



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Aleksandro Stulginskio universiteto
STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS
ŽEMĖS ŪKIO VERSLO VADYBOS (621N20014)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS

EVALUATION REPORT
OF *AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT (621N20014)*
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Aleksandras Stulginskis University

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba

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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Žemės ūkio verslo vadyba</i>
Valstybinis kodas	621N20014
Studijų sritis	Socialinių mokslų
Studijų kryptis	Vadyba
Studijų programos rūšis	Universitetinės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Antra
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (2), iššęstinė (3)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	120
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Vadybos magistro laipsnis
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	1997-05-19

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Agricultural business management</i>
State code	621N20014
Study area	Social sciences
Study field	Management
Type of the study programme	University studies
Study cycle	Second
Study mode (length in years)	Full time (2), part time (3)
Volume of the study programme in credits	120
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Master of management
Date of registration of the study programme	1997-05-19

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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
SAR	ASU_621N20014 Agricultural Business Management.pdf
SARA	Self-Assessment Report Annexes
SARA.1	ASU_Annex1_ Plan of the Agricultural Business management
SARA.2	ASU_Annex2_Syllabus of subjects of the agricultural business management program.doc

SARA.3	ASU_Annex3_Academic staff of the Agricultural business management Master study programme.doc
SARA.4	ASU_Annex4_Curriculum Vitae of Agricultural business management Master study programme.doc
SARA.5	ASU_Annex5_List of final thesis of Agricultural business management Master study programme.doc
SARA.6	ASU_Annex6_Evaluation report of Agricultural business management study (612N20014) programme.doc
SARA.7	ASU_Annex7_Aim, expected study outcomes and their link with study subjects of the second cycle study program Agricultural business management.doc

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

Aleksandras Stulginskis University (hereinafter – ASU) is the only university-level school of higher education focusing on agriculture sector in Lithuania, its activities date back to 1924. The university was renamed to ASU in 2011. All university activity areas got positive assessment by the international expert group in 2012 and ASU was accredited for 6 years. New university structure was adopted in the same year. ASU has 5 faculties, 2 academic centres, several subdivisions of academic infrastructure and administrative subdivisions. As part of structural reform 14 institutes were established replacing 37 former departments. ASU activity has been developed under “Strategy 2020 of ASU”¹ its implementation based on 3 year plans which is subject to annual revision and update. Faculties maintain close cooperation with each other in cross-field research and teaching. Agricultural Business Management study programme (hereinafter – ABM) is delivered at the Faculty of Economics and Management comprised of two institutes. The practice placement for students is organised by Entrepreneurship Development Centre.

The self-assessment team of the ABM was formed under Order of the Rector, 08/02/2016, no. 46-PA 17 and composed of Faculty teachers and administrative staff, students and employers’ representatives. Different data sources were used for self-assessment as reports of the University and its divisions, social surveys, studies and analyses, the Statutes and Regulations of the University.

SER gives a clear time table on SER group activities for carrying out self-assessment. Last external evaluation of ABM under the rules of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher

¹ Strategy 2020 of ASU (as last amended on 2015)(http://asu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/asu_strategija_2020_1.pdf).

Education was made in 2014 by a team of experts and the program was accredited for three years with the expiring date of 30/06/2017.

1.4. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on 15/12/2016.

- 1. Prof. Dr. Csaba Forgacs (team leader)** Professor in Corvinus University Budapest (Hungary);
- 2. Prof. Dr. Pandelis Ipsilandis**, Professor in Technological Education Institute of Thessaly (Greece);
- 3. Prof. Dr. Georgi Apostolov**, Vice-Rector in South-West University “Neofit Rilski” (Bulgaria);
- 4. Ms. Ugnė Bartašiūnaitė**, Executive Assistant to the CEO in *Lietuvos Energija*, UAB (Lithuania);
- 5. Mr. Eimantas Kisielius**, PhD student in Economics at Kaunas University of Technology (Lithuania).

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

The study program is geared to the development of managerial competencies in business organizations of agriculture and its servicing infrastructure making it unique being the single offering of that kind in Lithuania. The program aims to prepare masters of management studies for management work in agricultural business and its infrastructure organizations, which are able to justify, adopt and implement business development decisions with regard to agricultural characteristics and evaluating the growing dynamism, uncertainty, globalism and climate conditions. One of its specific features is that it responds to the demand for managers trained especially in agricultural businesses rather than for business managers of general profile.

The main aim is split into 3 partial goals thus making the whole program coherent and the links between the aim, content and learning outcomes reasonably justified. These partial goals refer to developing theoretical and applied knowledge, special competencies and practical skills relevant to managing agricultural business (including own). The learning outcomes are detailed, well structured and generally well defined, although, some of them need improvement (e.g. “knows is

not a learning outcome”). The study program’ aim, goals, the expected learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods are consistent with each other.

The intended learning outcomes comply with the public and market needs and relate to the rapid growth of the agricultural industry. The specific features of this industry determine the demand for managers trained specifically in agricultural business rather than for business managers with general profile. Additionally, the rapid growth of the agriculture infrastructure in Lithuania, as well as the fast development of agricultural raw material processing, the expenditure of the food industry, the increasing uncertainty of the agriculture business environment and the intensive modernization of family farms in the country call for specific skills, competencies and expertise which this program provides. The program aim and learning outcomes are publicly available (in Lithuanian) via the university website at:

https://asu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/%C5%BDem%C4%97s_%C5%ABkio_verslo_-_vadyba_magsitrantura_2015-2016.pdf

The study program aim, goals and learning outcomes meets the requirements of the Master’s level program in Lithuania. They were appropriately revised and improved following the recommendations from the previous external evaluation so as to reflect the unique character of this program and the specificities of the agricultural business. The title of the programme, its learning outcomes, content and the qualification offered are compatible with each other. A field study of the profession was conducted in 2015 with representatives of farms and managers of enterprises to assess the ongoing changes in agricultural sector and the expectations of the employers. As the agricultural sector continuously evolves – not only within national boundaries, the program could benefit from becoming benchmarked against similar programmes in EU. ASU has already established a wide international network of Universities offering similar programmes. The research results were taken into account in the process of revising the learning outcomes. One major change was that the research aspect of the program was weakened and the focus was moved to more practical managerial activities. Even though research aspects still exist in the program and can ensure sufficient research skills for continuing into doctoral studies.

The aim and learning objectives are clear and well designed reflecting an open Faculty strategy for innovation. The study program is a niche one covering special market needs. Social partners are strongly involved in developing the program. Competences gained by graduates are valued high by both social partners and alumni. Learning outcomes described, however, in some places

are rather generic than specifically related to this particular programme. Further improvements are needed to make the relationship between aims, learning outcomes in course descriptions more explicit so as to indicate more clearly their relation to study program objectives. It is suggested to make more direct references on entrepreneurship, social business and innovations and ensure consistency with what is available publicly.

2.2. Curriculum design

The volume of the full-time Master's Study Program of Agricultural Business Management amounts to 120 ECTS credits and duration of 2 years for full-time studies and up to 3 years for part-time studies. Its structure meets the legal requirements – the volume of one full-time semester is 30 ECTS and for part-time semester it's 18 ECTS plus additional 6 ECTS in two semesters. Each semester contains no more than 5 courses (full-time) and 3 courses (part-time). Due to the fact that the majority of students have permanent employment and are not able to participate in class activities it has been decided that 7 contact hours count 1 ECTS for full-time students and 5 contact hours – 1 ECTS for part-time students.

The study program comprises 4 groups of study subjects. The first group provides high-profile scientific knowledge with significant practical and innovative value and make 50 % of the entire program (60 ECTS). The second group of study subjects and practice placements intended to train in applied research and innovative activities in management amounts to 15% (18 ECTS) of the total program volume. The third group establishes the elective body of subjects aiming at gaining additional knowledge and competencies in accordance with individual students needs and preferences. It amounts 10% (12 ECTS) of the program volume. In particular, it means that a student may choose 2 out of 6 subjects offered. The total volume of the study subjects and practice placements under the groups 2 and 3 is 30 ECTS which complies with the official requirements. The final Master's thesis (writing and defense) makes up 25 % (30 ECTS) of the entire volume of the program.

The study subjects are spread appropriately and their themes are not repetitive, The learning outcomes of the individual study subjects are consistent with the Master's level of the studies as they comply with the level descriptors set by the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework.

There is also overall consistency between the title of the program, the study subjects, program aim, goals and the learning outcomes. The unique aspect of the program is the "Innovative practice" module introduced to provide knowledge about various kinds of innovations applicable to the agriculture business. At the same time "Entrepreneurship" is missing, although, the

program aims to prepare graduates for establishing and managing their own businesses (e.g. family farms). Several changes have been made in the curriculum following the recommendations from the previous external assessment, as well as suggestions made by social partners and employers. New subjects like “Sustainable Agriculture”, “Agricultural Business Environment and its Analysis”, “Marketing of Agricultural and Food Products” etc. have been introduced into the curriculum in order to strengthen the links between the study subjects and specific learning outcomes. Additional suggestions were made from Social Partners during the review (e.g. Logistics systems in Agricultural products, etc.) that could be considered in future programme reviews since they represent significant components of agricultural businesses.

Despite all these there are some weaknesses in presenting key elements of the subject descriptions. It regards the sections “Learning methods” and “Assessment criteria and methods of learning outcomes”. The “Learning methods” are actually “teaching methods” (e.g. “Lectures with elements of discussion”). “Level of perception about external environment and their context of continuous change” are not assessment criteria. The meaning of the term “methods of learning outcome” is not clear enough. There is a need to revise and sharpen up the definitions (the language) of some learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods.

In general, the content of the program reflects the latest achievements in agricultural business and management. There is also overall consistency between the title of the program, the study subjects, program aim, goals and the learning outcomes. The required and recommended readings, listed at the end of each subject description, are up to date with few exceptions and consistent with the subject content so that they could ensure the expected learning outcomes. There is a need to revise and sharpen up the definitions (the language) of some learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods.

2.3. Teaching staff

For implementation of ABM Master programme pedagogical staff was formed according to by-law of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania No. V – 826. Teaching staff (professor, associate professor, lecturer dr., lecturer) consisting of 11 teachers at the beginning and 12 from 2015/2016 on. Share of credit points of subjects taught by professors accounted for 20 % at the beginning followed by a two third proportion of associate professor which has been changed to 53,3 % and one third to 2016/2017 respectively, reflecting a shift to a more qualified staff composition. 5 professors, 5 associate professors and one lecturer dr and

one lecturer demonstrates a very strong teaching staff. The structure of the staff has met requirements of the Lithuanian Law of Science and Education.

All teachers seem enthusiastic and committed to the program. Those involved in study programme are well experienced both in organizing and writing teaching materials and got training concerning defining learning outcomes. Key subjects are taught by professors and associate professors. Between 2007 and 2012 lecturers have produced textbooks or study guide in different study subjects. Scientific research of lecturers and their scientific publications demonstrate the scientific qualification that is adequate to produce learning outcomes. Teaching materials and books used for study programmes dated of last 5-10 years but some older ones should be updated. In some subjects required readings include good foreign books, as well, while in other subjects more books in English suggested to be used. (e.g. Marketing, HR).

Except two lecturers (having 2 subjects) each lecturer teaches one subject. The Institute of Business and Rural Development management has enough high qualified staff resources. Some 25-30 % of lecturers' workload is dedicated to ABM programme. Working hours of lecturers cover pedagogical, scientific, methodical and organizational work which are planned for an academic year. Work time structure of staff is in line with that defined by ASU.

3/4 of ABM programme lecturers are under 55 years and, just one is at retirement age. The average age of lecturers has been between 46-49 years with a positive sign that average age of professors went down to 51 from 60 at the beginning of evaluation period. Teachers turnover will not affect so much the teaching level by experienced and qualified teachers. 10 lecturers have had sufficient experience in research, pedagogical and practical work.

ASU provides good conditions for lecturers to improve their pedagogical, methodological and subject qualification. Teachers had 10 occasions in Lithuania and 9 cases abroad to develop their qualification. Annual individual development plans are set every year. Research plans (3 years) are monitored by management with 2 checkpoints. Most of the research is applied research and mostly state financed. University is supporting lecturers to publish in journals with high impact factors, however, certain resistance expressed towards learning outcomes and the new policy towards publications in highly ranked journals. Activities in research makes it possible to provide updated teaching materials but using more foreign literature would help to further increase the quality level of ABM program. Professors visited foreign partners 20 times while number of arrived lecturers amounted to 33.

More teachers have developed their qualification. Number of scientific articles produced is high but there are significant differences between lecturers. Staff enjoys academic freedom and takes care about their subjects and do their best to improve them constantly.

Staff is well prepared and have become stronger by qualification since last assessment and adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Although, high average age has decreased still it is an issue which needs consideration for the years ahead. Research activities are significant but differences between teachers suggested to be decreased. Senate decision on increasing the requirements regarding the quality of publications as well as increasing the length of international mobility carried out by teachers and PhD students shows steps towards deepening internationalization.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

Premises for studies of the Faculty of Economics and Management are located in the 3rd Building of the ASU, which has gone through complete renovation and modernization. Energy system was improved and auditoriums adapted to ergonomic requirements offering better study conditions for working. All the auditoriums are equipped with a computerized study visualization equipment. Internet connection and computerized workplace for lecturers are available and two of them can be used for distance learning or video conferences.

Due to declining number of students one university student has 17.43 square meters of gross floor area, well above to assessment standards of at least 10.4 square meters. Premises by size and quality are adequate for studies. Size of auditoriums and labs are appropriate for teaching. Lectors' offices have 2-4 job places.

In computer classes each student has the opportunity to work with computer individually using software as e.g. Statistica, SPSS, ArcGis. Wireless internet available across the Faculty making possible to use it for information search, communication with lectors, homework and tests within Moodle system. Virtual access of the ASU library is provided. Class rooms are well equipped and also adequate by size for ABM students. Enterprises, institutions and organizations are places for innovation practicum where students by having sufficient knowledge in methodology of scientific research can carry out their research work on topical problems. Lectors are responsible to keep communication with companies, institutes offering places for students' practicum work.

Faculty puts emphasis on providing appropriate and updated study materials for students. Six locations of library desks offer a range of possibilities for students to find appropriate literature, latest research results, conference proceedings and text books listed by the lector. University library has 157 thousand book titles and 3 copies of them in average. Due to use EU Structural Fund library stock has been improved by 20 per centage since 2007,

At the end of 2nd semester (part-time students at 3rd semester) students carry out innovation practicum at selected enterprises, institutions and organizations. To prepare innovation practicum communication takes place between the lecturers of the Study Program and potential partners to fix the place and the content of the innovation practicum for each student. Choices also involve subdivisions of ASU infrastructure carrying out scientific research.

ASU has finished a construction work of facilities across the campus and having excellent conditions for student study works as well as for teaching and research. The over capacity of facilities, due to declining number of students, needs to be considered. Central library offers services to access all titles recorded which the student can use from any place in the country. Internet access is provided across the campus. Moodle covers the whole study process including teaching and its control and used extensively and intensively by staff, students and administrators. It is suggested to consider to use Moodle for putting lectures on video compensating declining contact hours.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Admission requirements are described and no changes for calculation of competition score have been introduced during the analysed period. However, comparison of the final results of applicants shows significant decreasing during year 2015-2016 (14) and 2016-2017 (12) compared with that of 2 previous years (34 and 22). Regarding the average values of competition scores it seems that numbers are rather stable (around 7.4) over the assessment period. There were no significant changes or trends in the total number of students, but full time studies have come to an end. This change was an adjustment step to markets' needs. Students are satisfied to have part time studies enabling them to manage their business during study period.

University took action regarding development of study program by introducing new study subjects, however, the experience in delivery is not yet sufficient. Second action is that Moodle has been used at the University increasing the level of teaching and communication between students and teachers, although, distance learning in Moodle environment should be extended. Since 2012 part-time students have been able to study under partial distance learning study mode. A number of different innovative and creative teaching methods (participatory action research, creative tasks, models, examples, illustrations, analogues, reflection, summarizing conclusions etc.) and learning methods (scenario design and implementation by activity

simulation, presentations, SWOT analysis, open discussions etc.) are used in the study process promoting deepening of the gained theoretical knowledge, verifying and applying it to practice, thus developing the skills in expert, individual activity. Students have various possibilities to participate in artistic activities – university has a lot of artistic groups, there is also a sports base. There is a concern of students' research activity where only competitions of student papers are mentioned but sufficient information is missing on deeper involvement of students in research projects work. There is information available online on student mobility programs and network of partners for mobility. In 2016 ASU had 89 active ERASMUS+ cooperation agreements in 27 European countries, but the numbers of mobility can be evaluated as moderate as in 2010–2016 only 6 students of ABM left for ERASMUS exchange programme. Students have access to information about financial support, there is a possibility to get consultations regarding career in University Career Centre. Students also can get help in the field of accommodation services. Students may express their opinion during surveys - "Student's Outlook on the Study Subject". Even though the use of results is doubted, in SER mentioning the results of ASU centrally conducted surveys and other feedback about the quality of studies are not always summarized according to the study programmes. Therefore, their use is quite complicated. The assessment system seems clear and adequate. University has developed the monitoring system of the progress of students. The description of the Assessment System of Learning Outcomes is presented on the University website. One part of the system might be seemed as really beneficial for students: a student is entitled to finding out the examination evaluation within three working days after the examination and discuss with the teacher about the impartiality of the assessment. During site visit review team learned that most of teachers respond emails from students but some answer them only during consultation period. To reduce plagiarism by students University approved at the ASU Senate session on 27 April 2016, No. 557 the Measures for Plagiarism Prevention in Students' Written Works. Antiplagiarism program is used to control the students work checking it during writing the thesis and when it is finalized. Concerning the effectiveness of grading system there was no feedback to review team on students complain in this field. Based on student feedback review team learned that 10 hours per week is the average time allocated to studies in the program; sometimes 0 during the week but 100% several days before deadline and exam. As far as the strengths of the programme are concerned students mentioned the followings: the acquired practical knowledge, the synergy of group works with different professional backgrounds, many presentations demanded, significant improvement of skills and having managerial courses. But they raised the need of having more visiting lecturers, getting higher language skills, more knowledge on marketing. Concerning students' success on labour

markets a continuous monitoring of Programme graduates' employment is carried out by the University. Numbers show that 100% of them were employed 6 months after graduation. Average wage per month of master program graduates 6 months after graduation in euro increased from 547 in 2011 up to 871 in year 2015 reflecting the increasing market value of such qualification. Around 70 % of graduates have job that is directly related to the acquired profession. The broadness of the program was commented by graduates as well as social partners. Some changes in the sequence of subjects was made based on students note. Innovative seminars, like staged theses and requirements for producing student scientific papers enriched the study process. Offering electives was also appreciated by students and graduates. Social partners underlined the need for deepening internationalization both on staff and student side. There is a demand to extend guest visits from industry and having open seminars.

Students underlined number of strengths of the study program helping them very much in career development. However, in order to deepening internationalization the need for increasing student mobility and to some extent staff mobility should be considered. It is suggested to give focus on integrating entrepreneurship into the study program and considering choosing more modern teaching methods. More emphasis suggested to be given to the involvement of students in research works. Consideration needs to be given to use Moodle more extended in teaching e.g. using more video lectures.

2.6. Programme management

The SER gives a very extensive description of arrangements in relation to allocation of responsibilities regarding the management of the programme, which are carried out at different levels of hierarchy: The Vice-Rector of Studies at University level, the Dean, Vice-Dean for studies, Faculty council at Faculty level and the Study Programme Committee at Programme level. The Department of Studies has the overall responsibility for Quality Assurance at University level, while at Faculty level this responsibility belongs to the Dean and Vice-Dean of the Faculty. The Centre of Study Quality and Innovations coordinates the QA processes, maintains data bases used for program analysis and evaluation and provides methodological support to Academic departments. The appointment of teachers to the specific programme follows a dual process. It takes place either by the relevant university department for general subjects or by the Business and Rural Development Management Institute for specialized subjects.

Under this scheme the Faculty Dean and Vice-Dean are responsible for all operations and processes regarding the implementation of the Study programme as admissions, registration,

scheduling of classes and other learning activities, exams, students' progress (called modilities in the SER), graduation etc.

The Programme Study Committee, currently comprises 9 members, including 8 academics, 1 social partner but no student representatives – although the SER refers to the role of the student representatives (pg. 32) and is chaired by an experienced academic. The chair acts more as of a coordinator rather than a Programme Director. The Committee carries no management functions and is responsible mainly for the academic evaluation and assessment of the programme during annual programme, reviews addressing programme development and improvement, using input from its academic and industrial members, the students as well as from the Centre of Study Quality and Innovation. Any change to the programme must go through all university channels (Faculty Dean, Faculty Council, University Senate).

While these arrangements are very comprehensive there is perhaps a need for a definitive statement in relation to the hierarchy of responsibilities and accountability regarding the delivery of the programme, the strategy for its future development and continuous enhancements. In this sense the role of a programme director is crucial. Fuller consideration should also be given to the role of the teaching delivery team and the individual lecturer under matrix reporting scheme with regard to programme ownership and the teaching team's contribution to the enhancement of the quality of the programme.

Collecting information from all interested parties (students, teachers, graduates, employers) regarding the quality of various aspects of the education a Study Programme offers to its students seems to be the cornerstone for Quality Assurance at the University. A number of surveys (some periodical, and other ad-hoc) take place addressing: the evaluation of study subjects, the programme, effectiveness of industrial placement, employment opportunities, thesis supervision and writing, international exchanges etc. Obviously, this data provides the basis for establishing a continuous quality enhancement process. There is no evidence so far that this goal has been achieved to its full extend. For example, graduates' opinion regarding the programme as: "difficult curriculum of the study program" or "too high requirements established by the teachers" do not show that the learning process is entirely under control.

Although, no formal benchmarking seems to have taken place the program tries to maintain its international competitiveness by monitoring the developments in similar programmes internationally. Staff mentioned to review team the program is a niche one and reflects local agricultural and economic environment. However, a formal benchmarking exercise against

international programs that are considered “the best” in the area would add value to the programme.

There appears to be an active engagement by social partners in the evaluation and improvement processes in a number of ways: Participation in Program Study Committee, and other decision making bodies, providing feedback by responding to surveys and participating in focus-group discussions. Employers did not feel that part time students of this program lack knowledge and said that it is important to have flexibility in the study process as most of the students have full time jobs.

The planned action to have a joint degree program in Agri-Food Management with Latvian University of Agriculture taking the advantage of synergy reflects an innovative approach.

Students are satisfied with the program and appreciate having part time education enabling them to manage their job. However, more attention should be paid to monitoring students individual work. Social partners demonstrated their deep involvement in running and developing the study program and found the program very strong. A formal benchmarking exercise against international programmes that are considered “the best” in the area would add value to the programme.

2.7. Example of excellence

Students and staff have excellent working conditions for study, teaching and research in an environment of well equipped classrooms and offices, accessing needed database and relevant software by individual use of computer, managing an easy communication with teachers and administrators using Moodle system extensively and intensively, working in premises which, by size and quality, are adequate to studies meanwhile having virtual access to wide services offered by ASU library from any place of the country.

The “Innovative practice” module introduced provides knowledge about various kinds of innovations applicable to the agriculture business indicating a unique innovation step in curriculum development to adjust real world needs.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

Give more training to staff to describe learning outcomes and their links to study objectives, course description and teaching methods.

2.

It is suggested to set up a strategy to deepening internationalization of teaching and research and making benchmarking of the study program.

3.

It should be considered to develop a plan on how to ensure economic use of overcapacity of facilities in the coming years.

4.

Enhance marketing efforts to attract more students, along with social partners who seemed very supportive of the idea

IV. SUMMARY

The main aim of the Study Program is well defined by being split into three partial goals making the program coherent where the links between content and learning outcomes reasonably justified referring to developing theoretical and applied knowledge, competencies and practical skills. Competences gained by graduates got high value both from social partners and alumni. The program reflects an open Faculty strategy for innovation. Learning outcomes are described, however, in some places they are rather generic than specifically related to this program. It is suggested to make further improvements concerning the relationship between aims, learning outcomes in course descriptions more explicit so as to indicate more clearly their relation to study program objectives and, making more direct references on entrepreneurship, social business and innovations and ensure consistency with what is available publicly.

The content of the program reflects the latest achievements in agricultural business and management. There is an overall consistency between the title of the program, the study subjects, program aim, goals and the learning outcomes. However, there is a need to revise and sharpen up the definitions (the language) of some learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods.

Staff consists of 5 professors, 5 associate professors and two lecturers are well prepared with great deal of experience and have become stronger by qualification since last assessment. Composition of staff adequate to ensure learning outcomes. Average age of staff has decreased over the assessment period declining from 60 years at the beginning to 51. However further decreasing of average age is still an issue which needs consideration for planning staff turnover for coming years ahead to achieve a more balanced staff age at lower average.

Due to construction work of facilities significant development can be observed at ASU. Across the campus the faculty has excellent conditions for student study works as well as for teaching and research. Concerning the per student lab supply, library services and gross floor area (17.43 square meters which is well above to assessment standards of at least 10.4 square meters) indicators they are outstanding, however, partly due to declining number of students. The high over capacity of facilities should force Faculty to look for opportunities to sell part of capacities on the markets generating income for the Faculty. There is a need for developing a strategy for achieving economic use of over capacities.

Efforts have been made to develop the study program. Use of Moodle has been increasing to improving the level of communication between students and teachers which was also combined with making a shift towards running partial distance learning studies more fit to students needs. A number of different innovative and creative teaching methods (participatory action research, creative tasks, models, examples, illustrations, analogues, reflection etc.) and learning methods (scenario design and implementation by activity simulation, presentations, SWOT analysis, open discussions etc.) are used which are appreciated by students. However, the level of internationalization of the study program needs further efforts from the Faculty to make it more attractive for foreign students and to increase student mobility and to some extent staff mobility reflecting the commitment of the Faculty in deeper involvement in internationalization.

Students very much appreciate having part time education enabling them to manage their job and, at the same time, they are satisfied with the level of education. Introducing part time education helped to slow down the decreasing trend of student enrollment. Stakeholders and social partners demonstrated their deep involvement in both running and developing the study program and underlined they see the program as very strong. As students have more homework and less contact hours more attention should be paid to monitoring students individual work. Although the programs focus on local agricultural environment, however, a formal benchmarking exercise against international programmes that are considered “the best” in the area would add value to the programme.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Agricultural business management* (state code – 621N20014) at Aleksandras Stulginskis University 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	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	4
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	3
	Total:	19

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

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

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

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

Grupės vadovas:

Team leader: Prof. Dr. Csaba Forgacs (team leader)

Grupės nariai: Prof. Dr. Pandelis Ipsilandis

Team members:

Prof. Dr. Georgi Apostolov

Ms Ugnė Bartašiūtė

Mr Eimantas Kisielius

**ALEKSANDRO STULGINSKIO UNIVERSITETO ANTROSIOS PAKOPOS STUDIJŲ
PROGRAMOS ŽEMĖS ŪKIO VERSLO VADYBA (VALSTYBINIS KODAS – 621N20014)
2017-02-23 EKSPERTINIO VERTINIMO IŠVADŲ NR. SV4-32 IŠRAŠAS**

<...>

V. APIBENDRINAMASIS ĮVERTINIMAS

Aleksandro Stulginskio studijų programa *Žemės ūkio verslo vadyba* (valstybinis kodas – 621N20014) vertinama teigiamai.

Eil. Nr.	Vertinimo sritis	Srities įvertinimas, balais*
1.	Programos tikslai ir numatomi studijų rezultatai	3
2.	Programos sandara	3
3.	Personalas	3
4.	Materialieji ištekliai	4
5.	Studijų eiga ir jos vertinimas	3
6.	Programos vadyba	3
	Iš viso:	19

* 1 - Nepatenkinamai (yra esminių trūkumų, kuriuos būtina pašalinti)

2 - Patenkinamai (tenkina minimalius reikalavimus, reikia tobulinti)

3 - Gerai (sistemiškai plėtojama sritis, turi savitų bruožų)

4 - Labai gerai (sritis yra išskirtinė)

<...>

IV. SANTRAUKA

Pagrindinis studijų programos tikslas yra aiškiai apibrėžtas ir suskaidytas į tris dalis: programa nuosekli, sąsajos tarp turinio ir studijų rezultatų yra tinkamai pagrįstos, susijusios su teorinių ir taikomųjų žinių, kompetencijos ir praktinių įgūdžių tobulinimu. Absolventų įgytą kompetenciją

gerai vertina socialiniai partneriai ir alumnai. Programa atspindi inovacijoms atvirą fakulteto strategiją. Studijų rezultatai apibrėžti, tačiau kai kurie iš jų yra labiau bendrojo pobūdžio, nei konkrečiai susiję su šia programa. Dalykų aprašuose siūloma dar labiau tobulinti tikslų bei studijų rezultatų sąsajas tam, kad būtų aiškiau išreikštas jų santykis su studijų programos uždaviniais, taip pat reikia labiau juos sieti su verslumu, socialiniu verslu bei inovacijomis ir užtikrinti, kad programos turinys atitiktų tai, kas apie ją sakoma viešai.

Programos turinys atspindi naujausius žemės ūkio ir vadybos pasiekimus. Programos pavadinimas, studijų dalykai, programos tikslas, uždaviniai bei studijų rezultatai yra nuoseklūs. Vis dėlto reikia peržiūrėti ir patobulinti kai kurių studijų rezultatų, dėstymo bei vertinimo metodų apibrėžimus (kalbą).

Personala sudaro 5 profesoriai, 5 docentai ir du dėstytojai, kurie yra gerai pasirengę, turi nemažai patirties ir nuo paskutinio vertinimo yra pakėlę savo kvalifikaciją. Personalo sandara yra tinkama studijų rezultatams užtikrinti. Vidutinis personalo amžius vertinamuoju laikotarpiu sumažėjo nuo 60 metų iki 51 metų. Tačiau vis dar reikia pritraukti jaunesnio personalo planuojant jo pokyčius ateityje tam, kad personalo amžius būtų labiau subalansuotas.

Dėl pastatų statybos darbų ASU materialieji ištekliai stipriai tobulėja. Universiteto patalpose fakultetas studentams yra sudaręs puikias sąlygas studijuoti, taip pat dėstytojams dėstyti ir vykdyti mokslinius tyrimus. Laboratorijų skaičius, bibliotekos paslaugos ir bendras patalpų plotas, tenkantis vienam studentui (17,43 kvadratinio metro, o tai gerokai viršija vertinimo standartą, kuris yra bent 10,41 kvadratinio metro), yra puikus, tačiau taip iš dalies yra dėl mažėjančio studentų skaičiaus. Fakultetas turėtų ieškoti galimybių, kaip rinkoje realizuoti dalį perteklinių patalpų ir taip gauti pajamų. Reikia sukurti strategiją, kaip gauti ekonominės naudos iš perteklinių patalpų.

Studijų programą stengiasi tobulinti. Vis dažniau naudotasi „Moodle“ sistema, siekiant pagerinti studentų ir dėstytojų ryšius, tai buvo susiję su iš dalies vykdomų nuotolinių studijų pritaikymu studentų poreikiams. Studijų programoje naudojama daug įvairių inovatyvių ir kūrybiškų dėstymo metodų (veiklos tyrimas dalyvaujant, kūrybinės užduotys, modeliai, pavyzdžiai, iliustracijos, analogai, refleksija ir kt.) bei mokymosi metodų (scenarijaus kūrimas ir įgyvendinimas imituojant veiklą, pristatymai, SSGG analizė, atviros diskusijos ir kt.), tai ypač vertina studentai. Tačiau fakultetas turėtų labiau stiprinti studijų programos tarptautiškumą, kad programa taptų patrauklesnė studentams iš užsienio ir intensyviau vyktų studentų judumas, tam

tikru lygiu ir personalo judumas, taip fakultetas demonstruotų didesnę susidomėjimą tarptautiškumu.

Studentai teigiamai vertina iššęstinių studijų galimybes, nes tuomet jie gali dirbti, juos tenkina ugdymo lygis. Įvedus iššęstines studijas, sulėtėjo programą norinčių studijuoti studentų skaičiaus mažėjimo tendencija. Socialiniai dalininkai ir socialiniai partneriai atskleidė, kad dalyvauja tiek programą vykdant, tiek ją tobulinant ir pabrėžė, kad, jų manymu, programa yra labai stipri. Kadangi studentams užduodama daugiau namų darbų ir dėstoma mažiau paskaitų, vertėtų daugiau dėmesio skirti studentų individualaus darbo priežiūrai. Nors programa yra susijusi su vietos žemės ūkio aplinka, tačiau formalus kokybės palyginimas su tarptautinėmis programomis, kurios laikomos geriausiomis savo srityje, pridėtų programai papildomos vertės.

<...>

III. REKOMENDACIJOS

1.

Reikia mokyti personalą apibrėžti studijų rezultatus ir nustatyti, kokį ryšį jie turi su studijų tikslais, dalyko aprašais ir dėstymo metodais.

2.

Siūloma sukurti dėstymo bei mokslinių tyrimų tarptautiškumo stiprinimo strategiją, atlikti studijų programos kokybės lyginamąją analizę.

3.

Reikėtų sukurti planą, kaip ateinančiais metais užtikrinti ekonomišką materialijų išteklių pertekliaus išnaudojimą.

4.

Kartu su socialiniais partneriais, kurie aktyviai remia šią idėją, sustiprinti rinkodaros priemonių taikymą tam, kad būtų pritraukta daugiau studentų.

<...>

Paslaugos teikėjas patvirtina, jog yra susipažinęs su Lietuvos Respublikos baudžiamojo kodekso 235 straipsnio, numatančio atsakomybę už melagingą ar žinomai neteisingai atliktą vertimą, reikalavimais

Vertėjos rekvizitai (vardas, pavardė,
parašas)

