sufficient up-to-date literature, also in basic business management and economics, and in particular in the English language. One step to improve the situation is the intention of the academy to apply the already installed ALEPH library programme for client service and performance functions. The opportunities for students have to be improved. It might also be possible to establish networks with similar institutions - though in different countries - to increase the availability of material at short notice. In the long-term the institution has to invest considerable amounts of money to improve the availability of adequate resources. Although the further development of electronic resources (eg. ALEPH, ELABA, EBSCO) will help, it is believed, that students can reflect better and link critically much easier if the respective sources are handy.

4.2.2. Suitability and accessibility of learning materials

According to the self-evaluation report all teachers prepare teaching and learning material. This is positively respected by the students. Electronic networks for students and teachers have been in place since 2008. An intranet system is planned for 2011.

5. Study process and student assessment

5.1. Student admission

5.1.1. Rationality of requirements for admission to the studies

The admission fully abides to the rules and regulations of the Luthiania Ministry. As a threshold, eligible students must have finished secondary education. Further details are outlined in the Rules for Admission to the Lithuanian Maritime Academy. The competitive admission mark for studies of social science to which this study programme belongs, is made up by school-leaving-exams, a weighted coefficient of exam marks, and the subject and the weighted coefficient of subject final marks. Since 2005 the average mark in full-time studies was 9.2-12.56, for part-timers 8.08-11.38, that is considerable lower. While this appears to be adequate for successfully studying the programme the academy is advised to follow-up these admission marks to find out if consequences could be identified as regards motivation, intelligence and finally the success rate of students within a given time. Within this evaluation, there should be a special concern focused on students who drop-out.

5.1.2. Efficiency of enhancing the motivation of applicants and new students

Through means of information and communication, including advertising, the academy addresses itself to the students to make them well informed about what is expected of them. Members of the academy, including students, also visit schools and inform future potential students about this course in particular and also about the courses at LMA in general. Other means are, for example, "Open Days", exhibitions or fairs, and bonding events (Career Services) - organised partly by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, but also with the support of Professional Information Points.

5.2. Study process

5.2.1. Rationality of the programme schedule

The self-evaluation report outlines the daily contact hours for full-time students. Though these times appear to be adequate, 4-5 lectures a day from Monday to Thursdays, the workload in terms of ECTS seems to be high, in particular for part-time students as outlined earlier on. From the self-evaluation, the presence of part-timers is not that clear. It seems as if these students are at the academy for two weeks per semester and that their semester varies between 2-4 weeks. As the contact hours are only one element of the work-load, the academy should deliver a more detailed outline of their part-time programme, including – and also for the full-timers - a detailed calculation of ECTS in relation to the learning outcomes and the respective forms of assessment. Very positive is the attempt of the institution to adjust timetabling, including exams, to the needs of the learners, which is particularly important for part-time students.

5.2.2. Student academic performance

Students are monitored closely even to the extent that their attendance is registered. Although it is a cultural element the academy might consider granting their students a little more freedom of choice in terms of their attendance. This could be seen as an indicator whether students regard various subject areas and forms of teaching and learning as adequate or not. Also, in this way the responsibility of the students for their own learning is clearly shifted to them. However, this is not a short-term concern but could be thought of for further development, realising that future graduates should be able to look after themselves and should on the other hand be trained to critically evaluate the benefit of the programme, not only once per semester through an official evaluation form to be filled in, but continuously throughout the studies. Overall, the plans outlined in the self-evaluation report give evidence of the academy's intention to monitor the learners and to be helpful in case of need. The report lists quite honestly a long list of reasons why students might fail and also details how LMA tries to help, involving the students' representatives.

5.2.3. Mobility of teachers and students

Teachers' international mobility is achieved through the Erasmus programme of the EU. Since 2005, nine academic staff stayed in the Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, Finland and Estonia. Looking at these figures one has to bear in mind that only 6 teachers work fully at the Port Economics and Management Department within which the programme Port and Shipping Management is offered. Within the same time-span 11 colleagues came from abroad, from Latvia, Poland and Estonia. Overall, much more mobility is required to help internationalise this programme.

To a large extent teachers' mobility has obviously paved the way for students going abroad. 18 students used a mobility window and went to Poland, Finland and Estonia. Only in the past two years 2 students from abroad spent parts of their studies at the institution, from Poland (a different institution in relation to the teachers' contacts) and Estonia. Again, more mobility is suggested by the experts.

5.3. Student support

5.3.1. Usefulness of academic support

As outlined before, the academy looks after the students quite well. Teachers are available for students outside the classroom and also outside their formal office hours. Advice is given for social as well as for subject-related issues. This also entails for the student a support in making decisions as regards study-programmes, potential continuation, and future career pathways. Communication is also available through emails and the internet.

5.3.2. Efficiency of social support

Diversity management appears to be effective. The academy promises that there is no discrimination because of disabilities, gender, nationality. In fact, through their very individualised programmes the academy tries to attract students from different regions and also those in full-employment to study. A particular issue the academy is aware of is the drop-out rates. Evidence should best be delivered in future about corrective actions taken and their impact.

Very positive is the particular care for students who are ill or women who are pregnant or for students with families. This includes the possible postponements of examinations and interruptions of studies.

5.4. Student achievement assessment

5.4.1. Suitability of assessment criteria and their publicity

In the various meetings no critique was mentioned in relation to the assessment criteria and their publicity. Students and staff seem to know the respective rules and regulations within the Quality Management System. However, it was mentioned in the self-evaluation report that the institution believes that some staff do not yet closely relate their marks and their assessment forms to the learning outcomes of respective modules. This was confirmed in the discussion with staff. Obviously the close link between the profile of a programme, the learning outcomes, the teaching strategy and the forms of assessment have to be focused even more. Also as noted before, a discussion about the grading in the ECTS User's Guide might be helpful for staff and students; it should increase transparency at least.

5.4.2. Feedback efficiency

No complaints were made as regards the quality of feedback in relation to the progression of students, assessment and strengths and weaknesses. The self-evaluation report details the opportunities of resits in case of failure in the various types of areas, also in the defence of the thesis. The possibilities of resits seem to provide a fair and common policy. A difficulty is spotted in relation to student debt's liquidation check.

There seems to be a misunderstanding also as regards credits: a student who fails an exam cannot get the credits linked to the programme. On the other hand, there is no malus either. Credits are awarded only if the student is successful. The credit does only refer to a grade to the extent that the student must have achieved at least a pass mark. If not, no credits - also no negative ones - should be granted. Not in all countries is it possible that passed exams can be repeated in order to get a more "positive" result. Concern could be raised as the final report does not show how often a student had to resit to get the respective mark. In case of resits some institutions within the EHEA allow for a pass-mark only as in some UK institutions.

5.4.3. Efficiency of final thesis assessment

It appears quite hard that students who fail the defence of their thesis have to wait a full year till they are allowed for second chance - without having to rewrite their paper. The experts were allowed to look at several theses. It is noticeable that there are not many remarks written on the papers as feed-back for the students. It was said by students that some teachers speak to the students thoroughly afterwards. However, it might be useful that the student gets a written feed-back according to a fixed set of criteria. This should already be tested with assignments having been submitted during the semesters. The self-evaluation report underlines that this is already the case. However, in the papers available to the experts this did not appear to be so and this should be checked.

5.4.4. Functionality of the system for assessment and recognition of achievements acquired in non-formal and self-education

The academy appears to be aware of these opportunities but it seems that there is no central overall rule and regulation yet. It is stated that this is up to the teacher to decide. As this is rather subjective the academy is advised to set up a formal procedure, both for accreditation of prior learning and also of prior and experiential learning. In many EU countries, there is the recognition of the former acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences and these are fully and objectively respected.

5.5. Graduate placement

5.5.1. Expediency of graduate placement

The academy follows-up closely where their students find employment after having left the institution or decide to continue their studies somewhere. They do this regularly and realise that the majority of the graduates are employed in the target sector of the study-programme. It is interesting to note that less than 10% of the students continue their studies somewhere, possibly due to high intensity of work in the port.

6. Programme management

6.1. Programme administration

6.1.1. Efficiency of the programme management activities

The PEMD is directly responsible for the implementation and running of the programme. The study programme has established a committee which at the beginning made sure that the programme fulfilled all requirements documented in the outline of the courses and now focuses on a permanent formative evaluation of the programme and the launch of any corrective actions if needed. Just a few months ago new members were approved on the board by the LMA Director. Also graduates are on it. PEMD supervises the programme strategy and initiates actions to amend the programme when needed. It also benchmarks the programme with those in other countries of the EU and also assures that all practical matters related to the programme are dealt with.

6.2. Internal quality assurance

6.2.1. Suitability of the programme quality evaluation

The quality assurance system seems to be rather complex, and the academy should make sure that only those elements are controlled which are essential for the success of the programme. Basically, the assurance begins at the very end of teaching and learning, at the learning outcomes which the programme promises the student to achieve on the condition that he/she invests time and effort. From there the quality assurance should go backwards to match the learning outcomes at subject level. The process seems to be rather centrally organised. It might be wise to include staff and students more at the core, rather than just asking for their opinions. Appraisal forms, preferably in the 360° format, might be introduced and a transparent career pathway in the academy outlined.

6.2.2. Efficiency of the programme quality improvement

The major issue in the quality assurance system is that the data collected is actually exploited. Changes have been made to improve this programme. "Cemeteries" of data collection should be avoided as otherwise those who deliver the information will not do so for long. Inherent in this discussion is of course one of payment if an external body is used. This, however, is outside the experts' field of investigation.

6.2.3. Efficiency of stakeholder participation

It is impressive to see that the academy systematically involves all major stakeholders. Recently an alumni organisation, "Maris Alumni", was launched. Present students and teachers from the whole academy have the opportunity to voice their opinion including those from this programme. Participation is rightly available.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The experts strongly recommend the improvement of the quality of the books available in the library. More basic economics and management texts should be available, preferably in the English language, and more current international books and journals acquired. This will support international openness.

2. The experts strongly recommend the further improvement of the internationalisation of the programme in terms of teaching and learning material, languages taught and staff and student mobility. The academy is advised to fix a percentage of students who should have spent a period abroad in five years time. Within the EHEA, the target is to have about 20% of students mobile by the year 2020. It is recommended to introduce mobility "windows" into the programme which could be used for internships abroad as well. In line with these issues is the recommendation that the levels of language teaching and the respective skills acquired by the students should be stated according to the levels of the widely accepted European Language Competence Framework. Staff might increasingly be sent to partner institutions such as Southampton, England or on intensive courses to be able to teach - for example in English - within an identified period of time. Additionally, it might be wise to introduce "Cultural Management" as an additional subject area.

3. The experts strongly recommend clearly outlining the correlation between learning outcomes, teaching and learning material, learning strategies and assessment forms. The possible impact on students profiles should be regarded. The writing of learning outcomes should be improved, using active verbs only so that they become transparent and unambiguous. As learning outcomes only those should be stated which can be assessed. The college has to rethink in particular their assessment as regards generic skills and competences for these students. The learning outcomes have to be achievable with an identified number of credits. The allocation of ECTS has to be reconsidered, as is intended in 2011. In particular as regards part-time students

it seems to be questionable whether their work-load is realistic. This may be seen in the light of the drop-out rates which have to be decreased.

4. We recommend to improve the teacher-student relationship in particular as regards the monitoring of student theses. If student numbers increase then some corrective actions have to be taken to overcome this bottleneck. It is also suggested that it is appropriate to have an effective staff development plan and a life-cycle for staff to ensure that key staff are available.

5. The experts recommend some revision of the programme to the extent that the students have options, more practical work is included, the multimedia equipment for teaching and learning should be continuously enhanced, as is intended, and the respect for the environment should become much more to the forefront.

6. The experts suggest some general issues for consideration:

- although the programme is unique, it should try to be open and alert and not be considered as a monopolist in Lithuania and the Baltic region,
- rethink whether it is still wise to link marks achieved within the academic work to social benefits available to students,
- Use the ECTS User's Guide, also as regards the grading of work and credits allocated.

IV. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Port and Shipping Management* (state codes - 65303S138, 653N25002) is given **positive** evaluation.

Table. *Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas*

No.	Evaluation area	Assessment in points*
1	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2	Curriculum design	2
3	Staff	3
4	Facilities and learning resources	2
5	Study process and student assessment (student admission, student support, student achievement assessment)	3
6	Programme management (programme administration, internal quality assurance)	3
		16

* 1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated

2 (poor) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement

3 (good) - the area develops systematically, has distinctive features

4 (very good) - the area is exceptionally good

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Dr. Michael Emery

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Volker Gehmlich

Dr. Maik Huettinger

Dr. Brian O'Connor

Mr. Saulius Olencevicius